

Paper 1: 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	16/12/2021
AUTHOR	Gill Dowse, Jonathan Willet and Ellen Wilson
FREQUENCY	Quarterly
OVERALL RAG STATUS	Green

Latest Update

Following discussions, the NBN Trust Board has agreed in principle to be as the host/ owner of the Better Biodiversity Data (BBD) Project, subject to the Board's final approval once NatureScot/ The Scottish Government approve the revised budget and stakeholder support for the project being obtained. Three meetings were held with the LERCs and RGs in Scotland, they all supported the BBD in principle. It is hoped that recruitment for the project staff, initially a National Co-ordinator and then four supporting roles, should start in early 2022.

The BRC presentation on iRecord to LERCs and Recording Groups in Scotland that took place in late-October, was very well received and further meetings/ training events may take place in 2022 due to this initial meeting.

The SBIF Recommendations are being reviewed and updated by the Working Group and will be submitted to the AG for their comment prior to a wider consultation. A timeline for delivery and an outline budget is also being discussed, this will be submitted as a paper to the AG in due course.

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	
STAGE 4: Issue recommendations and plan their implementation (initially June/July 2018 to March 2019 – now 2021)				
	Paper 6 (Implementation Plan) approved	2021	In progress	A host organisation has been identified and has accepted in principle.
STAGE 5: Support implementation of recommendations and monitor progress (2021? onwards)				
	Monitor implementation against key milestones	2022-2024		Milestones and monitoring to be described in Paper 6
	Paper 7 (progress report) approved	2022-2024		Subject to implementation options being approved and progressed
	Paper 7 (progress report) updated	2022-2024		Subject to implementation options being approved and progressed
	Paper 8 (outcomes) approved	2024		A review of outcomes will follow once implementation is complete
	Paper 8 (outcomes) updated	2024-2034		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"> Continued to provide support to SBIF Co-Chairs. A meeting with LERCS, RGs and BRC to discuss iRecord was planned and delivered on the 29th of October. Two meetings of the Working Group to discuss how iRecord could work better in Scotland were run on the 25th of November and 16th of December. A meeting of the Working Group to redraft the SBIF recommendations and discuss the RAG table and a revised timetable for delivery were run on the 2nd December. A further meeting is planned on the 6th January 2022. Planning of the upcoming SBIF Advisory Group for the 13th of January 2022. Continued representation of SBIF on the Project Advisory Group of The Scottish Marine Biodiversity Data Review (to run until December 2021).
NOT DONE THIS QUARTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
TO DO NEXT QUARTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support transition from planning to delivery of the BBD Project. Continuing SBIF communications. Continuing secretariat support to the SBIF AG Meetings.

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
STAGE 1: Set up the Working Group and complete planning for the Review (August 2016)			
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	
STAGE 2: Gather perspectives, requirements and other information from key stakeholders (September 2016 to July 2017)				
	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	
STAGE 3: Hold workshops to find and evaluate options at central, national and local levels (July 2017 to March 2018)				
	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	
STAGE 4: Issue recommendations and plan their implementation (June/July 2018 to March 2022)				
	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
	Approval in principle from the NBN Trust Board to be the project owner of the Better Biodiversity Data Project	10 September 2021	Complete	Formal approval will require support from all the LERCs and RGs and budgetary approval from NS/SG
	Support from LERCs and RGs gauged through three meetings held online.	November 2021	Complete	All LERCs and RGs gave their support to the BBD in principle.
	SG and NS approval of the revised BBD budget drafted by the NBN Trust	January 2022		
	Final approval to begin the BBD Project from the NBN Trust Board	2022		
	BBD Project begins	2022		

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
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 th 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 th of December 2020. AWAITING final approval of funding. Project Owner (NBN Trust) secured.
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.