

**NOC Association Steering Board
MRC Offices, 29th March 2017**

Attending

Professor Tony Clare, University of Newcastle
Professor Angela Hatton, National Oceanography Centre
Professor Gideon Henderson, FRS, University of Oxford
Professor Ed Hill, OBE, National Oceanography Centre
Dr Mark James, Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland
Professor Rachael James, University of Southampton/Challenger Society
Dr Hilary Kennedy, University of Bangor
Professor Peter Liss, CBE, FRS, University of East Anglia, Chair
Dr David Marshall, University of Oxford
Professor Steve de Mora, Plymouth Marine Laboratory
Professor Jon Sharples, University of Liverpool
Professor Andrew Watson, FRS, University of Exeter

Jackie Pearson, Secretariat, National Oceanography Centre

Item 1 Chairman's welcome and apologies

- 1.1 Peter Liss welcomed attendees and noted that Dr Mark James would be representing Professor David Paterson.

Item 2 Meeting minutes 8th November 2016

- 2.1 Although it would not necessary to have a representative from MSCC on the Board, it would be appropriate to have a standing agenda item about MSCC for Board meetings. Mark James volunteered to represent MSCC at future Board meetings and to provide a short report. **Action: Mark James**
- 2.2 It is important that heads of department circulate information about the NOC Association, across their departments. There is also the option to circulate information via the NERC Marine Listserver. **Action: All**
- 2.3 The Secretariat needs to review the contacts for the Association and ensure the widest possible dissemination of information. **Action: Secretariat**
- 2.4 Topics suggested for the 7th Annual Meeting have been included in the agenda.
- 2.5 The SUT has been invited to become a member of the NOC Association.

Item 3 Compendium of capability

- 3.1 There would be an update on status at the 7th Annual Meeting and members will be reminded to check entries and send updates. Gideon Henderson suggested there could be a pdf summary version available to download. It could be linked to the on-line version and emailed to members. David

Marshall suggested a single A4 flyer with the details, in landscape mode to fit in a Powerpoint and then distribute at meetings. **Action: Secretariat.**

3.2 It is hoped to launch the Compendium within the month. **Action: Secretariat.**

Item 4 Doctoral Training Programmes

4.1 We need to know what is happening with the allocation of studentships through the NERC doctoral training programmes (DTP). Since DTPs have been set up, there has been no central repository of information. We have requested this from NERC but haven't made progress. We need this because the next round of DTP is soon and there is no common record available. Mark expressed concern that there may be duplication of effort. This information should be in the public domain. There was a suggestion to see if we could acquire this information via the MSCC.

4.2 Angela Hatton advised that the NERC Science Board has been doing an analysis and has looked at studentships. The problem is that studentships are not allocated to particular areas. Angela agreed to follow this up. **Action: Angela Hatton**

4.3 Peter Liss made progress a couple of years ago and the data showed that there was a downward trend in the number of studentships per year but we are not certain this trend is long-term. Peter referred to the letter that was to be issued to departments. Only a few institutions have DTPs. It would be possible to get this information by writing to a few contacts but if we decide to go back over a few years, this would need a letter to every UK university. Angela suggested inviting the Training Advisory Group to the next meeting of the NOC Association Steering Board (Rachel Mills is a member of TAG). **Action: Secretariat**

4.4 David Marshall advised that there is a pie chart that appears to show that marine is doing well but it is actually showing marine *and* sea ice. We need to be clear about what the data is showing. Gideon asked about training needs - what skills are required by society now and in the next five years? This information could form the basis for a specialised CDT. Peter suggested that he re-send the letter to NERC and get updated figures so we can see what has happened to the apparent trend. **ACTION: Peter Liss**

Item 5 The new National Oceanography Centre

5.1 The NOC case is about to be submitted and we hope for an answer by the end of April. Over the last few weeks, we have been going through an audit and assurance process. The Gateway Three project board is engaged and Ed Hill has met with the BEIS Commercial Director.

5.2 The case is structured around four areas: Strategic, Economic, Financial, Commercial and Management. The ocean is essential to the UK's economic interest and the growth potential of the global ocean economy. Large scale oceanography is expensive and it will be important that the critical mass does

not drop too low. There has been an analysis to determine the value of the pending change to an independent model compared to its cost. There are certain freedoms that will be advantageous if we become independent. The NOC is working with the MoD and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office to find a way to try to access the Global Challenges Research Fund.

- 5.3 There is a flat cash allocation for funding the ships. Staff costs for supporting the ships are fixed. Flat cash means that, over time, less and less equipment can be supported. Any revenue generated by the charter of the ship will be reinvested to extend the national capability.
- 5.4 Andy Watson asked how NOC will be constrained in the strategic needs of the UK as a whole. Ed Hill explained this will happen through the governance structure, individual NC contracts and the overarching contract between NOC and NERC. Gideon asked where liability would lie if something goes wrong with the ship. Ed explained that the liability would be with NOC initially, however, there would be discussion with NERC.
- 5.5 The charitable objectives have been drafted. NERC has requested an observer status to avoid the risk that its membership could be construed as a form of control and therefore risk public sector classification by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). NC has fallen to levels which are of concern, although NERC has tried to rebalance the funding.
- 5.6 Ed explained that there are more opportunities for terrestrial science under the Global Challenges Research Fund. Some NOC NC funding is already directed towards ODA-related activities in space. NOC has a joint bid with PML at the moment. NERC's Dr Kate Hamer is due to give a talk about the GCRF at the Annual General Meeting which will aim to encourage the community to apply for funding. Economy and growth areas are key and we will have to adapt applications.

Item 6 The 7th Annual Meeting

- 6.1 All recommendations for the meeting content have been addressed.

Item 7 Training Opportunities

- 7.1 It would be good to publicise a training day on the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN) for PhD students and other young researchers. Peter queried whether it might be possible to circulate information about this opportunity via the NERC marine list server? Social media is also a good way of targeting the graduate community. E.g. information about the DTPs are on Twitter.
- 7.2 When the NOC Association started, we talked about having some working groups. Should we think about a modelling working group and identify some topics? Angela asked if we could we come up with ideas of evidence for skills needed in the future? David Marshall agreed that a working group would be

not be useful now as this has been superceded. Angela suggested the group consider some discussion topics.

- 7.3 Ed Hill noted that the NOC Association and Challenger published the document '*Scanning the Horizon*' on ships. This has worked well and was useful. If there is a need for working group and training groups, we should organise and publicise.

Item 8 Future Strategies

UK Marine Science Strategy

- 8.1 Ed Hill advised that the MSCC is refreshing its strategy. Previously, the MSCC has tended to focus on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the growing importance of marine industries, the ODA agenda and new technology. Unfortunately, there has been a lack of engagement from some departments. The MSCC has asked NOC to take the lead in pulling the new strategy together. The draft will go back to the MSCC shortly prior to a consultation in the summer and review in the autumn. Dr Henry Ruhl is the lead on this. The next MSCC meeting is 6th and 7th June in London. Mark James commented that the MSCC Secretariat resource is limited.
- 8.2 We need metrics to show success. There is a danger that the UK oceanographic capability may run into the sand, however, there are huge opportunities for the UK, post-BREXIT and these can be developed through our leadership on the UNCLOS and ABNJ issues.
- 8.3 Steve de Mora added that the UK should be leading in shipping, however, the UK didn't ratify the Convention on Ballast Water and this is an example of the disconnect because the DoT didn't come to the MSCC meetings. This issue relates to problems in coordination. The UK doesn't have a Department of Oceans and Fisheries. Ed Hill talked about the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission meeting in Washington where this topic came up, namely how to interface with the UN system, given the number of different ministries. There seems to be a similar problem in the US.
- 8.4 Steve de Mora commented that the emphasis on topping up funding with ODA money is having an impact on 'discovery' science. We need to recognise that the Foresight Programme is starting to come to fruition and will be available at the end of April. This can then inform the Strategy. Members of the Board (Ed, Gideon, Andy, Peter, David plus Henry Ruhl) to be contacted to decide criteria for a workshop. **Action: Secretariat**

UK Role in International Marine Science, including potential impact of BREXIT

- 8.5 We need to think about some of the challenges and decide some action items. Although Government has promised to supplement funding that may be lost because of BREXIT, this cannot compensate for what UK will lose by not having international work. We need to determine how much funding may be lost and from where we will replace it. In terms of large scale oceanography,

the next source of money after NERC, is the EU. The EU has been able to bring together scientists for collaborate and although it is not impossible to do this with national funding, it is not easy either. It will be difficult to jigsaw together international funding proposals outside of EU funding programmes. The ERC is also an important source of funding. One suggestion was for the UK science community to adopt a whole solution similar to that adopted by Switzerland which works despite not being in the EU.

Item 9 **AOB and date of next meeting**

- 9.1 The Board needs to be mindful of expiry dates on membership and there needs to be a rotation of members. There should be a discussion with the NOC Company Secretary on this issue. **Action: Secretariat with Caroline Speller**
- 9.2 The next meeting should be after the next meeting of the MSCC, in the second half of September or first half of October.
- 9.3 The Board decided to write to Professor David Thomas, School of Ocean Sciences, University of Bangor Science to invite him to represent Bangor on the NOC Association **ACTION: Peter Liss, Secretariat.**

Item	Action	Responsible
2.1	Standing item on MSCC activities to be incorporated into each Board meeting agenda.	Mark James
2.2	Ensure NOC Association email notifications are circulated across all relevant departments at member institutes	All
2.3	Review list of contacts for the NOC Association and ensure that as many colleagues are included as possible for general information circulars.	Secretariat
3.1	Develop an A4 flyer with details of the 'Compendium of capability' for distribution at meetings.	Secretariat
3.2	Launch the Compendium	Secretariat
4.2	The NERC Science Board has been doing an analysis on studentships but these are not allocated to particular areas. This needs to be followed up.	Angela Hatton
4.3	Invite the Training Advisory Group (TAG) to next meeting of the Association (Rachel Mills is on TAG).	Secretariat
4.4	DTPs: Re-send letter to NERC to get updated figures to see what has happened to the apparent trend.	Peter Liss
8.4	The Foresight Programme may inform the new Strategy. Members of the Board (Ed, Gideon, Andy, Peter, David plus Henry Ruhl) to be contacted to decide criteria for a workshop.	Secretariat
9.1	Be mindful of expiry dates on membership and there needs to be a rotation of members. Discuss with the NOC Company Secretary.	Secretariat with Caroline Speller
9.3	Write to Professor David Thomas, School of Ocean Sciences, University of Bangor Science to invite	Peter Liss & Secretariat

	representation of the University of Bangor on the NOC Association.	
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