

# SBIF Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland

## Highlight Report



SPONSORS	SBIF Advisory Group
CIRCULATION LIST	SBIF Advisory Group (and disseminated via SBIF web page and Twitter)
DATE	22/06/2021
AUTHOR	Ellen Wilson, Gill Dowse and Jonathan Willet
FREQUENCY	Quarterly
OVERALL RAG STATUS	Green

### Latest Update

This highlight report covers the period since the end of March 2021. The key action that has been undertaken is working to secure a host for the Better Biodiversity Data (BBD) Project. Funding for the project cannot be released until there is a host to disburse it to. We still hope that the project can begin in Autumn 2021.

Funding for a six-month extension to the Development Officer's post was secured but the post was reduced to one day a week to focus on providing a secretariat service and maintain communication with partners rather than any further project development. This being the case there have been a reduced number of outputs over the last quarter. The SBIF CIEEM questionnaire on how consultants use data closed at the end of April and its findings were collated and have been circulated to this group and published in the CIEEM Scotland Newsletter. The SBIF Working Group (Ellen, Gill and Jonathan) have continued to support Rona Sinclair at NatureScot with the development and now delivery of The Scottish Marine Biodiversity Data Review.

The UK Government Cabinet Office Geospatial Commission's Mapping the Species Data Pathway: Connecting species data flows in England was published in May and the blog and report mentioned the SBIF Review in glowing terms. Further mention of the SBIF Review was made in the Strategy for Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Research 2022-2027 and Development of a Combined Marine and Terrestrial Biodiversity Indicator for Scotland reports. Further information about these reports can be found on the [SBIF Blog](#).

The Working Group have had two introductory meetings with Lisa Chilton, the new CEO of the NBN.

Details of the Review and all highlight reports and approved papers are shared publicly (see <https://nbn.org.uk/about-us/where-we-are/in-scotland/the-sbif-review/>). Follow [@sb\\_info\\_forum](#) on Twitter for informal news on **#SBIFReview**.

### Stages and Milestones

STAGE/MILESTONE	DUE/DONE	STATUS	NOTES/RISKS/ISSUES	
<b>STAGE 4: Issue recommendations and plan their implementation (initially June/July 2018 to March 2019 – now 2021)</b>				
	Paper 6 (Implementation Plan) approved	2021	In progress	If a host organisation is secured, the funding can be drawn down implementation options will entail consultation with all relevant parties
<b>STAGE 5: Support implementation of recommendations and monitor progress (2021? onwards)</b>				
	Monitor implementation against key milestones	2021-2023?		Milestones and monitoring to be described in Paper 6
	Paper 7 (progress report) approved	2021-2023?		Subject to implementation options being approved and progressed
	Paper 7 (progress report) updated	2021-2023?		Subject to implementation options being approved and progressed
	Paper 8 (outcomes) approved	2023?		A review of outcomes will follow once implementation is complete
	Paper 8 (outcomes) updated	2023-2033?		Outcomes will be tracked for ten years beyond implementation



on track



SBIF Working Group attention needed



SBIF Advisory Group intervention needed

## Activities

COMPLETED THIS QUARTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of NatureScot funding secured for the SBIF Development Officer post one day a week until the 30th September 2021.</li> <li>• Supporting the SBIF Working Group to secure a host organisation for the Better Biodiversity Data Project, including detailed potential host liaison meetings.</li> <li>• Planning of the upcoming the SBIF Advisory Group for the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2021.</li> <li>• Agreed to represent SBIF on the Project Advisory Group of The Scottish Marine Biodiversity Data Review (to run from April to December 2021).</li> <li>• Drafted text for the Geospatial Commission’s blog and press release for the launch of the Mapping the Species Data Pathway: Connecting species data flows in England. 25<sup>th</sup> May.</li> <li>• Circulated feedback from an initial requirement gathering meeting for a Scottish biological records database and portal.</li> <li>• Circulated findings of the consultation of CIEEM members on their use of biological data and LERCs.</li> <li>• Drafted four SBIF <a href="#">blog posts</a>.</li> <li>• Circulated the draft meeting notes from February’s Welsh/ Scottish LERC meeting.</li> </ul>
NOT DONE THIS QUARTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
TO DO NEXT QUARTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing SBIF communications and doing as much preparatory work for the project as possible.</li> <li>• Supporting the SBIF Working Group to secure a host organisation.</li> <li>• Provide secretariat to the SBIF AG Meeting.</li> <li>• Production of four blogs.</li> </ul>

## SBIF Overview

Our vision for the Review is that it determines the optimum infrastructure for biological recording in Scotland, an infrastructure that in turn will attract the necessary belief, commitment and investment by stakeholders to be sustainable and successful in fulfilling the original vision of SBIF:

*High quality species and habitat data will be collected and managed through a sustainable, co-ordinated and integrated local and national framework of organisations, partnerships and initiatives. These data will be available to ensure that Scotland’s biodiversity, ecosystems and people benefit.*

The Review will do this in such a way as to be cohesive across Scotland with support from all stakeholders and the willingness and energy to then make the transitions necessary to implement the new infrastructure by 2020.

Our objectives are:

- To build the energy and confidence of key stakeholders in the potential for an improved infrastructure that delivers the original vision of SBIF (above).
- To establish a register of all operational recording schemes and their operators so that data flows in Scotland are well-understood.
- To establish what funding and other income sources sustain the current infrastructure and what sources may continue to be available, or become available, in future.
- To hold stakeholder interviews to gain their current perspectives and to consult stakeholders on the infrastructure that they and their sector would need to meet their requirements.
- To run stakeholder workshops to identify the options for how these needs could best be fulfilled centrally, nationally and locally, and to evaluate these options in order to identify the preferred one(s).

- To identify where improved use of technology can help reduce duplication of effort and increase the efficiency of the biological recording infrastructure (so that data are made available for use and re-use).
- To identify what transition arrangements would be necessary to implement the preferred option(s).

## Completed Stages and Milestones

STAGE/MILESTONE	DUE/DONE	STATUS	NOTES/RISKS/ISSUES
<b>STAGE 1: Set up the Working Group and complete planning for the Review (August 2016)</b>			
Paper 1 (Brief for the Review) approved	05 September 2016	Complete	
Paper 2 (high level plan for Stage 2) approved	05 September 2016	Complete	
Working Group meetings established	16 September 2016	Complete	
Logistics confirmed for Stage 2	28 February 2017	Complete	
<b>STAGE 2: Gather perspectives, requirements and other information from key stakeholders (September 2016 to July 2017)</b>			
Paper 2 (high level plan for Stage 2) approved	30 November 2016	Complete	
Questionnaire design completed	28 February 2017	Complete	
Interviews with Stage 2 consultees completed	10 March 2017	Complete	
Background data gathering completed	15 May 2017	Complete	
Logistics confirmed for Stage 3	21 June 2017	Complete	
Analysis of questionnaire + interviews completed	20 August 2017	Complete	
Paper 3 (high level business case) completed	4 December 2017	Complete	
<b>STAGE 3: Hold workshops to find and evaluate options at central, national and local levels (July 2017 to March 2018)</b>			
Paper 2 (high level plan for Stage 3) approved	21 June 2017	Complete	
Workshops with Stage 3 consultees completed	15 December 2017	Complete	
Paper 3 (detailed business case) approved	15 September 2018	Complete	
<b>STAGE 4: Issue recommendations and plan their implementation (June/July 2018 to March 2019)</b>			
Paper 4 (Review Recommendations) approved	15 September 2018	Complete	Published on 14 November 2018
Paper 5 (Advocacy Plan) approved	28 January 2019	Complete	Now maintained as live plan
Review lessons learned from doing the Review	17 March 2020	Complete	Completed at SBIF Advisory Group meeting
Scottish Government response to the Recommendations	19 December 2020	Complete	Programme proposal submitted to SG

## Key Documents

The documents below will be available via <https://nbn.org.uk/about-us/where-we-are/in-scotland/review/> once each one is approved by the SBIF Advisory Group as the Review progresses:

DOCUMENT	TITLE	STATUS
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Paper 1 Brief	Initiating a Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (formation of, and Terms of Reference and Brief for, a Working Group to undertake this Review)	APPROVED (at 05/09/2016 SBIFAG meeting)
Paper 2 Plan	Detailed plan for the Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (success criteria, activity plans, and timeline)	APPROVED (for Stage 2)
Paper 3(a) High level Business Case	The High-Level Business Case for a Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (reporting on the perspectives and requirements of each Sector and the need for change)	DRAFT COMPLETED for early workshops but focus now transferred to the Detailed Business Case
Paper 3(b) Detailed Business Case	The Detailed Business Case for Changes to the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (reporting on the options evaluated and our preferred option)	APPROVED (by email); including final recommendations
Paper 4 Final Report and Recommendations	Recommendations from the Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (recommendations and implementation roadmap)	COMPLETE Published on 14 November 2018
Paper 5 Advocacy Plan	Advocacy Plan for our preferred option for a Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (reporting on the advocacy arrangements needed and the potential decision-making process within Scottish Government)	APPROVED on 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
Paper 6 Implementation Plan	Implementation Plan for our preferred option for a Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (reporting on the transition arrangements needed and potential roadmap for their implementation)	SUBMITTED to NatureScot on the 18 <sup>th</sup> of December 2020. AWAITING approval of funding, pending securing a host for the project.
Paper 7 Progress Reporting	Progress reporting for the Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (implementation of our recommendations)	Not started
Paper 8 Outcomes	Outcomes and benefits from our Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland (successes and lessons learned)	Not started

## Key Diagrams and Leaflets

The diagrams and leaflets below are available via <https://nbn.org.uk/about-us/where-we-are/in-scotland/the-sbif-review/> and are listed here for ease of reference:

- **SBIF Value Model** (the ‘windmill’) illustrating the components of our biological recording infrastructure that provide value for various communities (decision-makers, biological recorders, data users and service providers).
- **SBIF Leaflet:** Introducing the SBIF Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure in Scotland.
- **SBIF Review Workshop Outputs** documenting the key messages from each workshop.
- **SBIF Review Literature Review Outputs** documenting the key findings with an archive of collated sources.
- **SBIF Review Interview Findings** documenting the results of key stakeholder interviews.
- **SBIF Review Questionnaire Findings** documenting the results of the questionnaire.
- **SBIF Review Benefit Dependency Network Diagram** mapping benefit dependencies.
- **SBIF Review Final Report** documenting the business case and recommendations of the Review.
- **SBIF Review Investment Programme Proposal** documenting a costed five year implementation programme.