

Summary note on Marine Knowledge Exchange Workshop

Sea Mammal Research Unit, St Andrews; 17 March 2010

This workshop meeting was called to discuss options, opportunities and actions to progress NERC science impact (into business/policy) within the marine sector. Existing NERC centre activities, the findings of an AEA Technology consulting report, and individuals' experiences and thoughts served as basis for discussions.

This note outlines:

- 1) next steps identified to progress key areas where NERC marine science has an opportunity to make a beneficial impact;
- 2) key points/recommendations relating to the co-ordination of 'next-steps' with respect to other NERC and UK marine activities;
- 3) a number of key points and recommendations raised relating to the ethos / conduct of KE that could contribute to the enhancement of NERC' marine KE

Participants (affiliation):

Simon Jackman (Head, NERC Knowledge Exchange), Craig Wallace (NERC KE Manager [Marine]), Ian Boyd (Director, SMRU), Dave Gunn (Director of Knowledge Transfer, SAMS), Ken Jones (Deputy Director, SAMS), Robert Gatliff (Head of Marine Geoscience, BGS), Annie Linley (Business Development Manager, PML Applications), Peter Burkill (Director, SAFHOS), Paul Bell (Marine Physicist, POL), Beth Chesney-Evans (Consultant, AEA T), Mark Hannam (Consultant, AEA T), Stephen Hall (National Marine Co-ordination Office, NOCS) [*Note: POL is now part of the new NOC*]

1. Progression of key topics for enhanced NERC Marine KE

Two key areas were identified where existing NERC expertise, and the present UK political/industrial climate, present opportunities for NERC to enhance impact of its science:

1 (a) Environmental impacts of wave and tidal energy development.

Somewhat behind offshore wind, wave and tidal power is expected to undergo significant development. NERC has an opportunity to provide science / expertise, with reference to environmental impacts of development. NERC has built capacity for wide-ranging marine environmental impact studies through, for example, the COST-IMPACT project, developed to investigate implications of various demersal fishing policies.

Government and industrial momentum towards planning, testing and deployment of wave and tidal energy is growing: the **Dept. of Energy and Climate Change** recently published a scoping report inviting comment on how the statutory Environmental Report, required before licensing decisions are taken, should take shape. NERC has also:

- commissioned two AEA Technology reports investigating existing NERC contribution to the field and opportunities for expansion, and;
- a specific £2.4m Theme action (led by theme on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources) to increase understanding of the environmental benefits and risks of marine renewables up-scaling.

The timing and conditions, then, are ideal to ensure these activities are cross-aware, aligned, and empowered to make the maximum impact on NERC's behalf:

- CW and SJ are to follow up with a meeting to PML, in May, to see AL and colleagues. COST-IMPACT can be discussed then (although initial dialogue between AL, CW and others relevant can commence now).
- CW would like to propose regular meetings of a NERC 'Marine Renewables Group' representing relevant science planning and KE activities (within NERC) so activities, communication and plans can be co-ordinated and complimentary to the common goal of raising impact. Key individuals, at present, would be: Sasha Leigh (or Chris Franklin); Ruth Hughes (Lead on managing AEAT Renewables Studies [at present]); Annie Linley (PML).
- CW will liaise with NERC colleagues to investigate and, if necessary commence/lead, a NERC input to the **Dept. of Energy and Climate Change** Environment Report Scoping Document. The deadline for input is April 15th.

1(b) Sea bed surveying within the UK

Accurate knowledge of sea-bed properties are recognized as being vital to underpin sensible marine planning decisions. At present large quantities of UK waters remain uncharted using modern, high-resolution mapping, and some collated, commercial information is either unavailable or not in a suitable format/state for planning-decision use.

NERC, particularly BGS (and NOC and SAMS), are participant to surveying activities – for example through commissioned JNCC work – and an imminent programme launch (Marine Environmental Mapping Programme) is scheduled in summer 2010 bringing together survey and interpretation activities across NERC.

As an immediate action a follow up meeting, led by CW, with Robert Gatliff (BGS) is suggested to discuss how resources could supplement, enhance, or compliment activities associated with the above to enhance NERC science impact and input to this field.

2. Co-ordination of 'next steps' and progression with existing initiatives

- Alignment and two-way communication should continue with the **Marine Science Co-ordination Committee (MSCC)**, whose partner members (of

which NERC is one) are responsible for devising, and implementing, a national Marine Science Strategy

- Within this a focused industry engagement strategy will take shape;
- Laurence Mee is the MSCC lead on this remit – and so communication and collaboration with him and his team will continue;
- Activities, priorities and strategy should take counsel from the **Oceans 2025** community and co-ordination team;
- Cross council collaboration must be encouraged and demonstrated in proceeding.
- Activities and initiatives should seek involvement within the **Living with Environmental Change (LWEC)** programme to enhance benefits through the infrastructure the programme provides and to access relevant/complimentary science that may be being undertaken by partner organisations;
- Furthermore, **LWEC** has recently assembled a senior-level Business Advisory Group, in which the marine sector is represented. Close co-ordination and communication with this group therefore will provide further information, and steer on potential industry needs within the marine field, and industry/policy engagement.

3. Noted points on philosophy / approach of NERC Marine KE

The discussion prompted a number of high-level recommendations and suggestions, based on the wealth of experience present, on how marine KE might be enhanced, or refined. These are summarized below:

- NERC would benefit from centres being able to respond quickly to industry proposals. Often opportunities are lost due to the lengthy application/review processes.
- One solution suggested may be to allocate, a priori, a fund to each centre, that could be utilized in funding collaborations that needed to commence quickly.
- Broad strategies should not obscure the value or importance of ‘bottom up information’ i.e. replace activities to get, or use, ‘drilled down’ information from Small and Medium Businesses themselves.
- Related to the above point, independent accounts of industry, or user, needs are noted to be extremely valuable to NERC, and its scientists, in being able to shape science proposals purposefully around user needs. The impartiality of the reporting party acts to demonstrate that the applicant, or NERC itself, is not focusing resources on its own interests.