

ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FUNDERS' FORUM
UK- Environmental Observation Framework
10th Management Group Meeting
09.00-15.20, 14th July 2010
Room C1-2, Met Office, Exeter

DRAFT Note of Meeting

Attendees:

Ian Davidson	Defra (Chair)
Mary Barkham	ERFF (telephone 9.00-14.30)
Alice Bunn	UK Space Agency/ BIS (telephone 11.00-13.30)
Peter Costigan	Defra
Liz Fox	Defra
Miles Gabriel	GEO DSTF
Robert Grew	EA
Richard Howe	FC
Robert Lawson	EEA / GMES / SEIS
Wendy McKinley	DOENI
Alistair Price	Met Office
Michael Schultz	NERC
Mike Segal	Defra
Ron Stagg	SG
Bruce Truscott	Met Office
Lawrence Way	JNCC (telephone)
Beth Greenaway	UK-EOF
Andrea Leedale	UK-EOF
Darien Simon	UK-EOF
Amber Vater	UK-EOF (notes)

Apologise:

Katherine Raymond	WAG
Richard Howe	FC
Cathy Johnson	DECC
Keith Porter	Natural England
Nathan Critchlow-Watton	SEPA (by telephone)

1. Introduction and Welcome

1.1. Members were welcomed to the 10th UK-EOF Management Group Meeting by the chair. A tour de table was carried out including teleconference attendees. Ian announced he would be moving posts within Defra and therefore stepping down from his position. He proposed Mike Segal (Director, Strategy and Evidence, Defra) as his replacement. No alternative suggestions were put forward and therefore Mike Segal will replace Ian Davidson as chair of the UK-EOF Management group, effective from 15th July 2010.

2. Update and Progress

Paper A – Minutes and Actions from the 9th MGM (April 2010)

2.1. Outstanding actions (around the delivery plan (4), the actions to clarify the requirements placed on the secretariat regarding the main initiatives (13), and members articulating the impact of UK-EOF (28) were discussed and carried

forward. It was also noted that there were no/few responses received from the members about the decision framework or the volcanic ash event. (7, 8, and 10).

Action 1: Initiative leads (Ian Davidson, Michael Schultz, Howard Roe, Ron Stagg and Mary Barkham) to define objectives and expectations of the UK-EOF over the next 6 months (previous Action 13 of the 9th Management Group Meeting), 30th July 2010.

Action 2: Members to provide to the secretariat, examples of the impacts of the UK-EOF, on their organisations (previous Action 28 of the 9th Management Group Meeting), 30th July 2010.

2.2. Bruce Truscott suggested that the minutes should reflect where differences in opinion had been expressed, for example, point 4.3 of the note of the 9th Management Group Meeting.

Action 3: Bruce to produce alternative wording for the appropriate sections of the draft 9th Management Group Meeting note and email to the secretariat, by 23rd July 2010.

Action 4: Amber to amend draft 9th Management Group Meeting note to reflect the sensitivities highlighted by Bruce Truscott, 31st July 2010.

Paper B – Progress and Highlights Report

2.3. Beth Greenaway gave an overview of the recent ERFF/ GECC/ LWEC merger informing members that there were outstanding governance issues. Mary Barkham explained that the new LWEC delivery plan would be presented to the LWEC Partners Board in September where these issues would be clarified.

2.4. Members were informed that the 1st Workstream Champions Teleconference was held on 14th June 2010 and had been very useful for both the secretariat and the Champions. The aim of these meetings was to try to reduce the number and length of papers at the Management Group Meetings. Michael Schultz suggested that this is reviewed at the end of the meeting.

Action 5: Members to comment on the new structure of the Management Group Meetings and papers, by 30th July 2010.

2.5. The group were informed of recent staff changes and of the current recruitment and spending restrictions that the UK-EOF was under in light of the economic situation. These issues may have an impact on the delivery and work plan.

Paper C – Income and Expenditure (2010/11)

2.6. An overview of the current financial situation of the UK-EOF was provided. It was noted that all organisations have now signed the cofunding agreement for 2010/11 and invoices have been sent out.

Action 6: Andrea to amend the Member Contribution Table (Annex C1) to indicate SEPAs Cofunding agreement has now been received, by 23rd July 2010.

- 2.7. The Management Group were advised that the £150K allocated to the 2nd stage of catalogue development is now unlikely to be spent due to the recent IT freeze. This money could be carried over to next financial year to cover staff costs in 2011/12 and will compensate for expected reductions in member contributions.

Paper D – Delivery Plan Review

- 2.8. Members agreed to sign off the current Delivery Plan for release on the website and noted the updated milestone chart. It was requested that during each Management Group Meeting, any issues would be discussed and then updated by the secretariat and posted on the website after the meeting. This will ensure an up to date version of the document is always available. Members discussed how the document was being used. Sections of this document do need to be reviewed regularly by the Management Group Members, other sections are for information and overview for those new to the programme or who want information about each workstream. The sections to be reviewed i.e. milestones, risks etc will be added to Paper B Highlights report for the next meeting.
- 2.9. It was agreed to include a reference to the socio-economic work into the UK-EOFs overall aim which will now read;

“The UK-EOF has the overall aim of shaping the UK’s capability to: “facilitate the ongoing environmental evidence required to understand the changing natural environment and its societal interactions, thus guiding current and future environmental management, policy, science and innovation priorities for economic benefit and quality of life”

Action 7: Andrea to re-write the overall UK-EOF statement to reflect the agreed amendments, and release the delivery plan on the web by 31st July 2010.

LWEC Flood Research Strategy

- 2.10. Mary Barkham gave a brief update of the LWEC Flood Research Strategy that had recently been initiated. Andy Moores (Environment Agency) will project manage the strategy and members were briefed as to how the UK-EOF would be used to provide information on flood monitoring in the UK.

3. Emerging plans for prioritisation of activities (UK perspective)

- 3.1. Michael Schultz gave a brief overview as champion of the Decision Support Framework workstream. He emphasised the need for UK-EOF to be reactive in assisting member organisations to make decisions on funding observation programmes and highlighting the importance of the development of the existing UK-EOF tools, over the next six months. UK-EOF could be valuable as a neutral ground for discussions between member organisations, e.g. NERC and Defra.
- 3.2. Ian Davidson provided an update of the Defra Network Monitoring Review, which had senior champions looking at what monitoring is undertaken and how to maximise value and make cost savings within the network. The areas of discussion in the project were around opportunities for:

- How – e.g. can capital assets, buildings, vessels be shared. Can new technology be used?
 - Where – can sampling sites be shared or rationalised?
 - Skills – what is the balance of having skills in house versus contracting out the sampling and/or analysis. i.e. what should be a core function?
 - Management and procurement – is there value in joining up monitoring across the Network. Options range from having a senior champion and a virtual network to joint planning to joint monitoring programmes and teams.
- 3.3. UK-EOF secretariat has been closely involved with this review producing strategic papers as well summarising and collating the evidence from the catalogue and investment work. It was suggested that future collaborative plans would continue to use the UK-EOF evidence tools and secretariat for support. Ian suggested that there could be further savings by extending the review outside of the Defra network.
- 3.4. Ron Stagg summarised the recent progress made with the CAMERAS Monitoring Strategy work. Scotland is working towards joining up the Scottish organisations including those outside the CAMERAS network, such as the Local Authorities and rural agencies. Ron suggested that the UK-EOF meetings and tools were providing a useful platform by which Scotland could join up with the rest of the UK and Europe, however it was too early for Scotland to be looking at efficiency savings. A CAMERAS workshop is to be held in September to draft the Scottish Monitoring Strategy.
- 3.5. Amber Vater informed members that UK-EOF secretariat were continuing to support the MSCC Long-Term Monitoring Working Group (LTMWG) by following and contributing to the discussions and providing an analysis of which long term marine activities are funded by more than one public sector organisation. The next meeting will be held in September.
- 3.6. The group were informed about the recent dialogues with the Welsh organisations through Shaun Russell (Welsh Environmental Research Hub). The Decision Support Framework Concepts and Tools documents have been highlighted to both members of the Welsh Environment Research Hub and the Welsh Assembly Government by Shaun. Further communications are expected.

Paper E – Bringing organisations together

- 3.7. Members were reminded of the release of the first draft of the ‘Decision Support Framework Concepts and Tools’ document onto the ERFF website. It was proposed that, as a next step in the Decision Support Framework, UK-EOF would act as a facilitator to bring together organisations to discuss decisions. Some members were positive about this recommendation but not all members agreed that all organisations should be brought together at once. Representatives from the devolved administrations suggested that UK-EOF could best support them by undertaking a supportive role ensuring they were kept informed of decisions, but not included in collaborative processes.
- 3.8. It was agreed that a meeting between key senior NERC representatives and Defra representatives to initiate discussions surrounding potential efficiency savings would be useful. Other members agreed that they would be keen to gain support from the UK-EOF as and when required. Members suggested that looking at potential areas for collaboration would be a useful way forward and

expressed the need to be kept informed of other organisations decision processes and timescales.

Action 8: Mike Segal to explore options for expanding the scope of the Defra monitoring review to other organisations.

Action 9: Secretariat to be reactive to support organisations with internal decision-making processes (as required).

Action 10: Each Member organisation to articulate to the UK-EOF, what support they require in the next three months (as required).

Paper E - Analysis Tool

- 3.9. The methodology and initial outputs of a trial prioritisation exercise by the secretariat were shown. Members considered the approach, and if this exercise should be continued to provide the UK with an overview of its long-term observations and how they align with the 9 headline issues. The analysis is highly dependent on the availability of the information in the catalogue – such as start date and description.
- 3.10. Members agreed that the tool was a logical and sensible method but should be used as, and referred to, as an ‘Analysis tool’. Issues surrounding the use and distribution of this tool and its outputs were discussed. There was a divide in support for the scoring system. No agreement was made on how the outputs should be used by organisations or if they should be used at all.
- 3.11. Two options were discussed, either a) the UK-EOF populates the Analysis tool with as much information as is held in the catalogue or b) the tool is refined but left blank for organisations to fill in their own projects and score internally according to their own priorities.
- 3.12. The advantages and disadvantages of each were discussed and opinions varied between organisations due to the way in which each of the organisations are funded (the funders and the funded). A pre-populated tool could provide a common evidence base for organisations to work from (allowing for the subjectivity in the interpretation of ‘critical’ evidence). Leaving the tool blank will let organisations self-populate, which allows for a rigorous analysis of observation activities using the information held within organisations and according to their own priorities. However, this could lead to significant risks around losing the transparency that the UK-EOF members agreed should be maintained.
- 3.13. Decisions will ultimately always remain with the funding organisation but some members were keen to see the tools used for a general analysis that may help funders support their decision in the future. Therefore the secretariat was asked by some members to undertake a low key review of current observation activities and share this only within a limited audience e.g. the Management Group.
- 3.14. Members agreed that the work already carried out by the secretariat had been significant and useful and the UK-EOF forum is perceived to provide the neutral space for organisations to discuss sensitive decisions in a secure

environment. In the short-term the secretariat will need to be reactive to organisation's request for support during their own internal decision making processes, In the medium term after the Spending Review (October to December) there will be potential roles for the UK-EOF secretariat, tools and forums. In addition there is an ongoing need to consider areas of collaboration between organisations, particularly around where and how observations are collected, managed and procured.

Action 11: Secretariat to continue to populate the Analysis tool with as much information as obtainable through the catalogue by 13th August 2010.

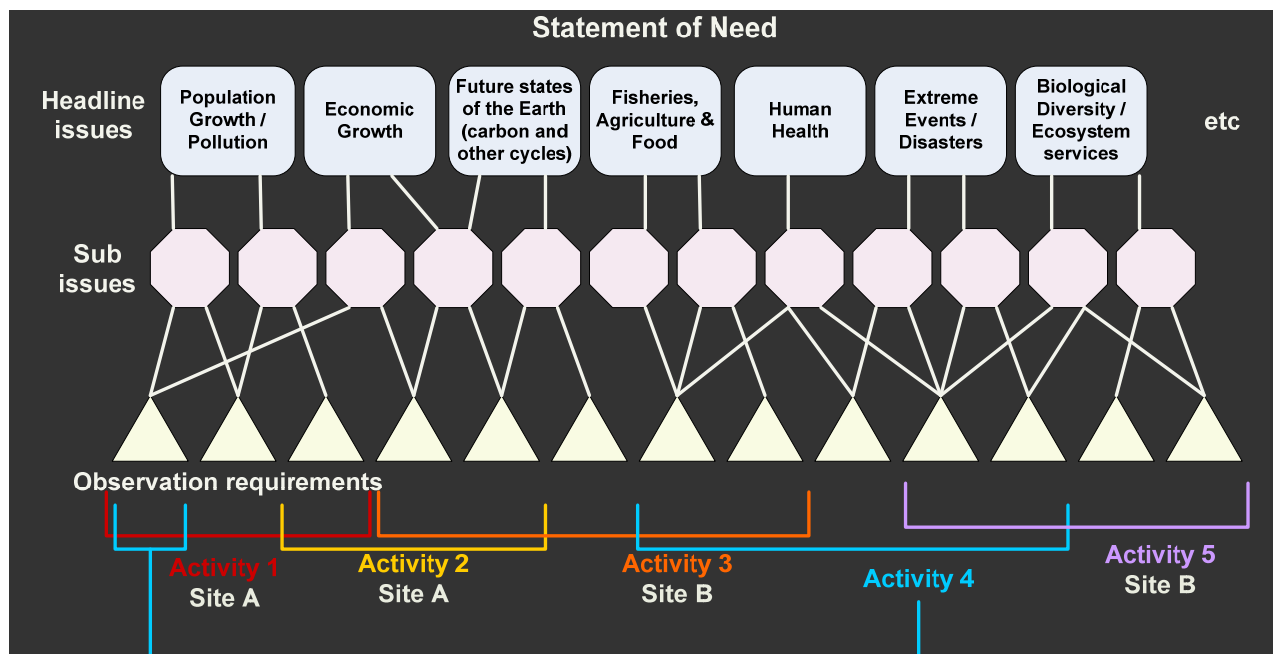
Paper K – Statement of Need

3.15. Andrea Leedale presented options for consideration in relation to the Statement of Need. Members had been asked to provide examples of when the Statement of Need had been useful to their organisations. Few direct responses had been received but it is understood to have been used by the Met Office, NERC and the MSCC LTMWG.

3.16. Members were asked to consider if weighting could be applied (by the UK-EOF or by individual organisations) to the Statement of Need headline issues to provide further detailed analysis using the 'Analysis tool'. No decision was agreed.

3.17. Members were asked to consider whether a top down approach, using the Statement of Need, would be a useful exercise to highlight current gaps and future needs (see diagram below). A prioritisation of the gap analysis could then be undertaken to identify priority areas that would need to be integrated into the UK suite of observations. Further analysis to identify shared requirements, using the top down approach, would highlight where organisations could share measurements, infrastructure, sites etc (see diagram below). Neither of these options were considered as important exercises at this point in time, however, it was acknowledged that a top down approach could be a valuable exercise in the longer-term, after immediate efficiency saving exercises had been carried out.

Diagram presented in association with Paper K



4. The International Perspective

Paper F – How should the UK influence, implement and benefit from EU/International Environmental Information initiatives?

- 4.1. Liz Fox provided an overview of each of the current EU/International environmental initiatives that the UK are involved in (GEO (SS), INSPIRE, GMES, SEIS, EIONET). Beth outlined the UK-EOF contributions.
- 4.2. It is perceived that there is general lack of understanding about these initiatives within the environmental communities. Currently organisations have been kept informed of UK-EOF inputs through the Management Group Members and Data Advisory Group representatives but this information is not filtering into organisations.
- 4.3. Robert Lawson suggested the UK-EOF has a good reputation within Europe, including the Commission and should use its position to help organisations link into initiatives. UK-EOF could act as focal point to ensure the UK gets the most out of GEO and other initiatives. The merger with LWEC could provide an opportunity to streamline the way in which UK organisations input to and benefit from initiatives.
- 4.4. Robert also brought a clear message from Senior Officials in the commission that there are now opportunities for discussions around reducing the burdens placed by the EU on Member States to monitor the environment.
- 4.5. There was concern raised about the expected input that UK would need to provide for EU and global initiatives and the increasing financial and resource pressures this could put on organisations. UK-EOF and Defra are working to join these up.
- 4.6. Defra, as the government lead on many of these initiatives, agreed to consider the way forward in terms of deciding how UK input into these initiatives and the level of input required in the revised landscape. Input was needed from many stakeholders, including but not limited to the UK-EOF Management Group.

Action 12: Liz Fox to seek a clear Defra line on the coordination mechanisms, policy line, and mechanisms for joining up these initiatives and advise the UK-EOF MG of their role by 27th August 2010.

Action 13: Mike Segal to contact the Commission regarding opportunities for reducing the burden on Member States from environmental monitoring obligations.

Paper G – The UKs offering to GEOSS at the Ministerial Summit, Beijing, November 2010

- 4.7. Miles Gabriel briefed the Members on GEO and the need to provide a list of core datasets to offer to the Ministerial in November. Miles emphasised that this was a voluntary offering of datasets but that these must comply with the data sharing principles (free data access etc). Members agreed to use the list presented in Paper G as a starting point and would attempt to add to or amend this list.

4.8. Robert Lowson emphasised the importance for the UK to make an offering to the Ministerial. Defra and UK-EOF would be coordinating the UKs input and acknowledged the need to keep costs and effort to a minimum.

Action 14: Members to discuss Paper G internally and inform Miles if they agree or if there are amendments or additional datasets that could be offered to the GEOSS Ministerial Summit, Beijing, in November by 20th August 2010.

Action 15: Miles and Liz to finalise the list of UK datasets to be offered to the GEOSS Ministerial Summit, Beijing, by 15th September 2010.

5. The Future of the UK-EOF

Paper H – The Priorities and Positioning of the UK-EOF

5.1. Beth reminded Members that NERC and Defra were both funding UK-EOF on a 3 year term, which was due to come to an end in March 2011. With the current economic climate, it was proposed that the second stage of the catalogue update would be suspended and therefore UK-EOF could survive on reduced funds. Members requested that the secretariat provide an overview to what UK-EOF could do if 25% and 40% cuts to the budget were made. Members agreed to review their commitments after the Spending Review and inform the UK-EOF as soon as possible.

Action 16: Secretariat to provide scenarios of what value UK-EOF could bring to funders with 25% and 40% reduction in resources, by 9th September 2010.

Action 17: Members to confirm their contributions to the UK-EOF as soon as possible after the Spending Review, by 26th November 2010.

6. UK-EOF Catalogue – How will organisations keep information up to date?

6.1. The UK-EOF catalogue is an essential tool required for many purposes. It is currently being used extensively to carry out analyses of the current UK situation. To allow an in-depth analysis to investigate areas of potential collaboration, the catalogue content needs to be reliable and therefore updated. Fully populated fields would also allow a top down approach and the exploration of potential areas for joining up (e.g. sites, measurements, and infrastructure).

6.2. Darien Simon gave a brief overview of the catalogue update process instigated since the last meeting. All organisations have been asked to update their information. In addition Darien has undertaken a review of the issues that 18 major organisations were facing in terms of providing updates. Initial results indicate that the major issues were reported in the ability to provide cost information. Members agreed that any reasonable cost estimates would be useful.

6.3. Darien outlined 4 possible options to amend the current catalogue update plan in reflection of the feedback received from organisations. These were;

- UK-EOF revise the scope of the update

- Organisations to add resources to the task
- UK-EOF revise the timeframe for delivery
- UK-EOF decrease the number of fields requested (but maintain the same timeframe)

6.4. The difficulties faced by organisations in providing certain aspects of the information being requested were acknowledged and members agreed to target specific fields that would be most useful for analysis.

6.5. Members agreed that a report to summarise each organisation's ability to supply metadata would be useful and could be used to decide which fields would be most appropriate for organisations to update. A decision could then be formed about the level of effort organisations require to update the catalogue content and the timescales to which they work by. This decision will affect the ability to analyse the catalogue content to feed into the Decision Support Framework and future decision making within organisations.

6.6. Darien agreed to provide a summary of the recent survey she carried out. The report will contain options to be considered about the level of detail the catalogue update should entail to ensure organisations can realistically deliver the essential information needed for further analysis.

Action 18: Darien Simon to provide a summary of the catalogue update issues and highlight the options for completing the catalogue update, by 31st July 2010.

Action 19: Members to consider the catalogue report and provide feedback to the secretariat as to their preferred options for updating the catalogue, by 5th August 2010.

Action 20: Darien Simon to compile Members feedback and conclude the way forward for the catalogue content update programme, 6th August 2010.

Paper I

6.7. Peter Costigan provided an overview of his experiences using the UK-EOF catalogue noting its usefulness in the recent Defra Network Monitoring Review. Members were informed that the support of the secretariat was also useful; however, there were several issues with the metadata being outdated or incomplete.

6.8. It was agreed that most organisational representatives would benefit from a strong message from their own Management Group Member to ensure the importance of updates is understood as a priority internally and externally.

Action 21: Management Group Members to ensure the importance of the catalogue is understood by their representative who is responsible for updating the catalogue, by 31st July 2010.

7. Social-Economic Activities

Paper J

- 7.1. Andrea Leedale informed the Members that a new date had been set for the Social-Economic workshop (29th September 2010) and that the venue was to be confirmed due to the Reading Innovation Centre closure. It was noted that support, in-kind, had been gained from Defra and ESRC. An error on p4 of the Project Initiation Document was highlighted – the budget for the study should read £15K not £5K.
- 7.2. Members agreed with both the approach and the sign off the PID with the noted change. Members were asked to provide the names of personnel within their organisations who could contribute to this workshop (economists, social scientist etc).

Action 22: Andrea Leedale to edit the figure presented on page 4 of the PID to reflect the proposed budget (£15K), by 23rd July 2010.

Action 23: Members to provide the names of personnel within their organisations that could contribute to the social-economic workshop in September 2010, by 31st July 2010.

8. Communications

- 8.1. Members agreed that the UK-EOF secretariat should use an ukeof.org.uk email address rather than a lwec.org.uk address. Members were asked to send comments on the other items not discussed on Paper L to the secretariat.

Action 24: Secretariat to change their email addresses to ukeof.org.uk, by 31st July 2010.

Action 25: Members to send comments on outstanding items on Paper L to the secretariat by 17th July 2010.

9. AOB, Proposed dates/ locations of next meeting(s)

- 10.1 The 11th Management Group Meeting was confirmed (7th October 2010) to be hosted at Defra, London. The 12th Management Group Meeting was proposed for January 2011 (date and venue to be confirmed).
- 10.2 The 2nd Workstream champions teleconference was confirmed (9th September 2010 time to be determined) and the 3rd proposed for December 2010.

Action 26: Secretariat to confirm a date for the 12th Management Group Meeting (January 11) by Doodle Poll, by 27th August 2010.

Action 27: Secretariat to confirm a date for the 3rd Workstream Champions teleconference to be held in December by Doodle Poll, by 27th August 2010.

List of Actions

	Action	Whom	By When
1	Initiative leads to define objectives and expectations of the UK-EOF over the next 6 months (previous Action 13 of the 9 th Management Group Meeting).	Ian Davidson, Michael Schultz, Howard Roe, Ron Stagg and Mary Barkham	30 th July 2010
2	Members to provide to the secretariat, examples of the impacts of the UK-EOF, on their organisations (previous Action 28 of the 9 th Management Group Meeting),.	All	30 th July 2010
3	Bruce to produce alternative wording for the appropriate sections of the draft 9 th Management Group Meeting note and email to the secretariat	Bruce Truscott	23 rd July 2010
4	Amber to amend draft 9 th Management Group Meeting note to reflect the sensitivities highlighted by Bruce Truscott	Amber Vater	31 st July 2010
5	Members to comment on the new structure of the Management Group Meetings and papers,	All Members	30 th July 2010
6	Andrea to amend the Member Contribution Table (Annex C1) to indicate SEPAs cofunding agreement has now been received	Andrea Leedale	23 rd July 2010
7	Andrea to re-write the overall UK-EOF statement to reflect the agreed amendments, and release the delivery plan on the web	Andrea Leedale	23 rd July 2010
8	Mike Segal to explore options for expanding the scope of the Defra monitoring review to other organisations.	Mike Segal	30 th July
9	Secretariat to be reactive to support organisations with internal decision-making processes (as required).	Secretariat	As required
10	Each Member organisation to articulate to the UK-EOF, what support they require in the next three months (as required).	All	31 st July
11	Secretariat to continue to populate the Analysis tool with as much information as obtainable through the catalogue by 13th August 2010.	Secretariat	13 th August 2010
12	Liz Fox to seek a clear Defra line on the coordination mechanisms, policy line, and mechanisms for joining up these initiatives and advise the UK-EOF MG of their role by 27 th August 2010.	Liz Fox	27 th August 2010
13	Mike Segal to contact the Commission regarding opportunities for reducing the burden on Member States from environmental Monitoring obligations.	Mike Segal	9 th September
14	Members to discuss Paper G internally and	All Members	20 th August

	inform Miles if the they agree or if there are amendments or additional datasets that could be offered to the GEOSS Ministerial Summit, Beijing, in November by 20 th August 2010.		2010
15	Miles and Liz to finalise the list of UK datasets to be offered to the GEOSS Ministerial Summit, Beijing, by 15 th September 2010.	Miles Gabriel, Liz Fox	27 th August 2010
16	Secretariat to provide scenarios of what value UK-EOF could bring to funders with 25% and 40% reduction in resources	Secretariat	9 th September 2010
17	Members to confirm their contributions to the UK-EOF as soon as possible after the Spending Review	All Members	26 th November 2010
18	Darien Simon to provide a summary of the catalogue update issues and highlight the options for completing the catalogue update	Darien Simon	31 st July 2010
19	Members to consider the catalogue report and provide feedback to the secretariat as to their preferred options for updating the catalogue	All Members	5 th August 2010
20	Darien to compile Members feedback and conclude the way forward for the catalogue content update programme	Darien Simon	6 th August 2010
21	Management Group Members to ensure the importance of the catalogue update is understood by their representative who is responsible for updating the catalogue	All Members	31 st July 2010
22	Andrea Leedale to edit the figure presented on page 4 of the PID to reflect the proposed budget (£15K)	Andrea Leedale	23 rd July 2010
23	Members to provide the names of personnel within their organisations that could contribute to the social-economic workshop in September 2010	Outstanding Members	31 st July 2010
24	Secretariat to change their email addresses to ukeof.org.uk	Secretariat	31 st July 2010
25	Members to send comments on outstanding items on Paper L to the secretariat	All Members	17 th July 2010
26	Secretariat to confirm a date for the 12 th Management Group Meeting (January 11) by Doodle Poll.	Secretariat	27 th August 2010
27	Secretariat to confirm a date for the 3 rd Workstream Champions teleconference to be held in December by Doodle Poll	Secretariat	27 th August 2010