

ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FUNDERS' FORUM
UK- Environmental Observation Framework
9th Management Group Meeting
10.00-15.45, 22nd April 2010
Room 301, Ergon House, London

Note of Meeting

Attendees:

Ian Davidson	Defra (Chair)
Susan Ballard	ERFF
Mary Barkham	ERFF
Peter Costigan	Defra
Liz Fox	Defra
Clifford Henry/ Dave Charlton	DOENI (by telephone- CH AM only)
Cathy Johnson	DECC
Robert Lawson	EEA / GMES / SEIS
Paul Mason	GECC observations (AM only)
Keith Porter	Natural England
Nathan Critchlow-Watton	SEPA (by telephone)
Michael Schultz	NERC
Ron Stagg	SG (by telephone)
Bruce Truscott	Met Office
Lawrence Way	JNCC (by telephone)
Richard Walmsley	EA
Beth Greenaway	UK-EOF
Andrea Leedale	UK-EOF
Darien Simon	UK-EOF
Amber Vater	UK-EOF (notes)

Apologise:

Alice Bunn/ Rachael Mills	BNSC/BIS
Katherine Raymond	WAG
Richard Howe	FC

1. Introduction and Welcome

- 1.1. Members were welcomed to the 9th UK-EOF Management Group Meeting by the chair. A tour de table was carried out including teleconference attendees.
- 1.2. The minutes of the 8th Management Group Meeting were discussed. It was noted that Cathy Johnson had not included as a member of the Jason III breakout group. The secretariat agreed to amend the minutes accordingly.

ACTION 1: Secretariat to amend 8th Management Group Meeting minutes to record Cathy Johnson's involvement in the Jason III breakout session, by the 30th April 2010.

2. Update and Progress

- 2.1. Beth Greenaway outlined the UK-EOF's progress since the last Management Group Meeting in January 2010, including the updated Statement of Need and Progress and Challenges Report which are now available on the ERFF website

http://www.erff.org.uk/documents/uk-eof_progress_challenges_report.pdf .
 Progress made with the Decision Support Framework was also reported.

3. UK-EOF Prioritises

- 3.1. An overview of the updated Delivery Plan was given. Members were challenged to review how UK-EOF works and how UK-EOF could work closer with each organisation.
- 3.2. Workstream champions were asked to commit to monthly teleconferences with the secretariat lead on their workstream to enable more frequent dialogue – especially in times of change.

ACTION 2: Secretariat to set up monthly teleconference between workstream champions (the first during the week commencing 14th June 2010), by 30th April 2010.

ACTION 3: Champions to participate in monthly teleconferences with secretariat workstream leads (ongoing)

- 3.3. Members discussed how the secretariat appears to spend a considerable amount of time and resources on technological developments and agreed it would be more beneficial to show explicitly what has been allocated to stakeholder engagement. Several pieces of work to date have required significant stakeholder engagement (e.g. Statement of Need) and the success of this should reflect the future direction of the programme. It was assumed in the short term stakeholders would require significant input from the secretariat in terms of the Decision Support Framework.
- 3.4. It was agreed that the short term focus of the UK-EOF should be to work closely with fewer organisations/ initiatives to provide added support and value. This should be reflected in the UK-EOF Delivery Plan (2008-2011). Five nominated organisations/ initiatives (see Table 1) will be supported by the UK-EOF over the next 6-12 months to achieve better delivery of support and add value.

Table 1 – Agreed initiatives and contacts

Organisation/ initiative	Main contact
MSCC Long Term Monitoring Working Group	Howard Roe
CAMERAS (Coordinated Agenda for Marine, Environment and Rural Affairs Science) Monitoring Strategy	Ron Stagg
NERC NCAG (National Capability Advisory Group)	Michael Schultz
Defra Family Network Environmental Monitoring Review	Ian Davidson
ERFF Flooding Strategy	Mary Barkham

Also see Actions 11-13.

- 3.5. Mary Barkham summarised the ERFF Review outcomes and the current plans for ERFF to take forward the GECC programme, which will be led by DECC and renamed as the Environment Change Strategy. Paul Mason provided an overview of GECC work and related initiatives. Members expressed concern about the potential increase in work load that this would put on the secretariat but the group were assured that the work load would be spread out among the new geo-coordinators.

ACTION 4: Secretariat to redraft the Delivery Plan to include the objectives and actions required by the UK-EOF in order to support the five initiatives agreed by the Management Group Members (28th May 2010).

- 3.6. Mary Barkham summarised the ERFF Review outcomes and the current plans for ERFF. She announced that at the GECC meeting last week it was agreed that ERFF will take forward the GECC work. This will be led by DECC. The major aspect was to produce an Environmental Change Strategy.
- 3.7. Paul Mason provided an overview of the GECC observation work and related initiatives that would now have to be taken on by UK-EOF. These activities are still to be confirmed but include: - an understanding of the UKs input into Global Monitoring programmes and to GEO, the periodic national review of the ECV (Essential Climate Variables for the IPCC) capability and the championing of climate quality data for long term studies and modelling.
- 3.8. Members expressed concern about the potential increase in work load that this would put on the secretariat but the group were assured that the work load would be spread out and that DECC would advice on requirements and the new geo-coordinators project would enable the initiate mapping of the UK input into GEO.

ACTION 5: Cathy Johnson and Paul Mason to confirm DECC support, activities and expected timelines for activities from the previous GECC work, by 14th May 2010.

ACTION 6: Secretariat to note the actions regarding the GECC in the delivery plan, by 28th May 2010

Ash update

- 3.9. Bruce Truscott gave an overview of the recent work the Met Office have been doing in response to the volcanic ash episode from Iceland. He thanked members for their support in providing information to the Met Office and requested any further information that members may know of. The Met Office was also keen to collaborate with others who may be able to use existing data and highlighted that without UK-EOF many of these collaborations would not have been possible. Ian Davidson suggested Miles Parker (Defra) maybe able to provide relevant information.

ACTION 7: Members to contact Bruce Truscott with potentially useful datasets relating to the volcanic dust event (ASAP).

ACTION 8: Members to contact Bruce Truscott if organisations think they can use the physical samples already collected by the Met Office (ASAP).

ACTION 9: Ian Davidson to ensure Bruce Truscott is connected to the Defra led committee on ash, by 28th April 2010.

4. Decision Support Framework

4.1. Amber Vater gave an update of the progress made with the Decision Support Framework highlighting the current trials being undertaken and the release of the first draft of the 'Decision Support Framework Concepts and Tools' document. Members were requested to provide feedback on the document and were asked to discuss the best way to move this forward considering the rapidly changing economic climate and the need for all organisations to be assessing their investments in the next few months.

ACTION 10: Members to submit feedback on the Decision Support Framework Concepts and Tools document, by 14th May 2010.

ACTION 11: Secretariat to update the Concepts and Tools document and release on the website, by 28th May 2010.

4.2. Members agreed that the basic concepts of the Decision Support Framework still provided an accurate description of what organisations want the tools to do. It was however acknowledged that other organisations were developing internal tools (e.g. NERC and Defra) and time was limiting factor to allow a UK wide, whole scale assessment of activities, as decisions are needed in the next few months.

4.3. Members discussed how UK-EOF could add value to organisations. It was suggested that organisational differences across the UK-EOF members make it difficult to find a single approach that would work for everyone. Concerns were raised amongst some members that this could lead to problems where clear, mature decision-making processes already exist within an organisation and therefore this approach may not be applicable to all member organisations. Members agreed that the secretariat should focus on working closely with the selected organisations/ initiatives to support the decision process and provide links between them. Concerns about UK-EOF being given authority to insist on the application of the Decision Tools across within Member organisations were discussed. Not all members articulated that this was a feasible action, however most members agreed that UK-EOF will need to be given some level of authority whilst working with these organisations to enable them to embed the decision tools into 'business as usual' procedures and/or work with internal teams. Although difficult to quantify, the benefits and inputs provided by UK-EOF need to be clearly stated in order to measure success and impacts.

ACTION 12: UK-EOF to continue developing the tools for organisations to use and act as a primary support mechanism for organisations, flag up when decisions could be usefully discussed more widely with others, ensuring a transparent, user driven approach is maintained (ongoing).

4.4. Members agreed that champions should be established within each of the agreed five initiatives to outline how UK-EOF can support and deliver benefits. Clear objectives must be defined to ensure UK-EOF's successes are recognised.

ACTION 13: 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, by 30th April 2010.

ACTION 14: Initiative leads (Ian Davidson, Michael Schultz, Howard Roe, Ron Stagg and Mary Barkham) to allow UK-EOF the authority to carry out actions and provide assistance where necessarily to provide benefits to the organisation (as required).

ACTION 15: Secretariat to provide the relevant support in response to the objectives set out by Ian Davidson, Michael Schultz, Howard Roe, Ron Stagg and Mary Barkham on behalf of their initiatives (as required).

4.5. Michael Schultz outlined the progress made by NERCs National Capability Advisory Group to develop an internal prioritisation tool. Michael emphasised the need for UK-EOF to continue developing UK wide tools as these would be useful for NCAG to cross check their own tool and in supporting other organisations decision processes. NCAG intend on using their tools in the first instance (since they cover more than observations) but will look to UK-EOF for a wider perspective. It was recognised that the benefits of the UK-EOF would be in communicating potential decisions to the wider community and bringing relevant funders together during these processes.

5. Current Catalogue Information Flow 2010

5.1. An overview of the current state of the catalogue content and processes for updating the information was given by Andrea Leedale. Many of the fields (in some cases over 60%) were reported to be blank and over 40% had not been checked since 2005.

5.2. Issues surrounding updating this information were discussed. Members agreed that it was vital to update the information (for many users) and that a single point of contact should be nominated from each organisation to maintain close links between the UK-EOF and those carrying out the updates.

ACTION 16: Members to submit the name of the person within their organisation who will be responsible for responding to catalogue updates, by 30th April 2010.

5.3. The group discussed which organisations should be contacted for updates. Resources and effort needed to contact all 114 organisations in the catalogue listed as lead organisations would be significant. It was decided that all organisations will be contacted in order to try and update as many of the activities as possible. Organisations with fewer entries will be contacted by email and any responses will be processed but no further action will be taken if no response is received. The priority will be the major funders (public funders).

5.4. Michael Schultz proposed that he and Sally Reid would be the main contacts for NERC and work with the secretariat to facilitate contacting the various NERC centres. Ian Davidson proposed Liz Fox would act on behalf of Defra and suggested an internal workshop would be useful to support the update process. Ron Stagg suggested that a coordinated Scottish organisations workshop and/or meeting would also be beneficial. Members were reminded that raising the

awareness and subsequent resources within their organisations would be necessary for the contents to be updated to work.

ACTION 17: Darien Simon to contact all organisations including the nominated catalogue representatives and request content updates (according to the modified information flow plan), by 28th May 2010.

ACTION 18: Darien Simon to organise meetings with NERC and Defra representatives to discuss the information flow from these organisations, by 7th May 2010.

ACTION 19: Secretariat to explore the benefits of organising catalogue update workshops within selected organisations/ collaborations of organisations, by 28th May 2010.

ACTION 20: Members to raise the awareness of the need for catalogue updates, within their organisations and highlight the resources required and those already available to ensure contents are updated, by 27th August 2010.

6. UK-EOF Data Initiative

6.1. Darien provided a brief overview of the Data Initiative and progress made since the 8th Management Group Meeting in January 2010. The existing challenges and potential solutions were outlined for discussion.

Catalogue content management

6.2. Members had already agreed that the completing of the catalogue content update should be moved forward and that resources should be allocated to try and achieve the update by August 2010 (see point 5.2). In order to carry out the updates it was emphasised that members needed to submit the name of the person within their organisation who would be responsible for coordinating updates and liaising with the secretariat.

Focal Point

6.3. It was agreed that in order to prioritise the catalogue content update, the webtool development would be postponed until the updates were complete.

ACTION 21: Secretariat to postpone Data Initiative Webtool until the catalogue content update has been finalised, to be reviewed at the October 2010 MGM.

Catalogue technical development

6.4. An example of the current usefulness and benefits of the catalogue was described compared to an example of how the proposed technical development would increase the usefulness of the catalogue. Members discussed the proposed second stage of catalogue development and agreed that the secretariat should continue to explore the possible development solutions including how initiatives such as data.gov could be used to harvest metadata and how lessons could be learned from other organisations that have existing databases. It was agreed that activity metadata needed to be stored somewhere but that this was not part of the original purpose of the catalogue. It was also

agreed that the secretariat should continue to explore the catalogue development options and report back to the Management Group in July 2010.

- 6.5. Keith Porter suggested that contact should be made with Jacqueline Parker (NE consultant) to liaise about the current NE catalogue development.

ACTION 22: Secretariat to continue exploring options for the catalogue technical development including harvesting from existing metadata databases and report an options appraisal back to the Management group at the 10th Management group Meeting, 14th July 2010.

ACTION 23: Darien Simon to contact Jacqueline Parker regarding the NE catalogue development, by 17th May 2010.

- 6.6. Liz Fox provided a summary of the 5th DAG Meeting (18th February 2010) conveying how these meetings were providing a successful forum for discussion and how continued communication was required to maintain links to each of the initiatives. DAG members had also suggested that stage 2 should include a user survey function to provide information about user needs and ongoing requirements to support the need for the catalogue through statistics on use.

7. Statement of Need

Social-Economic Activities

- 7.1. An update of the social-economic issues was given by Peter Costigan. The scope, benefits and format of an initial workshop to establish links across disciplines was proposed.
- 7.2. Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this activity and the resources needed to support it. This exercise was not seen as a high priority for secretariat resources and therefore the proposed workshop should only be held if external assistance could be drawn upon and existing data sets and portals used where necessary to reduce the amount of duplication that this study could entail.
- 7.3. Updating and maintaining resources was questioned. It was suggested that the outcomes of the workshop could be summarised in a simple report which linked to existing datasets/ portal etc for people to use and that these links could be maintained as part of the Data Initiative webtool.
- 7.4. It was agreed that Gemma Harper (Defra) and Paul Rouse (ESRC) should be contacted in the first instance to confirm if they would be willing to take on the reporting of a workshop, before the workshop is confirmed. This will then free-up secretariat time but still allow basic linkages to be formed across the disciplines.

ACTION 24: Andrea Leedale to contact Gemma Harper and Paul Rouse to establish if they are willing to champion the social-economic scoping workshop, by 30th April 2010.

ACTION 25: Secretariat to take action according to the response from Gemma Harper and Paul Rouse and establish/ abort the planned workshop (ASAP).

Statement of Need – Next Steps

7.5. Members were asked to provide the names of people within their organisation as potential invitees to the social-economic workshop.

ACTION 26: Members to email the secretariat the names of people within their organisation to represent them at the proposed social-economic workshop, by 14th May 2010.

7.6. Members agreed to consider the future direction of the Statement of Need including which areas of work would be most useful; prioritisation, gapping analysis, capability analysis, mapping etc and were requested to provide examples to the secretariat of instances where they have used the Statement of Need, how useful it was and how it could be improved.

ACTION 27: Members to email the secretariat with examples of their use of the Statement of Need, how useful it was, how it could be improved and comments on the future direction of the Statement of Need work, by 14th May 2010.

8. Communications

8.1. Susan Ballard reported the need to scale down the planned website developments due to time commitments within ERFF. The existing ERFF website will continue to provide the window for the UK-EOF's materials and tools.

8.2. Members were asked for their feedback about an ERFF newsletter as an addition to the current UK-EOF newsletter. It was suggested that a staggered distribution would be beneficial rather than creating a joint newsletter or sending two newsletters at once.

8.3. Susan requested that members feedback examples of where UK-EOF has added value to its members and their organisations. Bruce Truscott and Keith Porter had already suggested that without UK-EOF, it was unlikely that a current collaboration between the Met Office and Natural England would have occurred.

ACTION 28: Members to provide to the secretariat, examples of the impacts of the UK-EOF, on their organisations (ongoing).

9. Updates from Related Initiatives and AOB

9.1. Robert Lawson gave an update on the recent progress made with GMES, EIONET, INSPIRE, SEIS and GEO. The GEO Plenary was scheduled for November in Beijing and the UK needed to establish what its input would be as soon as possible. It was suggested that this should be discussed in detail at the 10th Management Group Meeting.

- A seminar to discuss the role of EIONET in GMES had been preliminarily set for the 26th/27th May 2010. Discussions will focus on Member States contributions of in-situ data.

- The new EEA 'Eye on Earth' tool was available for use and informed that the EEA had been in initial discussions with SEPA to develop a similar tool for Scotland.
- 9.2. An introduction to the CAMERAS initiative was provided by Ron Stagg who outlined the aims of the group and its links to UK-EOF. Members were referred to the CAMERAS website for more information about the vision and framework.
- 9.3. Ian Davidson gave an update about the Defra Network Environmental Monitoring Review. This review was described as an outcome from the Public Value Programme review as a potential area to be address in terms of increasing efficiencies across the Defra family's monitoring activities. Martin Hurst (Defra) and Steve Killeen (EA) are leading this process.
- 9.4. Alice Bunn submitted a paper to about recent developments with the UK Space Agency.

ACTION 29: Members to discuss the UK-EOF's input to the November Geo Plenary in Beijing at the 10th Management Group Meeting, 14th July 2010.

10. Proposed dates/ locations of next meeting(s) and Champions

- 10.1 The 10th Management Group in Exeter on the 14th July 2010 will be hosted by the Met Office. It was proposed that the 11th Management group Meeting should be held during the week commencing the 4th October 2010.
- 10.2 Workstream champions agreed to participate in a teleconference during the week commencing 14th June 2010. A Doodle poll was to be sent out to confirm attendance.

ACTION 30: Secretariat to confirm a venue and contact members to confirm their availability for the 11th MGM (to be held in October 2010), by the 31st May 2010.

ACTION 31: Secretariat to send out a Doodle poll for champions to express their availability to attend the first champions teleconference, by the 30th April 2010

List of Actions

	Action	Whom	By When
Paper A			
1	Secretariat to amend 8 th Management Group Meeting minutes to record Cathy Johnson's involvement in the Jason III breakout session	Secretariat	30 th April 2010
Paper D			
2	Secretariat to set up monthly teleconference between workstream champions (the first during the week commencing 14 th June 2010)	Secretariat	30 th April 2010
3	Champions to participate in monthly teleconferences with secretariat workstream leads	Workstream champions	Ongoing
4	Secretariat to redraft the Delivery Plan to include the objectives and actions required by the UK-EOF in order to support the five initiatives agreed by the Management Group Members	Secretariat	28 th May 2010
5	Cathy Johnson and Paul Mason to confirm DECC support, activities and expected timelines for activities from the previous GECC work,	Cathy Johnson, Paul Mason	14th May 2010.
6	Secretariat to note the actions regarding the GECC in the Delivery Plan	Secretariat	28th May 2010
7	Members to contact Bruce Truscott with potentially useful datasets relating to the volcanic dust event	All MGM	ASAP
8	Members to contact Bruce Truscott if organisations think they can use the physical samples already collected by the Met Office	All MGM	ASAP
9	Ian Davidson to ensure Bruce Truscott is connected to the Defra led committee on ash.	Ian Davidson	30 th April 2010
Paper F (and relevant to Paper E)			
10	Members to submit feedback on the Decision Support Framework Concepts and Tools document	All MGM	14 th May 2010
11	Secretariat to update the Concepts and Tools document and release on the website	Secretariat	28 th May 2010
12	UK-EOF to continue developing the tools for organisations to use and act as a primary support mechanism for organisations, flag up when decisions could be usefully discussed more widely with others, ensuring a transparent, user driven approach is maintained	Secretariat	Ongoing
13	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	Initiative champions	30 th April 2010
14	Initiative leads (Ian Davidson, Michael Schultz, Howard Roe, Ron Stagg and Mary Barkham) to allow UK-EOF the authority to carry out actions and provide assistance where necessarily to provide benefits to the organisation	Initiative champions	as required
15	Secretariat to provide the relevant support in response to the objectives set out by Ian Davidson, Michael Schultz, Howard Roe, Ron Stagg and Mary Barkham on behalf of their initiatives	Secretariat	as required
Paper G (and relevant to Paper H)			

16	Members to submit the name of the person within their organisation who will be responsible for responding to catalogue updates	All MGM	30 th April 2010.
17	Darien to contact <u>all</u> organisations including the nominated catalogue representatives and request content updates as required (according to the proposed information flow plan)	Darien Simon	14 th May 2010
18	Darien Simon to organise meetings with NERC and Defra representatives to discuss the information flow from these organisations	Darien Simon	7 th May 2010
19	Secretariat to explore the benefits of organising catalogue update workshops within selected organisations/ collaborations of organisations	Secretariat	28 th May 2010
20	Members to raise the awareness of the need for catalogue updates, within their organisations and highlight the resources required and those already available to ensure contents are updated	All MGM	ongoing
Paper H			
21	Secretariat to postpone Data Initiative Webtool until the catalogue content update has been finalised	Secretariat	To be reviewed October 2010
22	Secretariat to continue exploring options for the catalogue technical development including harvesting from existing metadata databases and report an options appraisal back to the Management group at the 10 th Management group Meeting	Secretariat	14 th July 2010
23	Darien Simon to contact Jacqueline Parker regarding the NE catalogue development	Darien Simon	17 th May 2010
Paper I			
24	Andrea Leedale to contact Gemma Harper and Paul Rouse to establish if they are willing to champion the social-economic scoping workshop	Andrea Leedale	30 th April 2010
25	Secretariat to respond to the response from Gemma Harper and Paul Rouse and establish/ abort the planned workshop	Secretariat	ASAP
26	Members to email the secretariat the names of people within their organisation to represent them at the proposed social-economic workshop	All MGM	14 th May 2010
27	Members to email the secretariat with examples of their use of the Statement of Need, how useful it was, how it could be improved and comments on the future direction of the Statement of Need work	All MGM	14 th May 2010
Other			
28	Members to provide to the secretariat, examples of the impacts of the UK-EOF, on their organisations	All MGM	ongoing
29	Members to discuss the UK-EOF's input to the November Geo Plenary in Beijing at the 10 th Management Group Meeting	All MGM	14 th July 2010
30	Secretariat to confirm a venue and contact members to confirm their availability for the 11 th MGM (to be held in October 2010)	Secretariat	31 st May 2010
31	Secretariat to send out a Doodle poll for champions to express their availability to attend the first champions teleconference	Secretariat	30 th April 2010