

MCCIP SG meeting minutes

Ref SG16-07

MARINE CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS PARTNERSHIP

SG MEETING OCTOBER 29TH 2007

Full Steering Group Meeting No.5

Summary of meeting and action points

Venue: Scottish Government, Edinburgh
Date: Monday 29 October 2007
Start: 11:15

Present:

Andy Greaves (Defra) Chair; John Baxter (SHN); Bill Turrell (FRS); Alexander Downie (SEPA); Kevin O'Carroll (DTI); Matt Frost (MECN); Craig Wallace (NERC/RAPID); Martyn Cox (Scottish Government); Paul Buckley (MCCIP Secretariat); Ed McManus (MCCIP Secretariat);

Video-conference:

Stephen Dye (MCCIP Secretariat); John Hamer (CCW); Victoria Paris (WAG); Robert Thorpe (EA); Kathryn Humphrey (Defra CEOSA);

Apologies:

David Connor (JNCC); Olly Watts (RSPB); Beth Greenaway (ERFF); Kate Francis (Cefas); Alistair Montgomery (Scottish Government); Dan Laffoley (Natural English); Mike Cowling (The Crown Estate); Barry Mcauley (DOENI);

Agenda item 1: Update on actions from previous SG meetings

The Chair reviewed actions from previous 2007 SG meetings. Most action points had been completed and those outstanding were to be covered in this meeting.

Two action points were discussed (from January and May 2007 SG meetings):

Action:	MCCIP secretariat to contact Keith Brander and Simon Jennings (an ICES lead) to check that MCCIP information flow to OSPAR is effective. 50 copies of the ARC have also been sent to OSPAR recently.
Update:	It was announced that MCCIP would be supporting the OSPAR QSR process. A potential £5-6k could be provided to MCCIP to deliver the required outputs.

Action:	MECN to prepare feedback paper on final list of proposals from UK Biodiversity Research Group for next SG to aid discussion on MCCIP research priorities.
Update:	MECN's work with BRAG to define marine research priorities had been halted. It was recommended that MCCIP should take ownership of this task to carry it forward and then feedback to BRAG. There was a need for MCCIP to decide what should be fed back - major themes or specific costed projects, taking into account the potential large time commitment involved of leading this work against other MCCIP priorities. On further discussion, it was agreed that MCCIP should take this forward, as it would fit in strongly with MCCIP objectives.
Action Oct:	MECN (MF) in consultation with MCCIP Secretariat (SD) to prepare a generic document on research priorities.

Agenda item 2 - Progress and activity report

Financial report

The estimated cost for all of the proposed activities over the lifetime of the project is £498k, only £406k has been received or formally allocated to MCCIP by the partners. Progress had been made on securing funding but there remained concerns over the budget deficit.

Discussions focussed on the cumulative shortfall over the lifetime of the project, which projected a large shortfall in 2010/2011. Due to administrative procedures not all partners were able to commit financial resources in future years. It was acknowledged that while the secretariat could facilitate fundraising, all partners have a role to play. Partners may need to consider providing additional funds.

Action: In future financial reporting, the **MCCIP Secretariat** will provide information on where we stand on contributions over the lifetime of the project from all funding partners (as has been the case in previous meetings).

Progress report

The progress made and the activities undertaken were highlighted along with the time used on various topics by the MCCIP Secretariat, including the management structure refresh.

The number of staff days estimated for the MCCIP Secretariat to support the SG and produce the ARC [as stated in the last version of the business plan and agreed upon at the contract meeting 16th July 2007] were reported by the MCCIP Secretariat as highly optimistic. Cutting from 155 days in the first year down to 70 days this financial year to produce the ARC was too much of a reduction to develop a product for which a consolidated consistent production process was not in place. The ARC process was proving different and more involved than last year, so the MCCIP Secretariat would be considering how they could realistically keep to budget while not compromising the delivery of other tasks or products in FY2007/08.

Various options for rationalising some activities and prioritising tasks were proposed by partners. It was clarified that the project was financially constrained by the lifetime

budget rather than the financial year. Some of the increased resource commitment in the current year was committed to refreshing the management approach to respond to identified needs of the SG. The outcome of which will be increased efficiency in subsequent years. The new project management approach allowed for a more sustainable approach to the delivery of MCCIP's objectives. However the overspend (of the first 16 months, relative to the initial estimates) could be negated if the revenue could be increased in future financial years to at least £100k pa.

As in previous SG meetings the need for priority accounting was mentioned. This was consistent with the reported new approach to managing the project, and would allow additional activities to be taken on when affordable.

Action: **Defra (AG) and MCCIP Secretariat** to produce a paper on future activities and priorities for the rest of the FY, including ARC forecast time, to be circulated to the SG.

Some partners highlighted that the special topic should be seen as a 'bonus' product and agreed that it should be delayed rather than having to reduce effort on the communications and outreach work. The secretariat activities in support of the SG and the special topic are the only areas with any potential to be reduced in terms of the number of days.

It was highlighted that FY2006/07 had allocated 268 days for the secretariat, and only 235 days in FY2007/08. Future projections were that there will be less time still (208, 199 and 168 days for the rest of the project).

The idea of a special topic or themed ARC maybe a good approach, however ultimately the decision to take this approach should be informed by the audience. The group considered if a themed ARC might put some people off who it wasn't of clear interest to. It was generally agreed that for additional products, such as the special topic, additional funds would have to be sought. It was suggested that more market research was required to inform these decisions.

Conclusion: The group concluded that **production of the special topic was currently not feasible in light of resourcing pressures**. However it was suggested that it could be considered again in the future if resources became available.

The in-kind contributions by the scientists to the ARC would demonstrate the value for money that this product currently provides. It was suggested that this time could be approximated as follows. 70 scientist days x £500/day = £35K in kind contribution. This is in addition to the £52K of secretariat time and £12.5 k in consumables etc for production and printing.

It was agreed that the new format of the SG papers should include a 'decisions required' section at the top of each paper, and should also, when relevant, request the SG to consider specific aspects of the papers.

It was suggested there could be time pressures on expenditure of funds in this FY if new partners joined. The MCCIP Secretariat confirmed that there would not be, and in addition, no formal procedures/criteria existed to decide whether or not a proposed new member should be allowed to join, or what their rights would be when they joined. It was thought that a major industry partner may not necessarily want a place

on the SG but may be interested in contributing financially. It was agreed that a target list should be produced and then volunteers sought to canvass these groups to join.

Summary of Benefits (SOB) document

The group briefly discussed the one page summary of benefits. The group agreed it was a useful document. Several minor changes were requested by partners including an amendment to include 'scientists' in the first section, highlighting that the products are objective and science based, and stressing the peer-reviewed nature of the ARC more strongly.

Action: **MCCIP Secretariat** to email SG asking for further comments on the SOB document.

Agenda Item 3 - ARC

Clarification was first sought on the meaning of the storm headline. It was explained that the models predict fewer overall storms but there would be a greater number of more severe storms. After some discussion the group agreed they were happy to keep the (predicted) storms statement and that it should appear as per the statement in the main part of the card for storms and waves.

It was queried whether carbon dioxide absorption in the oceans also be on the front page, as it was suggested that due to the current media attention on carbon dioxide it may appear that an ARC published in January 2008 was outdated.

The group agreed on the following text:

New climate impacts facts for 2007-2008 (or new findings from 2007-2008)

- 2006 was the second warmest year in UK coastal waters since records began; 7 of the 10 warmest years have occurred in the last decade.
- Models predict fewer storms but there will be a greater number of more severe storms.
- Coastal Erosion is expected to increase. Currently it affects 17% of the UK coastline.
- Warmer winters have been strongly linked to reduced breeding success and survival in some seabird populations.

The group agreed to dispense with the message regarding the variability of the 'Atlantic Heat Conveyor' as the variability message was potentially confusing.

The group considered that 'annual mean temperature' would be preferable than 'a winter anomaly' as it was consistent with the front-page text.

Action: **MECN** (MF) to speak to Pete Miller at PML to produce an annual mean of 2006 SST.

It was suggested to highlight that the headlines are 'just some of the new additions to this years ARC'. Additional suggestions included using bold format for new points, and a bullet in the 'Air and Sea Temperature' section about 'warmer winter

temperatures' as referred to in the seabirds bullet but there were concerns that this was not coherent with the text provided by the contributing scientists.

The importance of preparing 'Q and A's on issues likely to be of interest to the media, including fisheries and flooding issues.

Action: **MCCIP Secretariat** to send revised text back to the ARCWG ASAP when it is written up for final revisions and/or final sign off before printing.

Action: **NERC (CW), Defra (KH) and MCCIP Secretariat (SD)** to check for consistency between UKCIP08 trends report and MCCIP before the final text is signed off.

The SG agreed that the ARC text could now be finalised and printed in the format as presented and discussed. It was noted that SD and EM had contacted WWF for comments regarding the ARC.

Agenda Item 4 - Special Topic

In light of earlier discussions this agenda item was cancelled.

Agenda Item 5 - Process and Communications

Membership:

The MCCIP Secretariat tabled suggestions to provide greater clarity on membership criteria and rules for participation and membership. With regards to expenditure, the issue was raised that it might not be appropriate for 'in-kind' contributors to state how funds should/should not be spent. This is especially true when suggesting actions that carry a risk of over expenditure.

A sponsors group was suggested to decide on financial issues but in general there would not be a difference of opinion on matters between financially contributing partners and non-contributing partners. Therefore it was thought that there was no need to introduce any further rules or criteria at this stage.

The drop-off in attendance of partners at SG meetings was commented on, and it was suggested that a membership refresh was required.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to be able to inform organisations demonstrating an interest in joining of a formal first point of contact within the MCCIP Secretariat, who could then alert the SG. The group agreed that at this stage of the partnership we should keep this process informal.

Partners via video link had a separate conversation on this topic because the video link had become disconnected to the main group in Scotland. They had agreed they preferred to have members pledge finances or time in kind, and be voted onto the SG (with the Chair having the final decision). This was important to lever funds into MCCIP. Criteria for membership in relation to attendance and non-attendance at meetings should be reviewed.

Roles and responsibilities

ARCWG

The discussion centred on a business case for future ARCs. Media interest during/after the launch should be reviewed to support the business case for a new ARC (which could be presented at the spring 08 SG).

Communications and outreach

The definition of decision makers was discussed. It was highlighted that the defined audience are policy advisors, decision makers and marine stakeholders, and the focus should be on those groups that have the capacity to make policy level decisions. If by doing so, communicating the same information to other groups is facilitated, then this would be a welcomed achievement. It was commented that the ARC already targets a wide audience so there was no need to redefine audience at this stage.

Process

It was suggested that a risk register should be maintained at all times and the risks need to be considered as part of the decision making process on SG activities and when producing products. The MCCIP Secretariat confirmed that there was a risk register consistent with project management best practice and it was agreed that it could be presented at a future SG meeting.

Action: **MCCIP Secretariat** to include heading highlighting any risks identified in any SG papers.

Improving WG and SG communications

A 'WG meeting report' structure that would be sent by the WG chair to the SG within 5 days of a WG meeting was proposed. This would quickly inform the SG of meeting decisions and recent actions. The report would request the SG to respond to requests for feedback within 5 working days. A follow up telephone call was suggested to ensure any request for feedback was highlighted to the appropriate person.

The annual review of the business plan was discussed, and it was agreed that it would be done soon after the ARC launch, and reviewed at the next meeting in March.

Agenda item 6 - Communication group report

Communication strategy

The strategy had been revamped by reducing the preamble, introducing a draft objective and a strategy to deliver the objective. All of the rest of the text was taken from the previous version.

The strategy was discussed page-by-page, and the following issues highlighted.

- The term 'Scottish Executive' should be replaced by 'Scottish Government' throughout.
- Page 2 - The section relating to 'the key messages' should more usefully describe 'how to communicate the key messages'.
- Page 3 - Points 1-5 in the key messages are related more to the business plan. As part of being an honest broker we should say that we will try to 'encourage consensus' amongst the scientific community.
- Page 4 - We should try and attain a 'crystal mark' for clear English for this document. The wider audience description does not mention fishing, shipping, oil and gas as stakeholders.
- Page 5 - Point 1 - should also include 'UK government ministers and devolved administrations', and in all other relevant parts of the document. Point 2 - NGOs aren't decision makers.
- Page 6 - Delete MED from Defra MED
- Page 7 - Update milestone dates on all events pages. Larissa Naylor should be described as an ex-SG member.
- Page 12 - ARC dissemination activity under the communication strategy was not something that the ARCWG chair had been made aware of as an activity. This was something that the Communication WG were working towards and the ARCWG chair did not need to be directly involved, but would be consulted on.

The communications strategy stated that the secretariat would handle media interest/questions. This was the case for the ARC launch but the process for ad-hoc requests was queried. On the subject of the press release for the next ARC, the group agreed that there will be only one press release and it would come from the entire partnership. Media enquiries would be directed to the MCCIP Secretariat office. It was suggested that the same contact information for media enquiries should also be highlighted on the back of the ARC.

Agenda Item 7 - AOB & DONM

Time constraints meant that there was little time to discuss any other business except for the following action.

Action: **Defra (KH)** to email the SG with an update on UKCIP08.

The date of the next meeting was provisionally agreed as the first week in March, probably in London.

The meeting finished at 17:00



ANNEX 1 - ACTION LIST SUMMARY FOR UPDATE AT NEXT SG MEETING

- Action 1:** **MECN (MF)** in consultation with **MCCIP Secretariat (SD)** to prepare a generic document on research priorities.
- Action 2:** In future financial reporting, the **MCCIP Secretariat** will provide information on where we stand on contributions over the lifetime of the project from all funding partners (as has been the case in previous meetings).
- Action 3:** **Defra (AG) and MCCIP Secretariat** to produce a paper on future activities and priorities for the rest of the FY, including ARC forecast time, to be circulated to the SG.
- Action 4:** **MCCIP Secretariat** to email SG asking for further comments on the SOB document.
- Action 5:** **MECN (MF)** to speak to Pete Miller at PML to produce an annual mean of 2006 SST.
- Action 6:** **MCCIP Secretariat** to send revised text back to the ARCWG ASAP when it is written up for final revisions and/or final sign off before printing.
- Action 7:** **NERC (CW), Defra (KH) and MCCIP Secretariat (SD)** to check for consistency between UKCIP08 trends report and MCCIP before the final text is signed off.
- Action 8:** **MCCIP Secretariat** to include heading highlighting any risks identified in any SG papers.
- Action 9:** **Defra (KH)** to email the SG with an update on UKCIP08.