

NOC Association Steering Board 8th May 2019

MRC Offices, London

Professor Tony Clare (TC)
Professor Steve de Mora (SdM)
Professor Ed Hill OBE (EH)
Professor Angela Hatton joined remotely (AH)
Professor Gideon Henderson FRS (GH)
Dr Mark James (MJ)
Professor Peter Liss CBE FRS, Chair (PL)
Professor Martin Solan (MS)
Professor David Thomas (DT)
Jackie Pearson, Secretary (JP)
Professor Rob Upstill-Goddard (RU)
Professor Andy Watson FRS (AW)

Items 1 Chairman's welcome and apologies

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Professor Jonathon Sharples and Julie Pringle Stewart. Prof Liss welcomed Professor David Thomas to his first meeting.

Item 2 Meeting minutes and actions November 2018

- 2.1 PL had advised a few changes to the draft minutes which the Secretary had added. No further comments were received so the minutes will be published on-line. **Action: JP**
- 2.2 Action 3.5 (*write letter to Chair of CPEB about applying for ship time*) was outstanding so would need to be picked up by the new in-coming chair. PL queried whether a letter is needed. EH advised there needs to be a communication to the community about applying for ship-time. This action falls within the role of the Cruise Programme Executive Board (CPEB). Leigh Storey, Associate Director, National Marine Facilities will be giving a presentation on this at the Annual Meeting so it was decided to wait until after this to see whether there would still be a need for a letter. **Action: Decide if action 3.5. still necessary. Action: GH**
- 2.3 Action 4.1 (*Raise issue of interaction between NOC Association and the Challenger Society*) RU advised this was done at the Challenger Society meeting in Autumn 2018 and is being implemented. Minutes are being shared and chairs are going to each other's meetings.
- 2.4 Action 4.3 (*Send link on previous AGMs to RU*). Action complete.
- 2.5 Action 7.1 (*Complete actions on new membership of the new NOC Association Steering Board*) PL noted this would be for the in-coming chair to action. **Action: carry forward.**
- 2.6 Action 7.2 (*Note recommendations for future engagement with the community, for future Board meetings.*) Actions complete.

- 2.7 SdM suggested adding another column to the actions list to show those that have been carried forward. **Action, JP**

Item 3 Progress on the NOC demerger from NERC

- 3.1 The main terms of demerger are agreed. Mark Walport and the Permanent Secretary, BEIS have agreed. The process will now go through BEIS. The terms went to the Science Minister mid-April 2019 and were approved so are now with Treasury. The data of the demerger will be six months after Treasury approval. The membership of the NOC Board is being recruited and there are already three members: John Hurst (Met Office) is Chair, and new members are David Gee and Sarah Kenny, Chief Executive of BMT.
- 3.2 The Treasury will look at the risks of liability; they have some finance questions. Morale is mixed, however, staff are acquiring a better understanding of what is happening.

Item 4 Relationship with Marine Facilities Advisory Board (MFAB), Research Vessel Financing and Charters

- 4.1 In 2014/15 NERC decided to fund research ships and infrastructure at a flat cash level but this wasn't fully implemented until 2016/17. Thus a gap is opening. There is the 'owner and ready to go' cost of running the ships and the cost of using them. Flat cash applies to the 'owner and ready to go' cost. NOC can downgrade capability to make savings, however, this will not completely solve the issue. Alternatively, NERC has given NOC the licence to look for third party charter. NOC has been pursuing several opportunities: one has been arranged, two are in preparation. NOC needs to consider how best to prioritise the use of the ships, an activity which falls within the remit of the CPEB. CPEB is chaired by the NERC Science Director and representatives from NERC ship operations, Chair of the Marine Facilities Advisory Board and the Cruise Programme Review Group (CPRG). CPRG reviews the past year's programme. NOC doesn't have an influence on the programming of the ships as this lies with NERC. NOC's role is to advise on logistics.
- 4.2 NERC has suggested three options to meet the funding gap:
- 1.) Charter the ships
 - 2.) Cut capability
 - 3.) NERC could make up the difference in funding.

NOC has made progress with charter which was made possible recently when the ship was alongside, so there was no impact on the science programme. The two charters in progress are long term so these can be accommodated although this will still require some prioritization. NOC won't be able to respond to short term charters as this would involve cancelling expeditions. Longer term charters are the way forward when the ship is under used.

- 4.3 As standard grants are capped, staff are not able to run a ship-based expedition so staffing a ship can be a problem. When NERC started multi-centre programmes, many were polar and coastal; some of the thematic programmes also became polar. AH

added that it might be worth considering what the USA does which is track where the ship is around the world.

- 4.4 RU asked whether there is a conflict between the long term aspect of charters and the need to be flexible. AH explained that NERC will have to decide if this is feasible first and will report on this at the next meeting. This process is run through the NERC CPEB. PL added that the American system is easy because they have 20 ships whereas the UK has three, including the BAS ship. GH asked if this is being driven by the International Indian Ocean experiment. AH noted that NOC needs to be strategic about what is going on internationally and there is also the issue of transit time which is costly.
- 4.5 AMT and CLASS expeditions have berths to fill which isn't ideal and linked to lack of funding. MS added that currently, there isn't a national mechanism available to help find scientists to occupy berths on research expeditions. AH is working on this and ensuring that access is fair. Berths could be advertised on the web. There is a mechanism for identifying fellows to go on research cruises which is done through the Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean (POGO) and is part of the capacity building agenda.
- 4.6 NOC has a line for NC in its budget. For CLASS, NOC pays £0.5M each year. GH asked if the problem on standard grants could be addressed by building on NC expeditions which could also enhance NOC's relationship with the community. EH is keen to see that the flow of grant applications looking for ship time continues. Building on NC expeditions is a good idea, but this shouldn't be a substitute for people bidding for cruise time. To maintain ship capability, we must maintain the flow of grants. The cap on standard grants is constraining and there is an awareness of some lack of enthusiasm in the community to bid for ship time. This may be the time to work to improve communication on bidding for ship time. For example, there is an exception on standard grants that enables applicants to bid for more but how is this communicated? Perhaps this could be something for the NOC Association to communicate? MS indicated that early career researchers least understand the process of ship time requests, and that a common perception is that the new ship will demand much longer cruises. The latter view has important implications, as there is a general reluctance to participate in cruises of extended duration for a variety of reasons (family, other commitments, time efficiency in terms of publications etc.).
- 4.7 AW asked if there be more support to help scientists organise an expedition. AH suggested there should be a strategy about how to support early career researchers. PL suggested that the marine community is a special case which requires special treatment in terms of funding. SdM added that if the ships are funded, expedition science should be funded too. The communications between the research and availability of ship-going opportunities seem to be mismatched. AH advised some caution here - it should simply be the case that applicants can apply for extra costs for a sea-based activity. More scientists should be encouraged to apply for ship-time. MS added that scientists are taking ships out of science proposals now because there is a perceived risk that such proposals are much less likely to be funded. MS expressed concern that early career researchers may be disproportionately affected as their primary goal is to secure a grant to establish themselves. For this reason, they are more likely to be risk averse. NERC does not include ships on standard grants. We

need to improve coordination and communication with the community. It was reiterated to pend writing the letter noted at action 3.5 from the November 2018 meeting until after the 2019 Annual Meeting.

Item 5 – Relationships with the Challenger Society and the UK Scientific Committee for Oceanography Research (SCOR)

- 5.1 There used to be a separate UK SCOR committee which met annually. This is now disbanded and its role has been taken on by Challenger Council. GH is currently Chair of UK SCOR but is about to step down and suggested that Alessandro Tagliabue takes on the role. The UK pays a subscription - the Challenger Society pays 51% and the balance is paid by the Royal Society (RS). The RS administers UK SCOR via the Global Environmental Research Committee (GERC).

Item 6 – Marine Science Coordination Committee update

- 6.1 MJ spoke to this item. The MSCC concerns the translation of science to policy. It has 18 members at high level representation. Each group has a slightly different remit and they tend not to engage with the wider scientific community. Some groups report back to and challenge what the MSCC does. MJ expressed a concern about a lack of engagement with the academic community. The purpose of the MSCC is to have ministerial access. Unfortunately, some of the key bodies don't attend. Co-chairs of the MSCC are Dr Simon Brockington and Professor Colin Moffatt. There is intended to be a link to government but this isn't happening. There are a number of groups who have no real resource to achieve what they need to achieve. There is a new strategy which is progressing slowly (MSCC strategy will be announced in June 2019). MJ asked whether there is a desire or requirement to have representation by the NOC Association on the MSCC?
- 6.2 EH said that the subgroups on the MSCC do good work. The MSCC started well and a minister was identified. The current Minister is Dr *Thérèse Coffey*. Initially, there was a lot of resource and the MSCC was given the remit to write the strategy. Defra and Marine Scotland contributed the funding. Previously NOC provided the secretariat to the Inter-Agency Committee for Marine Science and Technology (IACMST) and has continued to contribute the same level of resource. The IACMST was supported by 50% of NOC's Trevor Guymer's time. The MSCC reported to the Minister but as the UK went into austerity, the financial contribution from Defra reduced, over time. Today, NOC contributes time from Anne Brazier of NOC's International and Strategic Partnerships Office. The Board suggested NOC Association writes to the House of Commons Science Select Committee to appraise them of the situation. SdM advised it had been reviewed a few years ago.
- 6.3 The development of the International Ocean Strategy arose from the *Future of the sea'* report and is about published. There will be a ministerial group to oversee the implementation of the strategy and the international working group of the MSCC will contribute.
- 6.4 If the MSCC ceased to exist, we would need to invent it as the basic idea is sound. It needs to be linked to the needs of science and policy. At the moment, the MSCC doesn't reach ministerial level and has little traction in the academic area. The NOC

Steering Board can't reform the MSCC but perhaps should be represented on the MSCC which has asked to widen its representation. This depends on the remit of the NOC Steering Board and we would need to consider other bodies already involved, for example, the Challenger Society and the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology (IMarEST). EH represents NERC on the MSCC. PL represents the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN). MJ is independent and Steve de Mora is an *ad hominin* member. MJ noted that there is no generic HEI representation which is important. The HEI sector conducts a lot of research and trains the scientists of the future. There needs to be new ideas and new thinking and challenges from the HEI community.

- 6.5 Perhaps representation should be the other way round with the MSCC represented on the Steering Board? If Simon Brockington attended Steering Board meetings, he would have opportunity to meet with several scientists.
- 6.6 Although the MSCC is not 100% effective, there is the potential to change and its value lies in the fact that it is a melting pot where people can meet. GH suggested Ed should attend as NOC, not NERC. The Challenger Society represents the community. NERC don't send anyone else to MSCC so in essence, Ed Hill is attending as NOC. RU was asked to take this to the next Challenger Council for discussion. **Action: RU**
- 6.7 PL asked whether NERC should be a member as a funder of HEIs, however, EH suggested it should perhaps be UKRI? If the right departments are round the table, the Marine Strategy Framework Director dominates. Some departments have drifted away unfortunately. The FCO is returning because of the International Ocean Strategy. The Department for Transport has never attended, neither has DFID so the agenda has become narrowed.

Item 7 Update on Compendium and IOC Global Ocean Science Report

- 7.1 Alan Evans of NOC's International and Strategic Partnerships Office had submitted the UK's contribution to the Global Ocean Science Report in February 2019. Extrapolation had been necessary in some instances because unfortunately, there had not been a consistent level of response from across the community. Previously, the UK only really featured in the citation analysis.

Item 8 New Chair of NOC-A Board

- 8.1 The new Chair of the Steering Board will be Professor Gideon Henderson. GH thanked PL for his contribution to the NOC Association.

Item 9 Future role of the NOC Association

- 9.1 We need to define the interaction between NOC, PML, SAMS and the links to the Challenger Society and consider the number and type of meetings and how the NOC A can help NOC to shape the future of NC.
- 9.2 **Page Two, point 6, Terms of Reference (ToR).** This is the core of what the NOC A needs to achieve, in terms of providing advice to NOC, on shaping the direction of NC. GH asked if the Board agreed that NC is the right way to define this or should we think

beyond NC? Should the NOCA offer broader advice beyond NC? PL noted that there could be a wider interpretation of NC other than 'funded by NERC', however, GH said that the ToR document assumes that the NOC A is interacting on NERC-funded NC which is a clear role for the NOC A.

- 9.4 The remit of the NOC A is restricted to the NERC components of NC and broader issues are covered by the Challenger Society. EH advised not to underestimate the breadth of NC which represents half of the funding that the NOC receives. The remit of NC ranges from the ships to long-term observations. NOC has a small amount of funding that supports National Public Good (NPG) and this will support our link to the UN Decade of the Ocean; NPG supports the Marine Science Coordination Committee.
- 9.5 MS noted that there is no mention of the continuity or composition of researchers, (meaning the next generation of scientists and gender balance). There is a rapid turnover of grants so we can lose continuity. This is a broad issue which cuts across all branches of science and we will think about this, as will Challenger and other bodies.
- 9.6 NC-delivered work includes NOC, PML, SAMS and the MBA. PML is awarded NC from NERC that does not come via NOC. PML receives NC funding from the NCEO and NCAS, however, marine NC is channelled through NOC. Are we sufficiently engaged with the community on the topic of NC? SdM commented that generally, NC is geared towards long-term science thinking and we need to make use of NC rather than try to reshape it.
- 9.7 AW said that one general meeting per year has not provided opportunity for the community to feed back on the issue of NC. EH noted that the NOC A Steering Board has at least two subgroups which are a way of providing feedback on particular aspects of NC.
- 9.8 MS noted that communication is well done in engineering but not so well for ecology. Some of the community may not completely understand what NC is. AH said that it would be useful to have input from a wider group. We need to think about new ways to communicate.
- 9.9 The new name of the NOC Association will be the NOC Association of Marine National Capability Beneficiaries. The reference to beneficiaries links to the future when the NOC will have charitable status. This title will be shortened to the NOC Association.
- 9.9.1 PL would prefer that the NOC A be broader than NC. GH said that the focus will be to think about NC spend but broader areas of NC spend will be areas where we can interact with the Challenger Society. SdM sympathised with PL's viewpoint as the NOC A was intended to serve the marine science community, however, this is now more limited. For example, where will we discuss topics like the UN Decade of Ocean Science? Would this be left to the Challenger Society? GH considered that the Decade is something that should be discussed by this Board because it has implications for NC. AH agreed.
- 9.9.2 The role of the NOC Association is not to duplicate what the Challenger Society or MBA does, however, we need to be a conduit between the broad marine science community in the UK and NOC in its delivery of NC. The new title reflects the fact that

some aspects of what the NOC A was doing are no longer within its remit. GH said that should be doing more to communicate what NC is. RU noted that if the Board identifies issues outside its remit, then these can be passed on.

- 9.9.3 MFAB and CLASS will report into the NOC Association. There was a concern that CLASS won't be in the NOC A long because it is only a five-year programme. GH noted this and commented that the Board needs to build a stronger link with the community and ensure that the links continue even when CLASS finishes.
- 9.9.4 AH added that if we had small pots of money that could add to the NC, this would make a huge difference.
- 9.9.5 What will the NOC A do that is in addition to what it does currently; there are the sub-committees and the annual meeting. GH asked how we can profile NC? We could arrange the next AGM around this topic. MJ added that MASTS should also have a session on NC.
- 9.9.6 EH noted that NC is not generically understood by the science community and yet is vitally important for underpinning science. There have been several attempts to convey this and it should be better understood. GH said that this should be a focus at the next meeting of the Steering Board.

Item 10 – Review of Terms of Reference (ToR)

- 10.1 **Page 3, point nine** – SAMS, PML and SAHFOS are providers of NC - can they also be members of this Board? As long as there are no conflicts of interest, membership will be fine. PL added that this is OK because members don't make decisions.
- 10.2 **Page 3, point 17.** The phrasing should reflect that the appointment of the Chair is to be made in consultation with the NOC Association Steering Board.
- 10.3 **Page 2, point 6.** PL commented on section 6 (c) and suggested that on bullet point two the wording be changed from:

'Duplicate the role of other bodies such as the Challenger....to, 'Where there are overlapping interests, NOCA should work in cooperation with bodies such as the Challenger.'

SdM advised to make this a separate point.

- 10.4 **Page 4, Point 19** should say that Chairs are 'ex officio' members on these boards. PL they should report to the Board and should be present. GH their papers would come to this Board.
- 10.5 **Page 4, number 26.** Include that the budget is be set in consultation with the Chair.
- 10.6 GH asked that term limits for service are included. [*Post-meeting note from Secretary: the term limit is given for the Chair and Board members (points 17 & 39).*]
- 10.7 **Page 5, point 29** – Merge the two bullet points together.

- 10.8 Once the document has been updated, it should be recirculated around the Board, then around the NOC Association. **Action: GH/Secretary**

Item 11 - Membership of the NOC A Board

- 11.1 We need to consider whether any institutes are missing. With the exception of DT, MS and RU, all other members will now step down. It was noted that there are no ladies on the Board. We should look to recruit three new members now and three more in the future. TC offered to step down. SdM advised he would be relinquishing his role on this Board to Professor Icarus Allen so this would also be SdM's last meeting. GH thanked TC and SdM. *Post meeting note to record thanks to AW.*
- 11.2 Page 6, number 38, Terms of Reference – Input on NC would be welcome from MASTS, IMarEST, the SMI and the MSCC, not necessarily as members of the Board although membership by the Challenger Society and MASTS is crucial.
- 11.3 Two groups who should be on the MSCC are NERC (maybe as NOC) and the broader community (currently represented by Challenger). RU agreed to bring this up at the next meeting of the Challenger Society. **Action: RU**
- 11.4 MJ agreed there needs to be broader academic representation on the MSCC. This could be either the Challenger Society or MASTS. MJ agreed to write to Colin Moffatt. **Action: MJ**

Item 12 9th Annual Meeting

- 12.1 The session on the Future of the NOC Association will be covered by GH and there will be a 10 minute presentation on CLASS about using berths on ships. The date of next Steering Board meeting will be six months from now. A Doodle Poll will need to be issued. **Action: JP**

AOB

EH thanked Peter Liss for his long and helpful service to the NOC Association since its beginnings in 2010. PL thanked EH and JP. During the 9th Annual Meeting of the NOC Association, EH would formally thank PL for his services to the Association and the marine science community. To this end, EH would be awarding PL with an Honorary Fellowship of NOC which is for those who have served marine science and have had a link with NOC. This would be the first time that NOC has made this award.

GH thanked PL and EH for their broad engagement with the community.

Actions from May 2019 meeting

Point	Action	Who	Carried forward
2.1	Publish meeting minutes from November 2018	Secretary	
2.2	Decide if action 3.5. still necessary.	New Chair	From Nov 2018
2.5	7.1 Complete actions on new memberships	New Chair and Secretary	From Nov 2018
2.7	Add another column to the actions list to show those that have been carried forward.	Secretary	
6.6	Raise community representation on the MSCC at next Challenger Council.	RU	
10.8	Revise ToRs following May meeting and circulate around the Board, then the NOC Association.	EH, Secretary	
11.4	There needs to be broader academic representation on the MSCC. MJ agreed to write to Colin Moffat.	MJ	
	The date of next Steering Board meeting will be six months from now. A Doodle Poll will need to be issued.	Secretary	