



**Note of the third meeting of the Oceans 2025 Programme Advisory Board 11-13
May 2010 in Plymouth**

Tuesday 11th May – PAB meeting 11:30 – 12:40

Members Present

Professor Peter Liss CBE, FRS, (Chairman), Dr Mike Bell, Richard Burt, Ms Rebecca Cowburn, Professor Mike Cowling, Professor Dan Laffoley, Professor Jan De Leeuw, Dr Caron Montgomery, Dr Jay Willis, Dr Mike Webb.

With Mrs. Jacky Wood, National Marine Coordination Office, NOCS (Secretariat).

Apologies

Professor Stephen Hawkins, Dr Serge Heussner, Dr Stephen Malcolm, Dr Mike Neilson, Dr Ian Townend, Dr Bill Turrell.

In attendance

Professor Stephen de Mora, Professor Ian Boyd, Professor Andrew Willmott, Dr Phil Heads.

Opening

Professor Liss opened the meeting and welcomed participants. He reminded them that the Board existed in an Advisory Capacity to inform the Programme Executive Board. Several Members of the Executive Board were in attendance for this session.

Item 1 Minutes of first meeting and actions arising

1. The minutes of the first meeting had previously been circulated and were agreed for publication on the website. **Action Secretariat.**

Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on agenda)

2. Minute paragraph 8 Additional members for PAB. The Chairman noted that several names had been put forward and considered by the Oceans 2025 Executive Board. However given the changing environment for Oceans 2025 it no longer seemed appropriate to bring in additional PAB members at this time.
3. Minute paragraph 9. Secretariat to circulate slides of Dr Williamson's overview presentation. Action discharged.

4. Minute paragraph 21 Clarification of DEFRA engagement on the PAB. Dr Caron Montgomery now represents DEFRA's marine policy interests. Ms Cowburn had joined the PAB to ensure linkage to the MSCC Secretariat.
5. Minute paragraph 22 Professor Townend, in written input to the Board, informed members that there had been useful engagement between HR Wallingford and PML, including discussion on potential development opportunities in respect of ecosystem modeling.
6. Minute paragraph 43 The recommendations of the June 2009 meeting were agreed by correspondence and presented to the Oceans 2025 Executive Board. The Board's response was formulated and the resulting document had been transmitted to PAB members, to the Oceans 2025 community and published on the Oceans 2025 website in December 2009. Action discharged.

Item 3 Presentation of the Annual Science meeting agenda, aims and logistics.

7. Mrs Wood gave an overview of the aims and format for the meeting. She noted that the organizing team had taken forward the recommendations of the PAB in respect of requesting overview presentations from the Centres that emphasized the key highlights, the impacts and the cross programme working now inherent in Oceans 2025 community. A dedicated Technology session was included that would demonstrate to the scientific users the progress in the development of underpinning tools. The emphasis in the programme structure on policy leads and impacts meant that most sessions were to be introduced by 'stakeholder' presentations. In addition to the 45 plenary session presentations the details of the many scientific achievements across the programme were captured in some 60 poster presentations. As in the previous year the meeting had been opened in principle to the whole Oceans 2025 community. Invitations had also been sent to a range of other stakeholders, in NERC centrally, in BGS, BAS, CEH, other academics, key Government department representatives, the NERC theme leaders, and other representative bodies.
8. Members of the Programme Advisory Board agreed to ensure that at least one PAB member was present at each of the parallel sessions.

Item 3 Overview of recent external developments and their impact on the Oceans 2025 programme.

9. Professor Andrew Willmott, on behalf of the Oceans 2025 Executive Board, gave a presentation that described developments in NERC that had impacted on Oceans 2025. This included the work of the National Capability Advisory Group (NCAG), a subgroup of NERC's Science and Innovation Strategy Board (SISB) which was developing a prioritization tool to assist in investment decisions for NERC's national capability. The Board felt that there was a need to ensure some read across to the work of the MSCC on long term data sets and sustained

observations and also the Environmental Observation Framework activities on prioritisation. The ‘usefulness of the NC to the UK’s ability to deliver its environmental commitments’ should also be considered, along with some downstream evidence to support this, looking back over appropriate and varying timescales needed to achieve impact.. The MSCC was driving for better coordination of marine science, howsoever funded; one legacy of Oceans 2025 was that it enabled a better visibility and management of NERC supported national capability and strategic marine science.

10. The Board stressed the importance of ensuring that any funding prioritization exercise had to be set within the context of the wider policy drivers, such as that needed to underpin the Marine Strategic Framework Directive. NERC had been successful in leveraging co-funding from DEFRA and others e.g. for the forthcoming initiatives on carbon capture and storage and for ocean acidification. However the links and implications of NC funding decisions needed to be understood. The Board also recognized the concern that even though some Research programme funding with a marine component was beginning to flow through there was a concern on the scale and duration of the funding opportunities, and a high overhead cost associated with the need for bidding against small pots of money. Research programme activity was dependant on the content of the Theme action plans. Though the marine community was influencing the future agenda it would be difficult to see how a longer term strategic funding programme such as Ocean 2025 could be conceived in this new funding scenario. To strengthen the rationale for action there was a need for the community to look to and work in an international context, linking into internationally recognized initiatives such as the GEO Biodiversity actions.
11. The remainder of Professor Willmott’s presentation focused on an outline of the rationale for the formation of the new National Oceanography Centre, NOC, bringing together the NERC owned components of the former NOCS together with the Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory based in Liverpool, the management of NERC marine national capability through a network of contracted ‘delivery partners’ and the formation of a NOC Association to ensure engagement with the wider UK marine science community.

The meeting closed at 12:45. Following lunch the Board then attended the first day of the Annual Science Programme meeting.

PAB Evening session Wednesday 17:30-18:45
Present

Professor Peter Liss CBE, FRS, (Chairman), Dr Mike Bell, Richard Burt, Ms Rebecca Cowburn, Professor Mike Cowling, Professor Dan Laffoley, Professor Jan De Leeuw, Dr Caron Montgomery, Dr Jay Willis, Dr Mike Webb, Mrs. Jacky Wood (Secretariat).

12. The Chairman asked that the focus of this session be on new recommendations, as Oceans 2025 was now well established. The Board agreed that high quality work was being presented and results with policy relevance and impact were coming through. Professor Laffoley felt it important that the key messages from the PAB should be targeted to MSCC as well as to NERC and to the Oceans 2025 Directors. There remained a serious concern on how best to amplify the profile of the programme, its cohesion around themes and the visibility of its achievements as the Oceans2025 ramp down speeded up. The programme could also do more now to improve its high level strategic visibility with policy makers and to enable conduits for science/policy discussions.
13. Professor de Leeuw expressed disappointment that Oceans 2025 was ramping down given its high positive profile at European level and internationally. Other nations envied the Oceans 2025 approach which was seen as having addressed to a large degree the fragmentation in the NERC marine community. Mechanisms, perhaps through some funding for coordination and communication activities should remain in place to ensure that the expertise and networking benefits of the programme were not lost. Fundamentally Oceans 2025 had been the right structure at the time and much had been achieved by the UK marine community under its banner. The PAB agreed it had a role to play in pointing out what risked being lost as a result of the new funding structures being put in place by NERC.
14. Professor Laffoley suggested that the key attributes that had worked well for Oceans 2025 should be characterized; this could help the Directors to determine what success looked like for UK marine science. Key attributes already apparent were the sense of community and co-working across sites and Centres, the profile and brand of the programme and the way that the Oceans 2025 science themes provided focal areas and rallying points for the science at a strategic level. A matrix of achievements could be identified as the issues that had been apparent at the formation of the programme – such as charges of duplication and some of the management issues associated with multi centre working had been addressed. Dr Montgomery felt that whilst great steps had been achieved for the 'NERC family' not all strategic marine science in the UK was under the oceans 2025 umbrella – and in going forward some of the key messages, and cost effective methods of working should be available to DEFRA and others. It was suggested that MSCC might wish to invite the Oceans 2025 Executive Board to commission a paper for MSCC's information.
15. The PAB were concerned that without the Oceans 2025 annual meeting as a forum it might be difficult to bring together the broad range of topics in future. It would also be more challenging from an audit perspective to assure that the key marine issues were being addressed. However this was a multifaceted issue – getting the community together to provide a snapshot of progress over 2 or 3 days was valuable but did not allow in-depth assessment. The strategic visibility of the programmes' achievements was a key issue and high importance attached to the science/policy interface. A flexible capacity to bring the key communities

together was required and it was felt that an annual meeting of the marine community with an agenda covering NC, Theme Action Plans (TAPs) funded research, cross linkages and policy relevance was needed. This had to be a two way process yet the Government Departments also found it difficult to articulate the research needed to inform policy. It was felt that the MSCC might also consider if such activities were also relevant to its wider outreach and communications agenda.

16. The Board recognized the value of continuing the SOFI workshops that provided good value for money in bringing together key players to address well defined topics. They questioned however whether the workshops had been sufficiently publicized and open to those with potential interest.
17. The PAB welcomed the dedicated technology session in the ASM agenda as it had given an opportunity to consider whether there might be gaps in the platform and instrument capabilities and the extent to which the developments were being market driven. It was becoming clear that the requirements for long term monitoring were in themselves becoming major 'customers' for the technology; there was a need, possibly in conjunction with the work of the MSCC long term monitoring working group or others, to undertake a technology audit for Oceans 2025, to consider the technology needs and gaps and broker these against the requirements arising from the UK's strategic monitoring programme and the requirements e.g. of the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
18. The PAB Board members who had attended the parallel biology session of the main ASM programme considered that the potential uses of 'omics' technology was still seriously underplayed. The PAB should reiterate its recommendation of the previous year and suggest that consideration be given to making use of more of the now widespread range of technologies to perform better and to extend the science; this didn't necessarily have to come at a higher cost. The Board noted with disappointment that the previously recommended SOFI workshop on potential for 'omics techniques' had not yet taken place. Mike Webb noted that the community found it hard to best target funding applications for environmental 'omics' projects as both NERC and BBSRC had interests, yet overall the feeling of many was that the potential was not yet fully recognized.
19. Professor Laffoley felt that in positioning the legacy of Oceans 2025 it would be important to consider the benefit to UK competitiveness in terms of the extent to which Oceans 2025 had levered other research investments and capabilities e.g. the European Framework projects. This could help demonstrate the added value of the Oceans 2025 investment. Knowing the value of this leverage and the contribution e.g. to skilled manpower, could be used in high level messages about the contribution of marine science to wider business competitiveness. This would not be an easy task to achieve but could be demonstrated to a degree through case studies and other Knowledge Exchange examples.

PAB final session Thursday 1:15-2:20
Present

Peter Liss CBE, FRS, (Chairman), Dr Mike Bell, Richard Burt, Ms Rebecca Cowburn, Professor Mike Cowling, Professor Dan Laffoley, Professor Jan De Leeuw, Dr Caron Montgomery, Dr Jay Willis, Dr Mike Webb with Professor Ed Hill (Oceans 2025 Executive Board) and Mrs. Jacky Wood (Secretariat).

20. Professor Hill presented a more detailed overview of the rationale behind the development of the new National Oceanography Centre (NOC), its formalized partnership with the Oceans 2025 Delivery Partners and with BAS and BGS and the concept of the NOC Association. One of the key benefits of Oceans 2025 was that it had been able to raise the visibility of the NERC national marine capability (which represented in spend terms around 20% of NERC's annual NC spend) within the wider marine science community. Professor Hill emphasized the expectation that the national capability components of Oceans 2025 (mapping part of theme 5, themes 8, 9, 10) would continue in a coherent way on a long term financial footing and could be managed in an integrated way. Some of the strategic advice that had been prepared by the PAB was particularly focused on these NC components. However the Research Programme components would be more variable and would be subject to the reporting and review requirements of their customers, other drivers and in some cases different oversight mechanisms (especially where NERC funding was being accessed alongside DECC/DEFRA funding for example). The new NOC also needed an Advisory board. Overall the advisory structures were still being considered and would need to transition over time.
21. The PAB noted that the research that was still underway under Oceans 2025 but not TAP funded would still require some advisory overview. The NC components undertaken by BAS and BGS also needed consideration. However the Board felt that it was important that there was some way to ensure an advisory capacity that was integrated and able to take a view across the NERC marine sector, including both NC and RP, and could consider whether the marine community was getting its share of the overall funding and addressing the right issues. This had to be done by a group with influence and it could not be done by a Board that was limited to an NC focus. Professor Hill noted that NOC would be developing, with the Associates and others, a strategy for the sector, and could perhaps use this to articulate the wider aspects and advocate for marine science.
22. The PAB was concerned that whilst the marine community had been actively engaged in the development of NERC's Theme Action Plans it still appeared in certain areas such as biodiversity that marine needs had not been sufficiently recognized. The Board was concerned that NERC was making its strategic investment decisions at a level of detail that did not take account of the real worth of the work or its ability to deliver against national requirements – for example to

- provide advice on Marine Protected Areas in the high seas. Whilst it was good to secure the NC capability the overall portfolio had to be right; working in this way was a high risk strategy; concerns were expressed in particular about funding for sedimentology and palaeo-climate work – the latter was needed to inform the quality of climatic research. To an extent the formulation of Oceans 2025 had temporarily de-risked strategic marine science – the new procedures were reintroducing the risks. The Board recommended the Executive Board consider all options to address the gaps and to express the risks in real policy impact terms.
23. The PAB also expressed concern that the TAPs did not appear to give sufficient priority to their underpinning NC requirements, especially where these had a high technology component e.g. for the Arctic where the platforms and the technologies would be the biggest challenge. There was concern that the TAPs were in place (and on an annual basis of prioritization) but the infrastructure requirement was not sufficiently aligned. Professor Hill noted that the Centres did not have the 'dual funding' stream that universities could rely on for salaries – so gaps and phasing of programmes could mean a real loss of intellectual capacity from the NERC community.
 24. The PAB was concerned that the SOFI scheme was not being continued as it provide a valuable way to engage with the wider community. They recommended that funding be found to continue with the SOFI workshop concepts. They also felt that current and planned SOFI workshops could be given increased publicity.
 25. The Board recognized the importance of association with LWEC and recommended that the accreditation of appropriate parts of the Oceans 2025 programme by LWEC be pursued with urgency.
 26. The Board expressed its appreciation of the format of the Annual Science meeting which had sought to emphasize the impacts of the programme and the policy links. The Board recommended that a publication be produced at the end of the programme that succinctly captured the Oceans 2025 legacy, highlighted the excellence of the achievements and provided a means to fly the flag for UK marine science. This publication should be in addition to other formal project reporting requirements.
 27. The Board agreed to finalize their recommendations by correspondence. **Action Secretariat.** Some of the recommendations were directed to NERC and it was agreed that the Chairman should prepare a letter to Professor Alan Thorpe expressing the views of the Board. **Action Professor Liss**
 28. The Board asked Professor Hill to convey their appreciation and thanks for the meeting to the Oceans 2025 marine science community.

J Wood NMCO 2 August 2010.