

Living with Environmental Change
UK- Environmental Observation Framework
12th Management Group Meeting
10.00-15.40, 26th January 2011
Cinema, Polaris House, Swindon

Note of Meeting

Attendees:

Mike Segal	Defra (Chair)
Cathy Johnson	DECC
Peter Costigan	Defra
Liz Fox	Defra
Doug Wilson	EA
Rich Walmsley	EA
Owen Dowsett	ESRC
Wendy McKinley	DOENI (by telephone 10-11.30am, 2-3.40pm)
Ali Price	Met Office
Lawrence Way	JNCC
Mary Barkham	LWEC
Keith Porter	Natural England
Sally Reid	NERC
Nathan Critchlow-Watton	SEPA (by telephone - am)
Caryn Le Roux	WAG
Beth Greenaway	UK-EOF
Andrea Leedale	UK-EOF (notes)
Amber Vater	UK-EOF

Apologies:

Robert Lowson	EEA / GMES / SEIS
Richard Howe	FC
Michael Schultz	NERC
Bruce Truscott	Met Office
Alice Bunn	UK Space Agency/ BIS (telephone 11.00-13.30)
Katherine Raymond	WAG

1. Introduction and Welcome

1.1. The chair welcomed all to the meeting including new member Caryn Le Roux. Apologies were given.

2. Update and Progress

Paper A – Minutes and Actions from the 11th MGM (October 2010)

2.1. Recent amendments made to the minutes, to better reflect lessons learned from the Met Office presentation, were agreed.

2.2. Outstanding action to carry forward: Action 23 Organisation priority statements: all were asked to return their updated statements to the UK-EOF ASAP.

Action 1: Members to check, if necessary update and return their organisations priority statements to the UK-EOF

- 2.3. Outstanding action: Action 28 Voluntary Contributions: Following a discussion at the last MG, the Met Office was to contact JNCC re: exchanging experiences of using voluntary contributions. The Met Office is establishing an online facility in conjunction with the Royal Meteorological Society to collect voluntary weather information submitted by the public and there may be scope to establish linkages between this and similar JNCC activities. The Met Office will follow this up. This is a good example of how members are contributing to the Government's Big Society.

Action 2: Met Office to follow up on possible cooperation with JNCC regarding the use of voluntary contributions (e.g. - weather data via online facility/Royal Met Soc).

Paper B – Progress and Highlights Report

- 2.4. Beth gave an overview of progress since the last meeting and highlighted that, following Darien's departure, the secretariat is now 3 full time staff and 0.8 of an admin assistant.
- 2.5. Members were advised that following the LWEC /ERFF merger, the UK-EOF would be referred to as a 'Programme of the LWEC Partnership' and it is expected to assist in the delivery of some LWEC objectives. The UK-EOF will report progress quarterly to the LWEC Delivery Group (chaired by Miles Parker) however the UK-EOF Management Group should make executive decisions to drive the Framework forward. The next Delivery Group Meeting is scheduled for 9th March.
- 2.6. At the LWEC Partners Board there was general strong endorsement for UK-EOF to continue, but there was some confusion over the remit and scope. In addition communication within member organisations about the UK-EOF projects and outputs could be much improved.
- 2.7. After discussion the need for an LWEC Delivery Plan (overarching score card for all LWEC activities) as well as a UK-EOF Delivery Plan (detailed plan for the observation Framework) was clarified.

Paper C – Income and Expenditure (2010/11)

- 2.8. An overview of the UK-EOF finances was given. All were asked to provide confirmation of 2011/12 funding ASAP, and if not already done so to send back signed hard copies of the Co-funding agreement. Both NERC and NIEA have only just received their budget allocations and have therefore not yet been able to confirm their contributions. Overall it is likely that the required income for 2011/12 will be achieved. The £280K predicted under spend will be carried forward into next financial year and as a result subscriptions for next year have been reduced.

Action 3: All Members to confirm and send back signed hard copies of the Co-funding Agreement to the Secretariat (if they have not already done so) as soon as possible.

3. Future Direction of the UK-EOF

Paper D – Delivery Plan Review

- 3.1. The revised Delivery Plan was discussed and the new format agreed. The proposed work was considered to be what members wanted overall. The scope of realistic delivery was left to the secretariat to determine. The wording should be amended to avoid confusion over the terms - delivery plan, work plan and work areas.
- 3.2. The Government Review of Data has been commissioned by Treasury (as part of its Public Sector Deregulation Programme) and will involve Government Departments and Arms Length Bodies, however it is not yet in the Delivery Plan. The UK-EOF metadata collection (i.e. the catalogue update process) will be included within the Defra return. All Members were advised to mention the UK-EOF as a body that is trying to obtain an overall UK view of environmental observations when they do their own returns. Keith already has wording to this effect, and agreed to circulate it. The more detailed requirements of the Initiative need to identify the collection of monitoring data at the level of each entry in the catalogue. It was suggested that all members use the entries they have in the catalogue as the basis for their return to Treasury. There is no remit for UK-EOF to justify each line individually – this is the remit of the funder. It is uncertain whether The Government Review of Data covers the Devolved Administrations. Defra agreed to check and advise devolved members.

Action 4: Secretariat to amend the Delivery Plan to clarify the wording and include the Government Review of Data.

Action 5: All members to be aware of their organisations return and reference the UK-EOF where appropriate.

Action 6: Keith to circulate wording used to support the UK-EOF case.

Action 7: Defra to check and advise the Devolved Administrations if they should be making a Government Review of Data return to Treasury.

- 3.3. Beth outlined the UK-EOF's vision in 2010/11, the achievements and (via the revised Logic Chart) the expected outputs by 2013. It was asked what the UK-EOF should do, in order to better achieve an understanding of the role of observations in meeting the overall needs of the UK (and whether what was set out in the Delivery Plan was the right direction)?
- 3.4. The ensuing discussion covered views on what the UK-EOF should be doing to add value. This was summed up as:
 - a) *Collaboration*

The current climate is an opportunity to fundamentally change how organisations operate; therefore the group should openly explore collaboration, including the identity and breakdown of barriers that prevent such collaboration (IPR, access etc). Where the discussions occur bilaterally the collaborations should be reported back to the UK-EOF MG so that examples of the value of UK-EOF members working together can be collated.

b) *Inform the UK View*

Discuss (but not make decisions about) issues that require a National view for example, the UK response to the GCOS implementation plan (for DECC) or monitoring to meet EU regulations. Provide advice to funders on the most important/ essential things the UK should be observing. This collective, strategic advice can be used by organisations to inform their own decision making (and therefore the National interest).

- 3.5. Some concerns regarding the above were noted. These included taking people or organisations out of their comfort zone of operating individually. The legitimacy of this group to provide a UK view was questioned – however it was felt that this group is best placed to do this (if they don't, either nobody will or someone else – with less overarching knowledge will). The need to have a UK overview also falls within the aims of LWEC (and the Partners Board expressed the need for the group to provide recommendations/ an overview), as well as meeting Sir John Beddington's request for a National Strategy for monitoring.
- 3.6. Collaborative discussions have already started (e.g. Defra Biodiversity Network). However under present financial pressures, immediate discussions are needed to understand potential impacts across organisations, the trade-offs and acceptable risks if organisations are to meet 30-40% cuts in funding.
- 3.7. Statutory (EU) legislation was suggested as a starting point. In the short term, a UK view may be needed to collectively identify the risks that government departments are willing to take, with the amount of monitoring that has to be done to satisfy the legislation. In the medium term the UK view, based on the evidence in the catalogue and from the assessment tool, could be presented to Europe when considering the usefulness and value of meeting legislation.

4. Assessment of Programmes/Activities against Need – Tool Development and Deployment

Paper E Assessment of Programmes/Activities against Need – Tool Development and Deployment

- 4.1. The the aims and purpose of the assessment tool were presented along with a demonstration of the online tool. Much discussion was had on this with respect to the robustness of this scoring approach (e.g. – a subjective 0-3 scoring approach, based on the UK-EOF Headline Issues, leading to mean values) and whether a consistent approach would be taken by all members in view of likely resources available. The system was, however, generally accepted and it was agreed to have a trial of the scoring in February and March. There were suggestions for improvements including a quick reference to how many organisations had scored an activity and the ability to pass over scoring for certain issues (thus not affecting the mean).

Action 8: The Secretariat to explore, and where possible include, the suggested improvements to the assessment tool.

- 4.2. It was clarified that each organisation would submit only 1 score, therefore organisations would have to generate a consensus view internally. It was requested that members score all projects (or as many as they could manage in

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the time available), taking a “global view” of the UK-EOF portfolio, rather than just the datasets that each organisation had a direct dependency on – some comment was made about whether this was practicable for certain organisations to be able to take a view on the datasets that they didn't use. The Met Office commented that the value of some of its datasets could only be fully evaluated by customers such as the CAA & MOD, who are not present in UK-EOF, but it was agreed that the group should try to establish as best as possible an UK-EOF overview.

Action 9: All organisations to consider how to undertake the scoring exercise in their own organisation between 10th February and 11th March.

4.3. After organisations have scored activities, the MG group will discuss the results and as reiterations will be necessary, it was agreed that signing off a report should be postponed to the Autumn Management Group Meeting. It was also agreed that the MG Champions telecon in March be used to assess progress with scoring and to discuss the report.

Action 10: Open the Champions telecon on 8th March to all members to discuss the scoring so far and the potential options for reporting and analysis.

4.4. Potential uses of the tool and/ or the results were presented, including contribution to the GCOS Implementation Plan, which Cathy Johnson explained. The implementation plan has 137 recommendations and DECC would like to formulate a UK response over the next few months. UK-EOF will help coordinate the response.

Action 11: UK-EOF Secretariat to liaise with DECC, and establish a process for collating a UK view on the GCOS recommendations by the end of February.

4.5. Nathan explained that the Scottish CAMERAS initiative will be looking at how monitoring activities help to meet the Scottish Strategy. It may look to score activities against pressures in a similar way to the assessment tool.

5. Evidence Gathering

Paper F – Catalogue cleansing and update

5.1. Amber gave an overview of the major updates that have been made to the catalogue contents in the last few months. The many organisations that supplied or checked information were thanked.

5.2. There is always more that can be done with the contents. One major step will be to link programmes and activities. This needs expert knowledge and Members were asked for nominations.

Action 12: Members to nominate domain experts, by 11th February, who may be able to help with the linking of activities and programmes.

Action 13: Rich Walmsley to help with the linking of Water Programmes and Activities.

5.3. The collection of investment information has been problematic with only £60m of the known £300m accounted for through the update process. It was agreed that asking for information per activity was still not possible for most organisations but they should be able to provide an overall summary of investment per domain, as is needed for the investment aggregation table and used in 2009.

Action 14: Each member to provide the Secretariat with high level investment information, broken down by environmental domain, for their observation programmes (i.e. fill in Table 1 from Paper F).

Merging the UK-EOF Observation & LWEC Research Catalogues

5.4. Mary explained that the 2 catalogues have almost identical backends; joining them would reduce effort in their long term maintenance. Each would maintain their own front ends.

5.5. Pending the cost estimate and ensuring that no value is lost from the UK-EOF contents or search facilities – there were no major objections.

6. Socio-economic issues

Paper G – Recommendations for Socio-economic information

6.1. Andrea outlined the recommendations from the recent workshop and the proposed workplans. The LWEC Social Challenge workshop will cover gap identification. It was agreed that:

- The data hubs should be added to the catalogue
- The datasets identified should only be added if they have direct environmental relevance.
- Tagging within the catalogue should be ‘socio-economic’, rather than separate social and economic activities.
- An explanation of this approach should be posted on the website along with any appropriate links or pointers to where other data can be found.
- The experience of current interdisciplinary projects is worth documenting providing that this has not already been done.

Action 15: Secretariat to screen the datasets identified for environmental relevance and send to Peter Costigan/Owen Dowsett for review before adding them to the catalogue.

Action 16: Secretariat to merge Social and Economic tags within the catalogue to form a ‘Socio-economic’ tag.

Action 17: Secretariat to amend the socio-economic webpage to reflect the approach taken and add information on finding other data.

Action 18: Secretariat to add the Data Hubs/Archives to the catalogue.

Action 19: Secretariat to check with the RELU Office (Philip Lowe) to see if any work has been done on documenting methodologies used in the projects.

7. Collaborative Opportunities

Paper H – Acid Waters Monitoring UK – Case Study: Can UK-EOF help?

- 7.1. Beth explained that the AWMN had approached the UK-EOF with regards to what they could do to secure the network and associated funding.
- 7.2. There was a consensus that discussing individual funding was not something that the UK-EOF should do. The UK-EOF can provide coordination, communication and tools for the community to use but they cannot 'save programmes'. AWMN and their funders need to assess whether:
- a) The reasons for the monitoring programme are still valid (e.g. the EA fund one part of the AWMN for their WFD Surveillance network – is the whole programme still needed or just parts?)
 - b) There are other ways of obtaining the information (collaborating with other programmes/activities or amending existing programmes).

Action 20: Beth to advise the AWMN how they could use the UK-EOF tools (such as the catalogue) to help them to present options to their funders and how they can demonstrate or justify their uniqueness in a time when collaboration across network programmes should be encouraged.

Mapping our Monitoring Sites

- 7.3. Keith presented work on mapping long term monitoring sites for 21 datasets using a coincidence map gridding approach (at several scales 5km² and 1km²).
- 7.4. Interpolation of the results showed that (regardless of the scale used) the distribution of monitoring sites across England was not even, and this is likely to be due to certain areas being of high quality for monitoring. Interestingly there was a concentration of monitoring in around outer London but a lack of monitoring in the North East National Park area (the same results were found even if EA and SSSI data were removed).
- 7.5. There was much support for the work. WAG is currently developing a Welsh Environmental Framework and believes this is something that could be done in Wales. JNCC offered to put in resources to widen this to a UK remit if there was interest.

Action 21: Keith to liaise with Caryn Le Roux regarding using this mapping to inform the Evidence workstream of the Welsh Environmental Framework in Wales.

- 7.6. From the mapping, questions over the balance of monitoring distribution can be asked. Distribution depends on the reasons for gathering evidence – however analysis would be useful when looking at surveillance frameworks (which are not targeting specific pressures). It is also a step in the direction towards looking at and modifying networks to reduce the amount of manual resource needed to maintain monitoring networks.

Action 22: Secretariat to circulate Keith's slides for Members to consider applications of the approach.

Member Updates

7.7. Welsh Assembly Government

A major consultation on the Natural Environment Framework (Wales) is due to finish at the end of February. This will provide the overarching Framework for the Strategy in Wales.

An evidence workstream is gathering information as a result of failing to meet 2010 biodiversity targets (being led by David Parker). This is separate to the Monitoring and Surveillance Strategy (being led by James Skates).

An Agency Review (CCW, FC & EA) is due to report in March and could impact on how data is collected and/or funded. JNCC are responsible for much monitoring that is relevant to Wales and would therefore like to contribute to the review.

Action 23: Lawrence to contact James Skates to discuss how JNCC can contribute to the Agency Review and the Monitoring and Surveillance Strategy.

7.8. Defra

The consultation for the Natural Environment White Paper generated 15,000 consultation responses. The White Paper is expected this spring.

The National Ecosystem Assessment will be publishing findings in March.

The Evidence budget has not yet been released but will take a share of the decrease in funding across Defra. Any reductions will need to consider the requirements of the Evidence and Investment Strategy.

A Measuring Change in the Countryside workshop on Friday 28th January will be looking at developing different ways in which changes in the countryside can be measured.

7.9. JNCC

JNCC are currently looking at where monitoring can be coordinated and also at where volunteer engagement can be increased.

On behalf of all UK countries they are investigating how to accelerate Earth Observations for biodiversity monitoring, which will influence GMES Land services.

7.10. Natural England

The 'new' organisation will emerge from April with an Evidence and Monitoring Department. It will be looking at long term monitoring networks and cost effective species surveillance.

Collaboration with the Met Office (weather stations) is underway and NE is now looking at using either FERA or CEH soil labs (using EA labs was not possible).

7.11. Location Council

The deadline to comply with INSPIRE for Annex 1 themes is May. Although this is a Directive and therefore a legal obligation, it is estimated that 50% of organisations will fail to comply - infraction proceedings are therefore a real risk.

The Chairman asked the representatives of all public bodies with responsibilities under the INSPIRE Directive to work in their organisations to minimise the risks of non-compliance.

Public Participation

7.12. It was asked what the UK-EOF could do in this area? Defra held a Big Society workshop in November, which called for more voluntary data collection. Natural England is moving in this direction (along with the NBN) for the collection of species data.

7.13. It was agreed that this should be discussed at the next meeting, with regard to what is the current position of each organisation, what is the value/cost of the voluntary monitoring effort? What are the barriers and in what direction would organisations like the voluntary monitoring effort to go? The UK-EOF could then collate information on the importance of the voluntary data.

Action 24: For the next Management Group Meeting - all members to consider their current position on voluntary observations, and thoughts on the direction that they would like the voluntary effort to go.

8. Data and Information Sharing

Paper I – The LWEC Environmental Information Framework – Implications for the UK-EOF

8.1. Beth gave an overview of the EIF and explained that the vision was to coordinate all the data initiatives that impact the environmental sector (and thereby increase efficiency but reduce the burden on data providers). The challenge will be in the delivery. A roadmap/business plan is being developed and will be presented to the LWEC Partners Board in May.

8.2. Implications for the UK-EOF are on the focal point of the Data Initiative and the Catalogue. It has also been questioned whether a second advisory group (in addition to the DAG) should be formed for the EIF.

8.3. It was decided that until the EIF had been fully scoped out, the UK-EOF should continue to facilitate the DAG. Until then the group want to be kept informed of progress with the EIF.

Action 25: Secretariat to keep members informed of developments/progress with the Environmental Information Framework (EIF).

Paper J – GEO Plenary feedback and the UK's contribution

8.4. Beth summarised the outcome from the GEO summit in Beijing. The UK had been seen as a good example and has since been asked to act as a pilot in submitting information into the GEO data-CORE. All data pledged must be submitted by November 2011.

8.5. GEO have this year to develop the next 5 year Action Plan, therefore there is much work to be done to shape the debate. The EU high level GEO working

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group will meet in March 2011, a prior meeting will be held in London (8/9th February) to discuss the EU view on the workplan and priorities. The UK should input into this discussion since there will be significant EU research monies available to undertake the tasks within the plan.

Paper K – Updates from SEIS / GMES / EIONET

8.6. There is a requirement on the UK to provide insitu data to underpin GMES services and this will be happening over the next 3-6 months. It was agreed that Liz could use the MG Members as contacts within their organisations for GMES insitu requirements.

8.7. Liz acknowledged that the UK-EOF had greatly contributed to the SEIS BASIS project, which is due to end soon. The EU (with support of EEA) will decide whether this will continue and whether a catalogue similar to the UK-EOF catalogue will be sustained at European level.

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

9.1. The 13th Management Group Meeting was confirmed (19th May 2011) to be hosted at EA, Bristol.

9.2. A teleconference for all (to discuss the scoring and assessment tool) was confirmed (8th March 2011 2-4pm).

Action 26: Secretariat to send out confirmation and appointments for the next Management Group Meeting and Interim Teleconference.

9.3. Doug Wilson accepted the role of UK-EOF chair and thanked Mike Segal for his chairmanship and wished him well in his forthcoming retirement.

Meeting Closed 15.40

List of Actions

	Action	Whom	By When	Status
Carried over from 9th MGM				
1	Members to check, if necessary update and return their organisations priority statements to the UK-EOF.	Members	11th Feb 2011	
2	Met Office to follow up on possible cooperation with JNCC regarding the use of voluntary contributions (e.g. - weather data via online facility/Royal Met Soc).	Met Office	ASAP	
Actions from the 10th MGM				
3	Members to confirm and send back signed hard copies of the Co-funding Agreement to the Secretariat (if they have not already done so).	All Members	ASAP	
4	Secretariat to amend the Delivery Plan to clarify the wording and include the Public Sector Deregulation initiative.	Secretariat	4 th Feb 2011	
5	All members to be aware of their organisations return and reference UKEOF where appropriate.	All members		
6	Keith to circulate wording used to support the UK-EOF case.	Keith Porter	4 th Feb 2011	
7	Defra to check and advise the Devolved Administrations if they should be making a Public Sector Deregulation return to Treasury.	Defra	11 th Feb 2011	
8	The Secretariat to explore, and where possible include, the suggested improvements to the assessment tool.	Secretariat	1 st Feb 2011	
9	All organisations to consider how to undertake the scoring exercise in their own organisation between 10 th February and 11 th March.	Members	11 th march 2011	
10	Open the Champions telecon on 8 th March to all members to discuss the scoring so far and the potential options for the reporting and analysis.	Members	8 th march 2011	
11	UK-EOF Secretariat to liaise with DECC and establish a process for collating a UK view on the GCOS recommendations.	Beth Greenaway/ Cathy Johnson	End Feb	
12	Members to nominate domain experts, by 11 th February, who may be able to help with the linking of activities and programmes.	Members	11 th Feb 2011	
13	Rich Walmsley to help with the linking of Water Programmes and Activities	Rich Walmsley	February 2011	
14	Each member to provide the Secretariat with high level investment information, broken down by environmental domain, for their observation programmes. (i.e. fill in Table 1 from Paper F)	Members	February 2011	
15	Secretariat to screen the datasets identified for environmental relevance and send to Peter Costigan/Owen Dowsett for review before adding them to the catalogue.	Secretariat	February 2011	
16	Secretariat to merge Social and Economic tags within the catalogue to form a 'Socio-economic' tag.	Secretariat	February 2011	
17	Secretariat to amend the socioeconomic webpage	Secretariat	February	

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	to reflect the approach taken and add information on finding other data.		2011	
18	Secretariat to add the Data Hubs/Archives to the catalogue.	Secretariat	February 2011	
19	Secretariat to check with the RELU Office (Philip Lowe) to see if any work has been done on documenting methodologies used in the projects.	Secretariat	February 2011	
20	Beth to advise the AWMN how they could use the UK-EOF tools (such as the catalogue) to help them to present options to their funders and how they can demonstrate or justify their uniqueness in a time where collaboration across network programmes should be encouraged.	Beth Greenaway	February 2011	
21	Keith to liaise with Caryn Le Roux regarding using this mapping to inform the Evidence workstream of the Welsh Environmental Framework in Wales.	Keith Porter / Caryn Le Roux	March 2011	
22	Secretariat to circulate Keith's slides for Members to consider applications of the approach..	Secretariat	31 st Jan 2011	Complete
23	Lawrence to contact James Skates to discuss how JNCC can contribute to the Agency Review and the Monitoring and Surveillance Strategy.	Lawrence Way	March 2011	
24	All Members to consider their current position on voluntary observations and thoughts on the direction that they would like the voluntary effort to go.	Members	19 th May 2011	
25	Secretariat to keep members informed of developments/progress with the Environmental Information Framework (EIF).	Secretariat	Ongoing	
26	Secretariat to send out confirmation and appointments for the next Management Group Meeting and Interim Teleconference.	Secretariat	31 st January 2011	Complete