

NOC Association Steering Board

Department of Earth Sciences, University of Oxford, 8th November 2016

Attending

Professor Peter Liss, CBE, FRS, University of East Anglia, Chair
Professor Ed Hill, OBE, National Oceanography Centre
Professor Gideon Henderson, FRS, University of Oxford
Dr Hilary Kennedy, University of Bangor
Professor Andrew Watson, FRS, University of Exeter
Dr David Marshall, University of Oxford
Professor Rachel Mills, University of Southampton/Challenger Society

Jackie Pearson, Secretariat, National Oceanography Centre

Item 1 Chairman's welcome and apologies

- 1.1 Professor Peter Liss welcomed colleagues and noted that apologies had been received from Professor Steve de Mora, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Steve Hall, National Oceanography Centre, Tony Clare, University of Newcastle and Professor Jon Sharples, University of Liverpool.

Item 2 Meeting minutes 4th April 2016

- 2.1 The meeting notes were accepted subject to one correction in 3.1 '*the drop on the number of DTPs*' needs to be revised to '*the drop on the number of marine-focused studentships in DTPs*'. Once corrected, the notes may be published on the NOC Association web site. **Action: Secretariat**
- 2.2 Peter Liss referred to the document summary about the remit of the NOC Association and noted that the Marine Science Coordination Committee is not represented. Professor Rachel Mills attends Steering Board meetings both in her capacity as the President of the Challenger Society and as a representative of the University of Southampton. Dr Hilary Kennedy, a former president of the Challenger Society attends the meeting as a representative of the University of Bangor. Peter recommended that the membership criteria be amended to read that, '*in normal practice the Chair of Challenger should be on the NOC Association Steering Board.*' **Action: Secretariat**
- 2.3 The Board suggested either a quarterly newsletter or an email across the community featuring news updates e.g. funding opportunities. **Action: Secretariat**
- 2.4 It is hoped to be able to launch the '*Compendium of capability*' at the 7th Annual Meeting and also, to highlight it at the March 2017 meeting of the MSCC. This will be possible subject to available resource.

Item 3 **NOC Association in the new NOC**

- 3.1 Professor Ed Hill said that the issue about the status of the NOC Association within the new NOC had become less clear. The Association will have an observer status. Peter Liss asked whether the fact that the NOC Association is funded by the NOC may compromise its independence. Ed advised that the NOC Company Secretary Caroline Speller was in discussion with some NHS trust secretaries to draw comparisons with the form of the new NOC.
- 3.2 Peter Liss asked how important it will be that the NOC Association has some independence from the new NOC. Should the NOC Association continue as it is? This question depends on the level of influence that the Board hopes to have. Peter commented that it would be best that the NOC Association is not a trustee, but that it has observer status so that it will be possible to express an uninhibited view. Ed asked whether the Board would feel inhibited if the NOC Association continued to be supported by the NOC or would the Board refer the Association to be supported in a different way? Professor Andrew Watson noted that were the NOC to withdraw its support, this would not be well received by the community.
- 3.3 Peter Liss noted the advantages of support from the Secretariat and added that the articles of the new NOC would need to show that the NOC Association has a role in the running of the new NOC. The articles could include that administration and travel support will be provided.
- 3.5 Dr Hilary Kennedy asked whether the name '*NOC Association Steering Board*' could be changed to the '*NOC Association Advisory Board*'. Ed Hill said that there will already be a number of Advisory Boards for the new NOC that report to the executive structure of NOC. The NOC Association would have observer status on the main board and the Advisory Boards would report to the NOC Executive Board.
- 3.6 Andy commented that one of the roles of the NOC Association was to enable, for example, HEIs to have a voice in terms with regards of research infrastructure e.g. the NERC ships. The background document on the NOC Association is to be sent to Rachel Mills. **Action: Secretariat**
- 3.7 Dr David Marshall commented that it is unlikely that institutes would agree to pay a membership fee to be part of the NOC Association. Presently, this Board is represented by Peter Liss on the NOC Stakeholder Advisory Board. Professor Gideon Henderson said that NOC support will be anticipated with T & S support from the NOC. Peter added that the NOC Advisory Board and Steering Board have agreed that the Association should have an observer status in the new NOC and that this needs to go to the NOC Stakeholder Advisory Board.

Item 4 Marine science and the disciplinary balance of NERC funded PhDs

- 4.1 Mark James spoke to this item and explained some analysis he had completed from data provided by NERC from 2011 onwards. Peter referred to the concern that marine science may be allocated a smaller proportion of studentships under the new NERC Doctoral Training Partnerships compared with the algorithm allocation of studentships.
- 4.2 Peter Liss was concerned that available data have indicated that there has been a drop in numbers of marine-related PhD studentships. For example, the figure for the proportion of PhD studentships identified as 'Marine' was 19% in 2015. Previously, the figures were higher in the data provided by the NERC office.
- 4.3 Rachel Mills referred to the 2017 NERC Call for Evidence of Training Priority. This is now on the NERC web site (<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/focused/cdt/evidence/>). The NOC Association stakeholders should be encouraged to submit appropriate evidence to this call. **Action: Secretariat**
- 4.4 Gideon Henderson noted that we need to bring the community together to think about the training priorities in the marine area. Peter suggested that this could be taken up at the 7th Annual Meeting. Members agreed. Rachel explained that evidence will be looked at by the NERC Training Advisory Board in June 2017 leading to future calls for proposals from the community. Peter agreed to have this subject as an item at the 7th Annual Meeting **Action: Peter Liss**
- 4.5 Peter Liss suggested we should have a session on Training Priorities in the marine area at the annual meeting. It would be useful to obtain the classification of studentship by Science Area for NERC funded and other studentships to present to inform a Training Priority submission.

Item 5 Ownership and governance

- 5.1 Ed Hill said that there is a paper between NERC and BEIS which will invite the Science Minister to approve moving to the development of business cases from the NOC and the CEH.
- 5.2 We will need to recruit members to shadow boards. Producing the business case is not a problem but it needs to have somewhere to go. There is a timetable for this. The UKRI is now being formed; the legislation is going through Parliament and this will go on line from 1 April 2018. If, therefore, the NOC does become independent, this needs to happen before 1 April 2018, i.e. before the UK RI comes on line.

Item 6 Actions from the 6th Annual Meeting

- 6.1 During the closing discussion of the 6th Annual Meeting, a concern had been raised about the need to maximise the flow of information and to ensure early involvement of the UK in bids to research initiatives. Peter Liss emphasised the need to publicise national calls for proposals, especially where there is a need to identify partners and European contacts. There is a need to be mindful of potential conflicts of interest.

Item 7 Annual Meeting of NOC Association

- 7.1 There needs to be time (say one hour) for groups to discuss bids for CDTs. There needs to be a paper circulated before the meeting to explain what is required of delegates. We need a discussion, perhaps at the end of the morning session. Results can be reported back at plenary. Rachel could cover an introduction to this. Perhaps we should book some side rooms. Rachel agreed to think about this. Gideon suggested one group/sub-set from delegates to discuss this. Mark James could lead a group on aquaculture, for example. Also, perhaps deep sea mining?
- 7.2 People interested in student training need to decide the focus of the CDT. Should we choose a champion? Ideas can then will go to the TAP. Last time, there were 37 evidence bids. We need to generate a three page concept idea and need examples of successful CDT bids. Rachel could cover this. Delegates need to come with an idea and ideally, some supporting evidence. Could we link to examples when we announce the meeting?
- 7.3 Other topic ideas include the G7 process, the Global Challenges Research Fund, the implications of Brexit. Suggest a one hour lunch, and then one hour discussion, then 10 minutes for feedback. We need to nominate colleagues to lead this who must be notified in advance. We should include an item on the G7. Ed explained how the Ocean became an agenda item for G7 nations. Two issues were raised: marine plastics and deep sea mining. These were agreed but the Science Minister said that there was a need to take a wider perspective - there is a need for a 'CERN of the ocean'. The UK suggested this idea already exists in the guise of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and agreed to develop this initiative further. The UK has continued to lead this project with the developed of five recommendations:
1. Support the development of an initiative for enhanced global sea and ocean observation required to monitor inter alia climate change and marine biodiversity, e.g. through the Global Argo Network and other observation platforms, while fully sustaining and coordinating with ongoing observation;
 2. Support an enhanced system of ocean assessment through the UN Regular Process to develop a consensus view on the state of the oceans, working to a regular timescale which would enable sustainable management strategies to be developed and implemented across the G7 group and beyond;

3. Promote open science and the improvement of the global data sharing infrastructure to ensure the discoverability, accessibility, and interoperability of a wide range of ocean and marine data;
 4. Strengthen collaborative approaches to encourage the development of regional observing capabilities and knowledge networks in a coordinated and coherent way, including supporting the capacity building of developing countries; and
 5. Promote increased G7 political-cooperation by identifying additional actions needed to enhance future routine ocean observations.
- 7.4 We are working to help the Science Minister to identify the issues. The NOC has been a catalyst to develop the position papers and had received input from members of the NOC Association. A meeting will be held in Southampton at the end of November 2016 which will hone a further set of recommendations that will go to the next Ministerial Meeting.
- 7.5 Countries have volunteered to lead on four of the five recommendations. Ocean observing is identified as the most important theme. Gideon Henderson asked about the objective of this process. Ed Hill explained that the UK would like to see if the initiative leads to further funding from the UK side into ocean observing. We have raised the profile of this issue at Ministerial level. We are trying to add some political impetus and see whether the G7 can improve on the earlier ocean assessment that was completed.
- 7.6 Peter Liss asked whether we should include an item about this in the annual meeting. By the date of the 7th Annual Meeting, the next stage of this process will have taken place and there will be a report on what has happened so far. It would be good for the community to hear about this. Peter suggested that we have a presentation on this and suggested contacting Adrian Martin or Jo Johnson or Alex Crook from BEIS. It was agreed to include the G7 as an agenda item at the 7th Annual Meeting. **Action: Secretariat**
- 7.7 Gideon and Rachel are involved in the Foresight project '*Future of the Sea*' that is looking at marine resources. Sir Mark Walport and Ian Boyd are co-chairing this. Henry Green, Government Office for Science, is Project Leader. Ian Boyd should be invited to talk about the '*Future of the Sea*'. **Action: Secretariat/Peter Liss**
- 7.8 Ed Hill confirmed that Marine Scotland is represented for the G7 '*Future of the Oceans and Seas*.' Mark James agreed to circulate a report about BREXIT that had been undertaken by ABP Mer. **Action: Mark James**
- 7.9 Rachel mentioned that Defra's Gemma Harper would be a good contact to invite a presentation about the 25 Year Environment Strategy and how Defra is testing these through a limited number of 'Pioneer' areas. **Action: Secretariat**

- 7.9.1 Peter Liss suggested we include an item on the RRS *Sir David Attenborough* which will be launched in 2018. Dr Ray Leakey should be invited to talk about the new ship. Gideon asked if we have a short piece on ship capability about the capability of RRS *Discovery*, RRS *James Cook* and the RRS *Sir David Attenborough*. We might also include an update on robotics from Dr Maaten Furlong. We should allocate one hour to these subjects. **Action: Secretariat**
- 7.9.2 Other suggested topics for inclusion are: the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), with an overview, if possible from Professor Kevin Horsburgh. Peter Liss is aware of a successful application in the marine area and it would be good to approach the applicant to hear about their experience. We need to change the perception that it isn't possible to fund marine research through the GCRF.

Item 8 AOB and date of next meeting

- 8.1 The Board set the date of the NOC Association Steering Board as 29th March and the 7th Annual Meeting of the NOC Association as 30th March 2017.
- 8.2 Jackie Pearson asked for the Board to consider the Society for Underwater Technology for membership of the NOC Association. Ed Hill agreed, though noted that we need to remain mindful that the Association is primarily intended for our academic community. **Action: Secretariat**
- 8.3 It was agreed to invite Professor Angela Hatton to future meetings of the NOC Association Steering Board. **Action: Secretariat**