

NOC Association Steering Board

4th October 2021

Microsoft Teams meeting

Attending

Professor David Thomas, University of Helsinki (DT), Chair

Professor Icarus Allen, Plymouth Marine Laboratory (IA)
Professor Angela Hatton, National Oceanography Centre (AH)
Dr Kate Hendry, University of Bristol (KH)
Professor Ed Hill, National Oceanography Centre
Dr Teresa Fernandes, Heriot Watt University (TF)
Professor Mark Inall, SAMS (MI)
Dr Mark James, MASTS (MJ)
Professor Claire Mahaffey, University of Liverpool (CM)
Mike Palmer, Marine Science Coordination Committee (MP)
Professor Martin Solan, University of Southampton (MS)

Secretary: Jackie Pearson (JP)

Guest participant: Dr Katy Hill, UK G7 Future Seas and Oceans Initiative Coordinator (KH)

Apologies

Dr Kerry Howell, University of Plymouth
Professor Ros Rickaby, the Challenger Society

Item One Welcome

Item Two Actions from May 2021

2.1 Minutes were agreed and should be published on-line. **Action: JP**

Item Three NOCA and the Challenger Society

3.1 Need to help community understand the differences between the Challenger Society and NOCA. JP to liaise with RR to write a piece for the NOCA and Challenger websites. Challenger Society is having an event on December 9th and might be an opportunity to raise this. **Action: JP/RR**

3.2 If the NOCA ToRs are unclear for community, we need a rethink. Need to ensure NOCA is acting within its remit so check discussion items each time. **Action: All**

Item Four MSCC update Mike Palmer

4.1 A map of different groupings, bodies, roles and responsibilities could be useful for the current review of the MSCC. Deborah Hankins has taken over from Simon

Brockington. At the last MSCC meeting, there was a concern from sub-group chairs about the MSCC vision and it was decided to review the plenary committee structure, vision and purpose. Prof Gideon Henderson is engaging with his counterparts across Whitehall to consider how we can most effectively work at the interface between the marine science and policy communities. We have asked Defra's marine evidence team to look at the MSCC set up, role, purpose, ToRs and the Secretariat, which itself is undergoing changes at the moment. MP thanked JP for covering Dr Abigail Marshall's Secretarial role after Dr Marshall's departure. We will review process this autumn and produce a report in January 2022, by engaging with the NOCA, subgroups etc. All of this has meant that we haven't had a plenary meeting in the last few months.

6. NOCA AGM 2022

6.1 Summary comments about the type of meeting

- hybrid events, need technical support – not always straight forward, can be expensive.
- consider why we would bring people across the country. Should be conducting this meeting on a fully virtual basis?
- how many people are even listening though if you have on-line events? It might be good to have people in the room?
- Progress not always achieved when taking part in events in person.
- Look at remit and discussion about the Challenger Society. A broad annual meeting may be more than just advising NOC on NC-related activities. Perhaps should have the NOCA as part of the Challenger Society meeting? Perhaps this would help adhere us to remit which may help resolve the confusion.
- Important to think about those on-line as sometimes those who are in the room may be better catered for.
- On-line allows a wider group of people to attend, cuts down on B & B, travel etc.

Conclusion – AGM to be on-line but ask department head to attend. Action: JP

6.2 Suggested topics for the 2022 AGM

- 6.2.1 EH advised NERC has asked NOC to lead an activity to understand how NERC might prioritise sustained ocean observations that are funded through National Capability (NC). The UK has several long-term sustained observations and there are emerging new activities, e.g. around gliders and biogeochemical floats etc. NERC would like to understand the landscape and wants a review from the science community. MI agreed the topic could achieve useful input.

- 6.2.2 KH referred to straying into the territory of the Challenger Society. There may be opportunities to join up at the next Challenger Society meeting in 2022. We need to be aware of what the Challenger Society is already covering. IA mentioned that the 2021 item on COVID overlapped with the remit of the Challenger Society so some confusion was understandable.
- 6.2.3 The 'Decade' is within the NOCA remit. The NOCA needs to be distinctive about which part of the Decade we are covering. IA agreed that the Decade is within the NOCA remit but what is the role of NC in delivering the Decade? EH said that NC has an important, distinctive role in delivering the Decade and there is a separate NC funding stream for 2022 which is around data, data centres and access and this links to observations.
- 6.2.4 DT confirmed that the meeting should be virtual and talked about representation from Early Career Researchers.

Item Five – the Decade Working Group (DWG)

- 5.1 AH talked about the National Decade Committee; hopefully a member of the DWG will attend the NDC meetings when agenda items are relevant. MI commented that we need to think about how the DWG topics relate to National Capability (NC) and the NOCA.
- 5.3 The membership of the DWG was drawn from the NOCA and the Challenger Society communities etc. The DWG is a community activity which originated from a call announced at the 2021 NOCA AGM. The DWG aims to help those who want to take opportunities forward. The NDC now needs to explain what it is doing; the NOCA and Challenger communities may want to think about how they might influence the NDC. There is now a call for nominations for members of the NDC and NOC, by default, has a communication role on this.
- 5.4 National Public Good funding supports the Marine Science Coordination Committee and government departments in underpinning the 'Decade'. NOC has provided the Secretariat for the MSCC for many years with resource from Defra which has now dwindled to almost nothing. Many committees lead back to NOC which is a potential source of confusion for the community as it can appear that NOC is responsible for all these activities.
- 5.5 KH mentioned the G7 Future of the Oceans and Seas Working Group which relates to NC and sustained observations. KH is happy to discuss how we are taking this forward. There will be a collaborative side event at COP26. EARTHDAY.ORG planned for [November 2021](#) will highlight observing network.

AoB

MS commented that scientists increasingly has less time to commit to some calls. The Decade is an opportunity for the UK to shine but a recent call allowed only four weeks to prepare whereas it needed need three to four months. This will impact the quality of submissions when colleagues must respond at the last minute.

DT closed the meeting by advising that he would be stepping down as Chair of the NOCA Steering Board, effective from 1 January 2022 so this would be his last meeting.

Actions

Item	Action	Who
2.1	Publish May 2021 minutes on-line	JP
3.3	Write a piece about the differences between the NOCA and the Challenger Society for the related web sites. Challenger Society has event on 9 th December so might be an opportunity to raise this.	RR/JP
3.4	Check that NOCA discussion items are within the NOCA remit.	All
6.1	Prepare the agenda for the NOCA AGM – to be a virtual meeting and ensure Heads of Department are invited.	JP