



**Note of the first meeting of the Oceans 2025 Programme Advisory Board
28-29 May 2008, at NOCS**

Members Present

Professor Peter Liss CBE FRS, (Chairman), Dr Mike Bell (Thursday only), Richard Burt, Professor Mike Cowling (Wednesday only), Mrs Fiona Harrison (for Mike Neilson) Professor Stephen Hawkins, Dr Serge Heussner, Professor Dan Laffoley, Dr John Lock (Thursday only), Dr Stephen Malcolm, Ian Townend, Dr Bill Turrell (Thursday only), Dr Mike Webb (for Dr Steven Wilson) .

With

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

In attendance (Wednesday am only)

Professor Ed Hill, NOCS, Dr Peter Claridge PML, Dr Ken Jones SAMS, Dr Phil Williamson Oceans 2025 Science coordinator.

Apologies

Professor Jan de Leeuw, Mike Neilson, Dr Steven Wilson.

Wednesday 28th May

Opening

1. Professor Liss opened the meeting by welcoming participants and inviting them to introduce themselves.

Item 1 Terms of Reference

2. Members discussed the proposed ToR Paper PAB 01/08. The Programme Advisory Board (PAB) was set up as a critical advisory mechanism to inform the Oceans 2025 Executive Board, in particular to engage and inform the programme from the perspective of stakeholders. Members commented that the remit was ambitious, particularly in the context of only one formal meeting a year and questioned the scope to steer the development of the ongoing programme. In response, Professor Hill noted that the Oceans 2025 programme had been through an extensive peer review and stakeholder consultation process in its development. However it was a strategic programme that therefore had to be informed on an ongoing basis by external

factors. In particular NERC's changing funding processes and thematic approach raised particular challenges. The PAB's advice on how Oceans 2025 might transition in this new climate would be particularly valuable.

3. Members commented that the ToR did not sufficiently emphasise the international dimension, or the scope for the PAB to advise on external opportunities that Oceans 2025 might link to or capitalize upon. In particular there was scope for Board members to advise on wider outreach aspects of the programme, and the use of new mechanisms and communication tools. It was recommended that the Secretariat provide a revised draft ToR for agreement **Action Secretariat**.
4. It was clarified that the PAB did not have a formal reporting line to NERC, nor would it be responsible for evaluating the science undertaken through the programme. It is the role of each of the Directors, acting under their contractual arrangements for their Centre to be formally accountable for the delivery of the Programme.
5. It was noted that the Board currently was not at full membership and that there was scope for members to recommend individuals or areas where stakeholder representation might be strengthened. It was felt that representation by the UK Met Office would be welcomed. Secretariat confirmed that an invitation had been extended.

Item 2 Presentation of the agenda for the Oceans 2025 Annual Science meeting

6. Professor Ed Hill outlined the aims for this Annual Science meeting. It was an opportunity to bring together the Oceans 2025 Centre theme leaders or their representatives¹, Strategic Ocean Funding Initiative (SOFI) grant holders and other key stakeholders to provide a rapid overview of the entirety of progress on Oceans 2025 since its formal start in April 2007, an opportunity to explore synergies and common issues across themes and critically, a networking event to support the development of the 'Oceans 2025 community'. Holding the first meeting of the Programme Advisory Board alongside this meeting was deliberately planned to enable direct engagement and feedback. It was recognized that the current programme was ambitious in terms of its coverage and that alternative means to achieve the objectives and to enable a wider audience to attend would be explored in future years.

Presentation Overview of the oceans 2025 programme – Phil Williamson, Science coordinator Oceans 2025

7. Phil Williamson, Oceans 2025 Science coordinator presented an overview of the Oceans 2025 programme, outlining its themes, structure and their interactions between the Centres. Slides to be circulated: **Action Secretariat**.
8. In discussion the PAB questioned the funding for the National Capability (NC) elements of the programme. More NC exists at the Centres than that which is

¹ There is a nominated 'Centre theme leader' within each Centre for each Oceans 2025 theme where that Centre is undertaking research. Their role is to represent and coordinate the theme contribution within their Centre and interact with other Centres participating in their theme and with the Science Coordinator..

funded under Oceans 2025 but for some of the Centres elements of NC had previously been supported by strategic programme funding. The expectation was that the National Capability Advisory Group (NCAG) would take a longer funding horizon, with a presumption that NC would continue to be supported subject to periodic review. A first task for the NCAG would be to review the portfolio of NC activity.

9. The PAB also questioned the linkage to international programmes such as those funded by the European commission under its Framework programme schemes. In many cases the Oceans 2025 funding provides matching funding for the FP project. The board commented that whilst this leverage was important it made it difficult to determine exactly what was being delivered with the Oceans 2025 funding. The international linkages had not been made apparent in the implementation plan and this element could be strengthened. Similarly the international influence and outreach of the programme. It would be strategically important to be able to determine the leverage and interdependencies between funding sources. It was confirmed that the implementation plan had been compiled on the basis of what the Oceans 2025 funding would deliver and that levered funding opportunities had only been considered where there was an assurance of mutual benefit and an ability to deliver more than the Oceans 2025 core aims.
10. The Board asked how the policy implications and knowledge transfer from the Oceans 2025 programme to policy makers would be undertaken and information captured. It was noted that the Knowledge exchange plan was still in development, and that KE was an ongoing activity. Each theme has a plan for its policy and industrial linkages. The Board expressed a need to have greater oversight of this area, noting that their role would encompass the opportunity to highlight where the programme was adding value as well as to provide an oversight of how the plan was implemented and the deliverables achieved.
11. The Board asked how NERC intended to review the Oceans 2025 programme. It was noted that NERC had moved away from the 5 yearly Centre by Centre Science and Management Audit (SMA) type reviews and was now favouring targeted reviews/evaluation which might cross theme, cross issue etc. It was not clear at this stage whether a mid term view of Oceans 2025 would be undertaken. In some areas of the programme external science review groups were still in existence, meeting on an annual basis and reporting to the Centre Director.

Item 4 Policy on Transparency, conflict of interest and related matters

12. The policy, based on NERC policy on vested interests was noted and will be made publicly available. **Action Secretariat**
13. Members were invited to provide a brief paragraph of biographical detail to the Secretariat for use on the programme website. **Action Members**
14. Members were provided with the necessary payment request and T&S forms and asked to complete these in accordance with the policy and return them to the Secretariat. **Action Members**

Thursday 29th May –formulation of recommendations

15. Discussion of the Board in private session focused on the benefits from the structuring of the programme. The coordinated multi-centre Oceans 2025 approach was welcomed as it gave the ability to Government departments and other stakeholders to gain improved visibility for the marine science that NERC was supporting; whilst recognizing that Oceans 2025, though a large proportion, was not the totality of marine science that NERC supported. However it was felt that more could be done to ensure and demonstrate that Oceans 2025 was addressing the key policy questions and to ensure the flow of timely and appropriate information from the programme to the policy process.
16. The breadth and depth of the work programme was impressive and it was clear that productive collaborations and partnerships were forming. The networking, interactions and synergies were being addressing in a structured way within the Oceans 2025 framework and this was felt to be welcome as a launch pad for further development. There was a level of unprecedented interaction and this appears to be because of the personal and work synergies generated by being in the structured programme. There was a healthy degree of research diversity within the programme and it was delivering high quality science. Past perceptions of any duplication of effort amongst the Centres has been addressed and there was a growing awareness across Centres of the programme totality – though scope to increase this awareness beyond the Centre theme leaders. Formulating the sustained observations theme was seen as particularly important and this brought together activities that had previously been unconnected, now they could be seen as part of a more coherent whole activity.
17. The Board felt that the internationalisation of the programme and its key linkages was not sufficiently highlighted. The global impact of the science could be made more explicit. There was also a regional dimension. It was accepted that the implementation plan was directed at NERC but that it could do more to bring out the added value and impact. The influencing and communications strategies [Secretariat note – yet to be documented in this version of the implementation plan being used by the Board] need to address the variety of stakeholders and have a clear line of sight to the policy drivers. Certain themes were good at targeting particular areas but there was space to do more at programme level to generate better outreach to a range of audiences. Ongoing communications and policy outreach should be structured around the scope of Oceans 2025 to provide answers and solutions. It was noted that the policy context for the programme had been explicitly set out in the original proposal, copies would be circulated. **Action Secretariat.**
18. The Board further discussed its concerns relating to the uncertainty around future NERC reviews, the evaluation of Oceans 2025 and factors affecting the transition from Oceans 2025 to the NERC thematic action plans, national

capability and the implementation of Funding, Allocation and Budgeting (FAB). The Board noted that there had been good interaction between the Centres in the development of Oceans 2025 and that there was a real risk of disaggregation in the transition to the new NERC funding model. The Board agreed there should be a recommendation to the Directors to seek clarification from NERC. There were particular concerns around next generation modeling sustained observations and technology development – it would be important that these areas were not put in danger by falling between cracks in the FAB model. The NERC representative reminded the Board that the purpose of defining the National capability category was to ensure visibility of such underpinning work and that the NERC theme leaders' action plans were related in the main to research programme funding. A cross cutting assessment of the national capacity dimension would be undertaken and the National Capability Advisory's group would be important in this context.

19. The Board discussed the Governance arrangements for the Programme, in particular how programme-wide risks might be identified and managed. The Board agreed that there should be a recommendation to the Directors to highlight the need for cross programme risk management and the updating of the programme's risk register. Particular attention should be given to risks arising from staff changes, ship reliability and availability, and the scope to direct spend according to programme developments.
20. The Board questioned the extent to which the Oceans 2025 community had an opportunity to engage with the NERC Theme leaders. The Secretariat was also to provide some examples where theme leaders had visited the centre and where individuals and in particular the Oceans 2025 science coordinator have had contact time, however it was felt that more might be done to encourage interaction, including scope for dedicated Oceans 2025/theme leaders meeting. It was noted that each of the NERC theme leaders had received an invitation to participate in the annual science meeting but that none had done so.
21. The Board noted that excellent, large scale science had been presented and that whilst cross linkages between themes were identified there was a need to give attention to ensure maximum value by bridging across the themes and groups that can be linked. There was scope to clarify and enhance intra-theme coordination mechanisms. There was also scope for the theme leaders to act as a platform of awareness of broader research activities in their areas.
22. The Board noted practical difficulties relating to access to data that would be benefit Oceans 2025 – based on widely expressed concerns in relation to organizations holding trading fund or other commercial status. This could also be taken forward in the context of the programme's risk register.
23. The Board agree to formulate its recommendations through further refinement outwith the meeting. The recommendations are at Annex 1.

Membership of the PAB

24. In the light of the presentations the Board members present reiterated that a representative from the Met Office would be welcomed. Consideration should also be given to strengthening international membership of the Board. Members' suggestions were invited: **Action Board members.**
25. Board members noted the opportunity to increase their engagement with particular elements of the programme. Members expressed interest as follows:
- Richard Burt – Technology aspects themes 8 and 10 and knowledge transfer
 - Mike Bell/Met Office interests – theme 9
 - Steven Hawkins – themes 4,6,10
 - Serge Heussner - theme 5
 - John Lock - Defra policy interests
 - Dan Laffoley - themes 1,2,4,6,10
 - Stephen Malcolm - knowledge transfer to policy, especially themes 2, 4, 10,
 - Bill Turrell – themes 3, 4 and 6, knowledge transfer/ strategy
 - Ian Townend - themes 3, 4

Format of future meetings

26. The Board agreed that the format of the current meeting had achieved its aim of providing an oversight and snapshot of programme developments. However in future there might be a half day plenary session for all, based on the key discoveries and highlights from the preceding year. This might be followed with a half day of discussions in smaller groups structured around specific themes or cross programme issues (suggestions were observation, modeling and data interpretation, coastal issues). Key pointers were that there needed to be greater time available for discussions and that the meeting should be opened out to a wider scientific community. A mid-term conference might also be considered. It was felt that the PAB should have strong input to the design of the annual review meetings. It was noted that the staff effort and budget for coordination actions had been constrained in the NERC Council decision process.
27. Future meetings of the Programme Advisory Board would also request an overview of the programme developments across the board and a formal response from the Executive Board on how the recommendations of the Advisory Board had been addressed. The Board might also seek to meet more frequently, according to need.

28. The Board considered that there might be a role of the various learned societies and associations to increase engagement with Oceans 2025, perhaps through the joint organization of open meetings.

NMCO Secretariat July 2008