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# Report of the Triennial Review of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee

June 2013



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



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# Executive Summary

1. In April 2011, the Cabinet Office announced that all Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) would be reviewed at least once every three years. These Triennial Reviews (TRs) would have two key purposes:
  - a. To provide a robust challenge to the continuing need for the NDPB, its functions and form, and be assessed against the Government's three tests.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Where it is agreed that the body will remain as an NDPB, to review the control and governance arrangements in place to ensure that the public body is complying with recognised principles of good corporate governance.
2. The Review of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) was announced by Richard Benyon, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment, Water and Rural Affairs, through a Written Ministerial Statement on 21 March 2013. The Review has been conducted in accordance with the Cabinet Office Guidance on Reviews of Non- NDPBs.<sup>2</sup> This is the first Triennial Review<sup>3</sup> of JNCC which has been undertaken jointly by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Devolved Administrations).
3. The Cabinet Office guidance notes that Reviews must not be overly bureaucratic, be appropriate to the size and nature of the NDPB and conducted in a way that represents value for money for the taxpayer.
4. The Review was conducted in two stages. Stage one examined the key functions and stage two considered the governance arrangements to ensure that JNCC was operating in accordance with the principles of good corporate governance.

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<sup>1</sup> The Cabinet Office "3 tests" are: is this a technical function (which needs external expertise to deliver); is this a function which needs to be, and seen to be, delivered with absolute political impartiality (such as certain regulatory or funding functions); or is this a function which needs to be delivered independently of Ministers to establish facts and/or figures with integrity.

<sup>2</sup> [http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/triennial-reviews-guidance-2011\\_tcm6-38900.pdf](http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/triennial-reviews-guidance-2011_tcm6-38900.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Consideration was last given to the functions and form of JNCC as part of the introduction of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>).

5. The Review concluded that JNCC is very much valued for its record of delivering Government environmental priorities and is generally respected by its partners and customers. The functions JNCC carries out on behalf of Government are currently necessary and it is broadly the right body for delivering those functions. JNCC's current status as an Executive NDPB should remain.
6. However the Review also concluded that the range of functions carried out by JNCC could be better managed and communicated to sponsoring bodies through better transparency and accountability.
7. Other areas for improvement include:
  - improving services to customers and Government, through better partnership working and clarity of delivery. For example, through better join up of marine conservation advice between JNCC and the country conservation bodies, including Natural England;
  - driving forward a more collaborative approach with other environmental organisations, including civil society, to deliver shared environmental aims;
  - further strengthening governance arrangements to deliver better accountability to the governments of the UK and the Devolved Administrations, and the public;
  - continuing to drive forward efficiencies and focus resources on key government priorities; and
  - improving the visibility of its scientific leadership.
8. Once implemented, these changes will further improve JNCC's efficient delivery of the UK's environmental priorities in the face of future challenges.
9. The TR team worked closely with the leadership and staff of JNCC and is grateful for the invaluable advice and information they have provided.

## **Introduction and Purpose of the Review**

10. In 2010 all NDPBs were subject to a cross-government review to confirm whether the body was needed. On 14 October 2010, the Cabinet Office Minister announced proposals for reform of public bodies to increase accountability, cut duplication of activity, and discontinue activities that were no longer needed. In April 2011 the Cabinet Office published the Triennial

Review programme and, in June 2011, published guidance on the principles and processes by which departments should review their NDPBs.

11. JNCC is classified as an Executive NDPB. It has a UK-wide remit and is sponsored and funded by Defra and the Devolved Administrations. This Review was therefore undertaken jointly by Defra and the Devolved Administrations. JNCC comprises a Joint Committee responsible for strategic direction and high-level decision-making, and the JNCC Support Company, a company limited by guarantee which employs staff and implements work programmes set by the Committee. Both the Committee and the Company were considered as part of the Review process.

12. The Review considered whether any reforms would achieve:

- better delivery of high-quality nature-conservation evidence and advice to Government and JNCC customers, resulting in better outcomes for the environment, the economy and for society on a sustainable basis; and
- any strengthening of its governance arrangements, to deliver better accountability to UK and devolved governments and the public.

15. Information was initially collected from the Devolved Administrations and UK Government departments including the Department for Energy and Climate Change and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Stakeholders gave their views in response to the JNCC TR Discussion Document,<sup>4</sup> and took part in a preparatory stakeholder workshop. Relevant responses to the Discussion Document for the Review of the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) were also taken into account.<sup>5</sup>

13. The Review examined the functions of JNCC, in particular whether they were necessary, and if they should continue to be carried out by JNCC in its current form. This is further explored in the sections “Assessment of Functions” and “Assessment of Alternative Delivery Models”.

14. In parallel, Defra has also carried out a Review of the EA and NE. This has allowed this Review to consider linkages between the respective work of these organisations. This report reflects current government policies and priorities. These may change and JNCC will need to reflect these changes at the appropriate time.

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<sup>4</sup> Available from the following webpage:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/181989/jncc-triennial-review-discussion.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181989/jncc-triennial-review-discussion.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Available from the following webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/triennial-review-of-the-environment-agency-and-natural-england>

### **Box 1 - JNCC Key Facts**

The legal basis for JNCC is the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

The JNCC:

- advises the UK Government and Devolved Administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation; and
- is the forum through which the 4 UK Country Nature Conservation Bodies discharge their statutory responsibilities for nature conservation across the United Kingdom as a whole and internationally.

The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs appoints the Chair and five independent members of the Joint Committee. The other eight members comprise the Chair and one other member of each of the three GB Country Nature Conservation Bodies, while Northern Ireland is represented by two members from the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (statutory advisers to the Department of the Environment). The Chief Executive is appointed by JNCC.

JNCC has offices in Peterborough and Aberdeen, and employs around 160 staff. Its grant-in-aid budget for 2012-13 was £9.739 million, funded by Defra and the Devolved Administrations: Defra £7.137 m; Scotland £1.487m; Wales £0.743m; Northern Ireland £0.372m

JNCC spends its Grant-In-Aid broadly as follows:

- Marine work: £4m;
- Evidence and standards: £2.7m;
- International: £0.8m.
- Governance and corporate support: £2.2m.

Most of its work is commissioned either on a regular, annual basis (such as the preparation of annual or periodic reports for multilateral environmental agreements), or an ad-hoc basis, such as for import and export advice for CITES specimens.

JNCC also receives around £1 million per annum from other sources including other Government Departments.

# Summary of Conclusions

## **Box 2 – Conclusions (in no order of priority)**

Conclusion 1: JNCC will build on its current partnership working with stakeholders and in particular improve engagement with civil society, including with the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

Conclusion 2: JNCC, in collaboration with Defra, Devolved Administrations and the country conservation bodies, will review its internal arrangements to ensure that it is able to promote high-quality science, based on agreed priorities and provide a clear voice for the UK nature conservation bodies nationally and abroad.

Conclusion 3: Defra and Devolved Administrations, working with the Joint Committee, will explore options to ensure that the membership of the Committee and its ways of working allow the views of all sponsor bodies to be better represented. This could include exploring legislative options to provide eligibility to the sponsor Department in Northern Ireland to be represented on the Joint Committee.

Conclusion 4: There is currently no strong evidence to move all offshore marine delivery functions from JNCC to country conservation bodies such as Natural England. However, the Scottish and Welsh Administrations have confirmed that they will want to consider this again in due course.

Conclusion 5: JNCC and Natural England will work more collaboratively when providing marine conservation advice that spans the 12 nautical mile boundary. In particular they will explore further the delegation of renewable energy advice from JNCC to country conservation bodies, including Natural England. This should produce a more streamlined and efficient service to the customer.

Conclusion 6: Defra and Devolved Administrations, in collaboration with JNCC, will undertake an analysis of the funding of JNCC and a review of the funding formula to: determine a fair apportionment of grant-in-aid going forward; secure best value for money; and provide clarity on how JNCC delivers its functions for the sponsoring bodies.



# The Review

## Assessment of Functions

16. The functions analysis undertaken as part of the Review was conducted in two stages and focused on nine of the ten programme areas described in the JNCC business plan for 2012/13<sup>6</sup>. These comprised: surveillance and monitoring; marine monitoring; marine ecosystem assessment and advice; marine management; Marine Protected Area advice; global advice (including advice on UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies); European intelligence and advice; biodiversity information and advice; and access to information. Functions relating to JNCC Governance and Corporate Services programme area were not considered in the functions analysis but were considered separately, and more broadly, as part of the second stage of the Review process.
17. Thirty seven functions or work activities were considered against the three Government tests to ensure that they should be delivered by a public body.<sup>7</sup> All thirty seven work activities passed one or more of the three tests, i.e. they were:
- a technical function (which needs external expertise to deliver);
  - a function which needs to be, and seen to be, delivered with absolute political impartiality (such as certain regulatory or funding functions); and
  - a function which needs to be delivered independently of Ministers to establish facts and/or figures.
18. For most work activities there was strong evidence to suggest JNCC's evidence and advice functions should be delivered independently and impartially from Government. However, there was some scope to reconsider this in relation to the provision of Global and Overseas Territories advice.
19. As a result of the functions analysis and stakeholder views (Annexes 3 and 4), key programme areas were identified as needing further consideration. These are summarised with our conclusions as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> [http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/jnccBusinessPlan\\_2012-13.pdf](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/jnccBusinessPlan_2012-13.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> A summary of the application of the Government Tests can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/triennial-review-of-the-joint-nature-conservation-committee>

- ‘Access to Information’ - Based upon the internal review of JNCC’s data provision services (see Annex 6), the Review Team concluded there were no significant drivers for reforming the delivery of functions under JNCC’s “Access to Information” programme.
- JNCC’s ‘Global and Overseas Territories Advice’ - On further examination it was found that there was no overriding case for change to the delivery of JNCC’s Global and Overseas Territories functions (see Annex 5), including moving this function in house into Defra. JNCC should continue to carry out its functions as it currently does, reviewing where greater efficiencies can be secured. There may be opportunities for improving the work that JNCC carries out globally and specifically on Overseas Territories, given stakeholder concerns, in particular about the level of NGO engagement.
- Relevant aspects of the JNCC’s ‘Marine Programme’ - A separate workstream considered functions in the marine area. The results of this analysis are summarised in the section on Findings from the Review (see Annex 1 for full information).

20. In conclusion, JNCC’s current functions should continue to be delivered by a public body. All the functions considered passed at least one of the Government Tests indicating a public body should continue to deliver those functions (see Annex 4). There was evidence that the range of functions could be better managed and communicated to sponsoring bodies.

21. The following sections describe the functions analysis findings in further detail.

## **Partnership Working**

22. The Review concluded that JNCC’s relationships with its customers, including the UK Government, Devolved Administrations, country conservation bodies and civil society could be improved. This includes drawing further on the expertise available from other organisations particularly volunteers to deliver JNCC’s aims.

23. Partnership working with civil society could be improved in several areas such as the collection of biodiversity evidence in the terrestrial and marine environments (see Annex 1) in the UK and advising on nature conservation in the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. This will help achieve the best and informed environmental outcomes, while maintaining and enhancing JNCC’s close relationship with Defra, the Devolved Administrations and country-conservation bodies, and achieving better value for the tax payer.

## **Scientific leadership**

24. Some stakeholders asked that JNCC examine whether it had the best arrangements in place internally to provide strong scientific leadership on biodiversity and ecosystems that Government and other stakeholders require. JNCC's strengths in coordination of surveillance of terrestrial and marine biodiversity were widely acknowledged, including the importance of partnerships developed with the voluntary sector and the application of science-based advice to government policy. The Review concluded that JNCC should further enhance its visible leadership in the scientific community, providing a clear voice for the UK nature conservation bodies nationally and abroad.

## **Governance**

25. As a consequence of the provisions of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the representation on JNCC's Committee might not fairly reflect all its principal sponsors. This is especially true for Northern Ireland, whose structures differ from those in Great Britain. We will explore options to address this, including possible legislative change.

## **Improved delivery in the marine environment**

26. JNCC's marine work concerns evidence and standards across the UK, input to European and international agreements, and nature conservation advice in the offshore area (beyond 12 nautical miles from the coastline (nm)).

27. There are already a number of ongoing improvements to the delivery of marine work within the EA, NE and JNCC, alongside agencies such as the Marine Management Organisation. As part of the Review process for both this Review and that for the EA and NE, work has been carried out to assess the EA, NE and JNCC marine functions together. This is set out in more detail in Annex 1.

28. This assessment identified further scope to improve the way in which certain marine functions are delivered such as better join up between JNCC and NE in providing marine conservation advice. Stakeholders, in particular those from the renewable energy sector, expressed some concern about clarity of NE and JNCC's roles around the delivery of advice, in particular for offshore renewable cases.

29. Improvements were also identified in the commissioning of marine evidence. As JNCC only accounts for a small proportion of evidence commissioned by Defra, the Review has fed the conclusions into the wider Defra Strategic

Alignment Programme. This aims to integrate evidence commissioning, gathering and use across the Defra Network.

## Finance

30. While it is clear from this TR that the functions carried out by the JNCC are currently required and should be carried out by JNCC, there was a strong appetite for change in terms of clearly identifying exactly what the various contributions from UK Government and from Devolved Administrations pay for in terms of delivery. This would not only improve transparency for the sponsor organisations, but also improve accountability and help achieve better value for money for both taxpayers and customers. In the time taken to undertake this review, it has not been possible to address this particular issue in detail. As a result, JNCC and Defra will be working with the Devolved Administrations on an Analysis of Funding of JNCC, along with a review of the funding formula, to ensure a fair apportionment of how grant-in-aid is determined going forward.

## Assessment of Alternative Delivery Models

31. The Review considered how JNCC functions should be best delivered and considered options in line with Cabinet Office guidance. A summary of these options are included in Box 3:

### **Box 3 – Options for alternative delivery models considered for JNCC:**

- Move out of Central Government, for example to a charity, mutual organisation or social enterprise.
- Bring In-House within sponsor organisations.
- Merge with another body, for example Natural England for marine functions.
- Deliver through a new Executive Agency to form part of a Government Department.
- Deliver through an alternative model, such as Independent Advisory NDPB, Non Ministerial Department, Government Company, Public Corporation or Trading Fund.

32. An assessment of these alternative delivery models found that they were not considered appropriate due to a range of factors, such as:

- the current UK sponsorship arrangements
- lack of potential and likely separate income and future commercial viability
- need for continued independent scientific advice to Government
- lack of appetite from voluntary sector to take on the functions of JNCC
- small size of the organisation

33. The Review concluded an Executive NDPB is the most appropriate model for JNCC to carry out its UK wide functions. Three alternative delivery models for an Executive NDPB were then considered which were described in the published discussion document. Box 4 gives a summary of our considerations.

**Box 4 - Consideration of three Executive NDPB delivery models considered:**

Option 1: Current Structure – continue to seek efficiencies with improvements to accountability on the functions delivered, and to ensure that they meet the needs of and represent best value for money for each administration.

- Allows scope for future flexibility. For example, the Joint Committee could authorise country conservation bodies to exercise any of its functions, and could deliver additional commercial work for the government administrations and other bodies on an ad hoc basis.
- Encourages JNCC to develop further income streams.
- Creates a clear line of sight on the functions delivered to ensure that JNCC functions meet the needs of administrations and represent best value for money for taxpayers and customers.
- JNCC and Defra work with the Devolved Administrations will clarify governance arrangements further and help inform the review of the funding formula.
- This would involve minimal disruption to staff.

Option 2: Commissioning model for UK work – different funding mechanisms for core work (functions all countries wish to see delivered) and additional funding for non-core work by countries (to meet specific needs of administrations).

- In principle this structure could offer individual sponsor bodies greater flexibility to decide whether the provision of non-core work was needed to meet national priorities for their administration.
- However, it would be difficult to determine what proportion of JNCC's work falls within core work and what could be subject to commissioning. This could

compromise the integrity of the specialist expertise.

- It is considered likely that a high proportion of JNCC's current functions would be considered core work. Therefore introducing a new commissioning model for the small remaining non-core work would not represent an efficient or cost effective delivery option for sponsors.

There could be scope for JNCC's sponsors to explore commissioning opportunities that could arise under Option 1 as a result of the work to improve JNCC's efficiencies and identify a clear line of sight on functions delivered. This avoids the risks associated with option 2.

Option 3: Committee Structure - the Joint Committee agree a work programme to fulfil its UK functions but delivery work moves to the UK country conservation bodies and the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland (who would take on JNCC staff to undertake the work). JNCC's international work would be transferred with the relevant JNCC staff into Defra.

- This would be the most radical option for change.
- Establishing effective governance and operational arrangements and managing the transfer to successor bodies of work, staff, funding and data assets would potentially be difficult and costly.
- It would require legislative change, and would have the highest risk of non-delivery of functions leading to reputational damage and, potentially, costly infraction proceedings.

34. Of the stakeholders that expressed a preference about delivery models (Annex 3), most considered that no change to the existing delivery structure was necessary. A small number suggested that an arrangement involving service-level agreements or a more regional structure could be considered – particularly in relation to consent decisions for major offshore infrastructure developments.

35. The Review concluded that the assessment had not identified sufficient benefits in either Options 2 or 3 to justify changing the current structure. The associated and potentially ongoing costs and risk of disruption in moving to either new model could not, on the strength of the evidence, be justified. As a result, Option 1 was considered the most pragmatic, cost effective and flexible delivery model that could deliver government priorities.

## Control and Governance

36. Having concluded that JNCC should remain an executive NDPB, the second stage of the TR process involved an assessment of performance against the principles of good corporate governance. JNCC is performing well in delivering across its range of corporate plan performance indicators and has good governance systems in place.<sup>8</sup> These meet the financial accountability and performance monitoring requirements of Defra from its NDPBs.
37. However the situation is not static and further improvements will be needed (as identified in Box 2 - Conclusion 3 and 6) to improve DA representation on the Board and the transparency surrounding the cost and value of contributions from each administration to JNCC. It is expected that these changes will be reflected in key performance indicators and taken forward as part of the Analysis of Funding of JNCC.
38. The corporate services function of JNCC will also be considered as part of the Strategic Alignment Project which is taking place across the Defra Network. The assessment of governance arrangements is summarised below.

## Accountability

39. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is accountable to UK Parliament for the activities and performance of JNCC. Given that JNCC is jointly sponsored, relevant Ministers from Devolved Administrations are accountable to their own Parliament or Assembly.
40. The Chief Executive of JNCC is formally designated as Accounting Officer. In this role he is personally responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which he has charge; for ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds; and for the day-to-day operations and management of JNCC.
41. As the lead sponsor, Defra ensures that there is the right level of scrutiny and oversight of JNCC's functions through Ministerial approval of its corporate plan and key performance indicators. It also ensures quarterly reporting on financial and performance matters. Defra Ministers hold a performance review with the Chair and Chief Executive every six months. There is frequent liaison between senior JNCC staff, Defra officials, and officials of the Devolved

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<sup>8</sup> A detailed assessment of governance performance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/triennial-review-of-the-joint-nature-conservation-committee>

Administrations, including quarterly reviews of both financial and performance management. Moreover, JNCC holds an annual meeting with Ministers from the Devolved Administrations to check alignment, and bilateral review meetings with sponsorship teams from the Devolved Administrations to check performance. Framework documents govern many of JNCC's relationships. We will continue to keep our oversight mechanisms under review.

## Effective Financial Management

42. JNCC complies with all the necessary statutory and administrative requirements on the use of public funds. An Annual Report & Accounts is published, which is independently audited by the National Audit Office and compliant with HM Treasury guidance. This is published and laid before Parliament.

## Roles and responsibilities

43. The Joint Committee Chair is appointed by and responsible to the Secretary of State. Members of the Committee (see Box 1 - JNCC Key Facts) are appointed by the Secretary of State through a formal, rigorous and transparent appointment process. The Committee holds publicly open meetings three times a year. Members discuss strategic nature conservation and organisational issues as well as making high-level advice, strategy, funding and planning decisions.
44. The JNCC Framework Documents provide the legal, administrative and financial framework within which the Joint Committee operates. These documents are available from the JNCC website.

## Cost of Review

45. The review was carried out by a team formed from within Defra and the Devolved Administrations. An additional member of Defra staff at a cost of £13,000 was appointed to this team for the duration of the Review. In addition to these staff, a senior civil servant from a separate area within Defra provided external advice and challenge.



## **What happens next?**

Defra and the Devolved Administrations will work with JNCC to implement the conclusions in this report. An Analysis of Funding of JNCC will be produced before the end of the summer 2013. Furthermore, JNCC will provide an implementation report to Defra and the Devolved Administrations by June 2014.

# Annex 1: TR Marine Workstream – Findings of the Marine Working Group

## Annex Overview

The findings of the marine workstream, established to inform the Environment Agency and Natural England TR and Joint Nature Conservation Committee TR, are summarised below.

## Background

A Marine Working Group was set up to gather evidence, test options and recommendations in relation to marine conservation functions carried out in the seas around England by:

- Environment Agency (EA) – advice on coastal water quality and pollution
- Natural England (NE) – advice on marine nature conservation out to 12 nautical miles (nm) from the coast
- Joint Nature Conservation Council (JNCC) - advice on marine nature conservation in UK offshore waters (beyond 12nm); coordination of UK wide marine issues and reporting; and provision of standards and guidance to other country conservation bodies.

Members of the group were Defra, EA, NE, JNCC and Devolved Administrations, with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) attending in an observer capacity. The group met five times between February and April 2013. The following provides a summary of the group's analysis and findings.

## Analysing the marine functions of EA, NE and JNCC

The following marine functions of the EA, NE and JNCC were assessed:

1. Transitional and inshore waters including delivery of inshore water quality EU obligations (e.g. Water Framework Directive), environmental permitting and fisheries.
2. Biodiversity conservation advice for both inshore (0-12nm) and UK offshore (12 – 200+nm).
3. Marine evidence collection in inshore waters and UK offshore waters.

The agencies provided information on delivery of each of their marine functions. It was clear from research, discussions with the agencies and Defra policy leads that there was significant ongoing work by the agencies to co-operate in improving

delivery of marine work. For example, in response to the Better Regulation Executive Coastal Development Review<sup>9</sup>.

We analysed four work areas in detail - advice on planning and licensing, advice to public authorities/Government, evidence, and resources - through a brainstorming workshop with the agencies, MMO and Cefas. This concluded that the first two areas were common to both the marine and terrestrial landscape and would be considered as part of the EA/NE TR. Marine evidence is considered below and JNCC resource issues more widely as part of the JNCC TR.

### What marine stakeholders told us

Defra held a marine stakeholder workshop in January to gather stakeholder views. There were positive comments about all three organisations and examples of joint working around evidence collection and advice provision. Stakeholders valued the expertise of staff and integrity and transparency of evidence to government. Environmental stakeholders said they valued having agencies that had the environment at the core of their remit.

Some thought that advice provided to the planning and licensing process could be more consistent both within and between bodies. Stakeholders were worried about the capacity and resilience of agencies to provide advice. Renewable energy stakeholders suggested that the geographical boundary between Natural England and JNCC (at 12nm) sometimes caused issues where projects needed advice from both agencies. Although stakeholders thought that more integration was needed they had fewer concerns about organisation shape and were more concerned with ensuring timely and high quality advice was provided.

The six consultation responses to the NE/EA review discussion document which referenced delivery in the marine area, echoed comments from the stakeholder workshop. Eight marine responses to the JNCC discussion document covered similar issues (summarised in Annex 5). Some respondents were the same for both discussion documents.

### Findings of our work

Following the functions analysis and consideration of stakeholder views, two areas were examined in more detail as discussed below:

#### *Marine evidence collection*

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<sup>9</sup> Details of this review and Defra response are available from <http://discuss.bis.gov.uk/focusonenforcement/review-findings/>

We looked at whether there are opportunities to improve coordination around the gathering of evidence (through monitoring and research) between EA, NE and JNCC. We assessed two possible options for change against the current (baseline) situation. Both would extend the current role of Defra's Marine Biodiversity Evidence Coordination Board and include:

- a central commissioning body for marine evidence budgets requiring procurement
- centralising marine evidence budgets within one organisation.

The total spend across NE, EA and JNCC on marine evidence collection is approximately £18 million (2/3 of which is spent by EA focusing on, among other things, monitoring under the Water Framework Directive). Over 90% of these funds are marine monitoring and survey, and less than 10% are research and development. Agencies currently work in partnership with each other and other marine bodies.

Centralising procurement could generate a small amount of annual savings to the agencies (between £5,000 and £81,000). There may be other ways of common commissioning through agencies using each other's existing framework contracts or jointly procuring services. Centralising the marine evidence budgets within a single organisation could result in an estimated net cost to UK Government of £37,000 or net savings of up to £77,000 (depending on the diversity of projects). We concluded that the difference in the administrative impacts between the two options is not substantial. Given the uncertainty of future marine evidence project portfolios, it is hard to estimate efficiency gains so expert judgement has to be applied. In conclusion, there is no clear case to justify pursuing either of the two procurement options, but the role of the Coordination Board should nonetheless be strengthened.

#### EA/NE TR Report (Efficiencies in monitoring and data collection, p 41)

The Marine Working Group concluded similar findings for marine evidence in relation to JNCC as the NE/EA Review. This identified potential for a more efficient, rationalised approach, though better commissioning, prioritisation and integration of evidence work across the Defra network and with external partners. The EA/NE Review recognises that the most effective way to achieve this is through the work of the consolidated evidence project of the Strategic Alignment Programme, which aims to integrate evidence commissioning, gathering and use across the Defra network. The project will deliver options for short and medium term savings and has already developed (and had approval for) a model for a network-wide approach for the approval and delivery of all monitoring activities.

Defra will look to EA, NE and JNCC, working through the cross-network Strategic Alignment programme, to harmonise data commissioning, collection and interpretation as far as practicable.

### Outputs of Marine Evidence Collection Analysis.

- We anticipate that the greatest opportunities for efficiencies in marine evidence collection by EA, NE and JNCC are in reinforcing efforts to seek opportunities for joint prioritisation and integration of marine evidence work across the Defra network and with external partners. For example JNCC gain value for money by undertaking collaborative projects with other organisations which operate funded research cruises and EA and NE undertake many joint surveys.
- The Defra programme of Strategic Alignment (see above section) should include an assessment of maintaining or developing partnerships and collaborations with bodies outside Defra (e.g. research councils, research laboratories etc). Consideration should also be given to evidence work funded in UK offshore waters around Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- A stronger role is recommended for Defra's Marine Biodiversity Evidence Coordination Board (MBECB) in prioritising and integrating Defra's marine biodiversity evidence programme to promote proactive coordination to deliver efficiencies.
- We suggest a piece of work is undertaken with Devolved Administrations to consider any overlap between delivery agency evidence programmes and contracts. This would determine the scope for amalgamating procurement for simpler (menu-type) contracts under existing framework contracts (such as those of EA or NE) or developing new ones<sup>10</sup>.

### Marine conservation advice across inshore and offshore waters

We looked at options for improving the delivery of marine advice across the 12 nm boundary between JNCC and the other country conservation bodies. Two options were assessed in detail (a third of moving domestic marine advice from NE to JNCC was dropped after agreement of Marine Working group members):

- alternative ways of enhancing join up of conservation advice between delivery bodies without making formal changes to role, functions or significant organisational changes;
- moving all JNCC domestic offshore marine advice delivery functions to country conservation bodies, including NE.

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<sup>10</sup> Experience suggests that establishing new frameworks can take up to two years.

There was little quantitative information available so we considered qualitative costs and benefits to enhancing join up. The tools for achieving option one include: improving communication with stakeholders – better outward communication to clarify the role of Agencies and aid signposting of advice; formal agreements between agencies that set out roles and responsibilities in the provision of advice; building on existing powers for inter-agency delegation of responsibility; and contractual arrangements for specific tasks.

JNCC estimate that 44 of their staff<sup>11</sup> are engaged in delivery of domestic advice in the offshore area (17 in English offshore waters, 22 in offshore Scottish waters, 3 in offshore Welsh waters and 1 in offshore Northern Irish waters). JNCC staff are located in Peterborough and Aberdeen. Examining qualitative costs and benefits showed there might be some benefits to customer service from moving marine conservation advice to conservation agencies but it was recognised that national marine customers would still need to engage with different agencies in different parts of the UK. Moving all conservation advice delivery to country conservation bodies was considered to have a potentially de-stabilising effect on JNCC and possibly affect the delivery of its UK coordination work.

Conclusions included in this report (conclusions 4 and 5)

- There is currently no strong evidence to move all offshore marine delivery functions from JNCC to country conservation bodies such as Natural England. However, the Scottish and Welsh Devolved Administrations have confirmed that they will want to consider this again in due course.
- JNCC and Natural England will work more collaboratively when providing marine conservation advice that spans the 12 nautical mile boundary. In particular they will explore further the delegation of renewable energy advice from JNCC to country conservation bodies, including Natural England. This should produce a more streamlined and efficient service for the customer.

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<sup>11</sup> Calculated as Full Time Equivalents and not individual staff.

# Annex 2: Report of the JNCC TR Steering Group

## Annex Overview

The Report below summarises the work of both the JNCC TR Steering Group and the JNCC TR Working Group.

## Background

The Steering Group comprised representatives of the Defra JNCC TR Team and Defra's TR Team, the Devolved Administrations and JNCC. It first met on 20 February 2013 and subsequently met on 6 March, 19 March, 15 April and finally on 30 April.

A Working Group, comprising of working-level representatives of the Steering Group and JNCC officials was formed in order to consider:

- stakeholders' responses to the Discussion Document published when the Review launched on 21 March;
- an analysis of the functions of JNCC; and
- an analysis of options for changing the form of JNCC.

In addition, after its first meeting, it requested for its own consideration,

- a paper on Access to Information and
- a paper on JNCC's Global and Overseas Territories work.

The Working Group met on 15 and 23 April, and fed its conclusions to the Steering Group at its final meeting on 30 April.

The conclusions of the Steering Group are encapsulated in the conclusions and recommendations of this Report.

## Annex 3: Stakeholder Engagement

### Annex Overview

The summary below provides an overview of the stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of the Review. It also provides a summary of how Defra and the Devolved Administrations have responded to the evidence and comments provided in response to stakeholder engagement.

### Background

Before launching the consultation Defra undertook preparatory engagement with policy leads within Defra, other UK Government Departments and with stakeholders through a preparatory workshop held on 25 February 2013. This engagement helped shape the approach to the Review and allowed Defra to test the baseline data for the functions undertaken by JNCC.

A discussion document was published on 21 March. This was used to consult stakeholders about possible reforms to the current delivery arrangements, and the potential for reform of individual functions, or groups of functions within JNCC. A total of 33 responses to the discussion document were received, just under half came from civil society organisations in the four countries, and ten came from public bodies, two from individuals and two from trade organisations or businesses.

### Responses to Discussion Document - Key Concerns and Our Response

Most respondents considered that JNCC's functions are necessary. Only one respondent was negative about JNCC's functions and this was solely in relation to a narrow sub-set of functions.

**Our Response:** The evidence gathered as part of the Review and our own analysis of JNCC's functions largely supports this view expressed by most respondents. We have concluded therefore that the functions JNCC carry out are necessary.

Just over a quarter of respondents considered that JNCC did not collaborate with NGOs/civil society sufficiently in their work, and recommended they improve their record in this regard. Examples given included work related to the Overseas Territories and on biodiversity evidence in the UK.

**Our Response:** We recognise the concerns raised by respondents regarding the way JNCC collaborates with NGO / Civil Society. **Conclusion 1** addresses this.



Many respondents commented favourably on JNCC's work with respect to contacts with the OT administrations, on environmental mainstreaming, funding initiatives and advice. However, there was concern about the level of scientific data relating to OT biodiversity, and also the degree of transparency and accountability related to the disbursement of funding for OT initiatives. While there was much praise for JNCC's efforts in the Territories in terms of relationships with Territory Governments themselves, a number of NGO respondents considered that relations with them, both in metropolitan UK and in the Territories, could be improved.<sup>12</sup>

**Our Response:** We recognise the concerns raised by respondents regarding improvements in the way JNCC works with the OT. While noting the good work already undertaken in this area we have developed **Conclusion 1** to address the concerns raised.

Nearly half of respondents commented on the apparently increasing capacity constraints facing JNCC, in particular referring to the recruitment and retention of staff at all levels, especially specialist staff (inter alia on oil and gas). In this respect many also criticised the level of funding going to JNCC as being insufficient to meet increasing demand, especially for example on issues such as marine licensing.

**Our Response:** In response to the concerns of respondents regarding possible capacity constraints, recruitment and retention of staff and levels of funding for JNCC we have developed **Conclusion 6**.

Around one third of respondents commented on the level of independence of JNCC from the UK Government (and in one case Defra in particular). They regarded this as an important factor, that JNCC in some cases was threatened by too close a relationship with the UK Government, potentially affecting their impartiality. One respondent related this independence issue with the public appointments system.

**Our Response:** We recognise the value respondents place on JNCC's ability to provide independent advice. It should be noted however that JNCC is a body charged with delivering the priorities of the four sponsor countries and a good relationship with sponsoring Governments is essential. All key appointments for JNCC are made strictly in accordance with OCPA regulations.

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<sup>12</sup> There was no response from the Overseas Territories themselves

Connected with the above point, there was an issue raised by some respondents relating to the concentration of JNCC on English biodiversity matters, where there appeared to be a closer interaction between JNCC and English bodies than with those from the other Countries in the UK. These respondents suggested that greater interaction was needed between JNCC and organisations with devolved responsibilities. Although in many cases the evidence for this apparent disconnect was not provided, there were specific examples in the marine environment.

**Our Response:** In response to the concerns regarding a possible concentration of JNCC on English biodiversity issues we have developed **Conclusion 6**.

A small number of respondents mentioned that there should be greater contact between JNCC and the GB Invasive Non-Native Species Secretariat.

**Our Response:** We recognise that some respondents felt that JNCC and the GB invasive Non Native Species Secretariat should work more closely. In response we have developed **Conclusion 1**.

On Form, the one-third who expressed a preference suggested that no change was needed, although some suggested more of a Service-Level Agreement approach should be taken. Some also suggested a more regional structure might be appropriate, with closer relations for example between Scottish Natural Heritage and JNCC Scotland.

**Our Response:** The review concluded that Option 1 (Current Structure with a follow-up review to identify a clear line of sight on the functions delivered) was the most pragmatic, cost effective delivery model that could deliver government priorities.

Finally, a small number of respondents criticised the limited length of time for responding to the Discussion Document, especially as it included the Easter holiday.

**Our Response:** We wanted to launch the Review as quickly as possible and we asked for responses within three weeks to minimise potential disruption to JNCC. It is important that the Review was proportionate and reflected the fact that JNCC is a smaller body compared with, for example, the EA and NE. We also carried out some preparatory engagement with stakeholders in the run-up to the review to ensure they were well prepared to respond.

## Other thematic issues

Marine – a number of respondents commented on the marine work carried out by JNCC and other agencies:

- one suggested JNCC could lead on marine and climate change matters;
- a few felt that the 12 Nm boundary for division of responsibilities was “inappropriate and meaningless”; they added that there was a need for a single point of contact between NE and JNCC on marine issues;
- some wanted increased collaboration between JNCC and their NGOs on marine matters;
- one felt that JNCC focused too much attention on marine issues pertaining to England;
- a few commented that marine spatial planning issues needed to be addressed;
- one praised JNCC’s marine work, but considered it needed greater investment;
- one was positive about JNCC’s role, but considered results were increasingly becoming compromised by increasing demand on the licensing side; they added that JNCC should increase involvement in oversight of Marine Conservation Zones and Special Protection Area processes.

Renewable energy – a number of respondents commented on the renewable energy work carried out by JNCC:

- two expressed dissatisfaction with how JNCC operated in conjunction with Natural England, and commented there was confusion about roles here (duplication);
- a few favoured increased engagement by JNCC on renewable energy at sea.
- IPBES – one respondent mentioned JNCC’s role with respect to the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and saw much promise in their continuing their role in this

- Geodiversity – a small number of respondents expressed concern at the lack of attention given by JNCC to geodiversity.

### Breakdown of Responses Received

Of 33 responses (one of which was an addendum to an earlier response), just under half came from civil society organisations in the four countries, and ten came from public bodies, two from individuals and two from trade organisations or businesses. A fuller statistical analysis has been undertaken to support these findings.

### List of Contributing Stakeholders

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust	Jeremy Baker
Assoc Welsh RIGS Groups (Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites)	JNCC Trade Union Side
Bat Conservation Trust	National Grid
British Association for Shooting and Conservation	Natural Resources Wales
British Trust for Ornithology	Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group
Butterfly Conservation	Northern Ireland Environment Link
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology	Renewable UK
Cynthia Burek	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Department for Energy and Climate Change	Scottish Environment Link
European Environment Agency	Scottish Geodiversity Forum
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Scottish Natural Heritage
Forestry Commission	Scottish Power Renewables
GeoConservation UK	Scottish Wildlife Trust
International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	The Wildlife Trusts
	UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum
	Wildlife and Countryside Link
	Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

# Annex 4: Process for Functions Analysis

## Annex Overview

The summary below describes the steps taken to undertake a function analysis of JNCC conducted as part of the Review.

## Process Description

The functions analysis for the Review was taken forward in two broad phases. As part of phase 1 of the functions analysis Defra and JNCC worked together to establish baseline data for 37 key work activities grouped under each programme area.<sup>13</sup> With a baseline established, the review team were able to identify and start to challenge JNCC's individual functions by programme area. The Review Team considered evidence from policy officials in Defra and Other UK Government Departments, as well as from stakeholders (through a preparatory stakeholder workshop and through responses to the Discussion Document published by Defra) to make an assessment of which functions provided an opportunity for further consideration and which offered limited opportunity for reform.

The criteria applied in making the initial assessment of JNCC's functions are included were:

- a. an initial assessment of whether the activity passed the UK Government's "three tests",<sup>14</sup> as evidence for whether the activity needs to be delivered by a public body, such as a NDPB,
- b. the degree of flexibility available as to how the statutory requirements or policy commitments could be delivered;
- c. Defra policy teams' assessments of the extent of the opportunity to reform the delivery of the activities;
- d. whether alternative delivery options had been considered in recent reviews, particularly whether they had endorsed the current approach or identified potential for change.

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<sup>13</sup> the baseline was derived from JNCC's Business Plan and management information for 2012/13 and is presented in Annex 2 to the JNCC Discussion Document : [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/181989/jncc-triennial-review-discussion.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181989/jncc-triennial-review-discussion.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Paragraph 6.5 of the Cabinet Office Guidance for reviews of NDPBs: [http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/triennial-reviews-guidance-2011\\_tcm6-38900.pdf](http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/triennial-reviews-guidance-2011_tcm6-38900.pdf)

Based upon the initial analysis of phase 1 the primary purpose of phase 2 of the analysis was to create a shortlist of activities or groups of activities where there is the best opportunity for reform and to conduct further analysis on these in order to inform the conclusions of the review.

Considerations made at this second stage of analysis were: feasibility for change, appetite for change, potential benefits from change, and the scale of proposed change. As part of this further analysis functions within two programme areas were identified as meriting closer consideration and two papers were produced in order to do this:

- a) a paper on functions under 'Access to Information' and
- b) a paper on functions under JNCC's 'Global and Overseas Territories' work (Annex 5)

The Working Group considered these papers and their discussions and findings informed the conclusions developed for this report.

# Annex 5: Report on JNCC's Global Functions

## Annex Overview

The report below was requested by the JNCC TR Working Group as part of the function analysis carried out for the Review. It provides an analysis of JNCC functions under their Global Advice (including UK Overseas Territory and Crown Dependency) programme.

## Introduction

The JNCC TR Steering Group commissioned Defra to undertake a light-touch review of the global functions of the JNCC, following their consideration of the initial functions analysis. To inform this review, responses from stakeholders to the discussion document were analysed. In addition, the Review Team considered the current functions of JNCC and options for reform.

## Background

The UK is a signatory to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Good scientific advice is required to enable UK and devolved governments to meet their international obligations for biodiversity and sustainable development and to influence the outcome of negotiations at international meetings. International work is also necessarily linked to UK and country processes. JNCC provides advice to UK Government departments, the governments of the Overseas Territories (OTs) and Crown Dependencies (CDs) and others in respect of the implementation of the Environment Charters, MEAs, and the UK strategy on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Overseas Territories.

## Available options for future delivery

The options for delivering international work are different from those for UK coordination. This is partly because it is funded differently, and partly because the nature of the support and the customer is not always the same. The country conservation bodies are the main customer for UK coordination, and the UK Government and OTs and CDs are the main customers for international coordination.

International work could either remain with JNCC or in principle be moved elsewhere i.e. probably to within core Defra, but another organisation such as another Arm's Length Body (ALB) could be considered if any efficiencies and improved service

could be generated. However, it is not apparent that any other ALB would in practice have the requisite capacity or unique knowledge and skill-set to assume these functions. The review also considered whether some functions could be transferred to NGOs. However, there are strong, substantive reasons for not pursuing this.

### Consideration of Functions - Views from stakeholders

Responses to the discussion document (at least 14 of the responses make specific reference to JNCC's role on global advice and OT/CD support) are generally supportive of JNCC's role, in many cases wanting it to be strengthened. This is especially true in terms of support provided to OTs and CDs. FCO is particularly supportive of their work in environmental mainstreaming in the OTs (and in fact has been funding this work to the value of £300K/annum for the past two years).

However, a number of NGO respondents, while supporting the work with the OTs and CDs, noted a need for better engagement with the NGO community and improved strategic approach to evidence provision and transparency of funding for projects. They also suggest that JNCC's capacity for providing impartial advice may be compromised by the closeness of their relationship with the UK Government, and in particular Defra. One stakeholder mentions particular issues with respect to OT and CD support that they have experienced both with Defra (and other UK Government Departments) and JNCC, but while the relationship clearly needs to be addressed, the response itself is not considered to be representative.

### Conclusion

To transfer the global role of JNCC would entail significant realigning of staff objectives - there is no discrete team within Defra to which this function could transfer, and no ALB equipped to do so. Moreover, transferring any of JNCC's functions to one or more NGOs is also not seen as a practical option, for the reasons given above.

JNCC's arm's length position from the UK Government gives it an impartial and unbiased position which is valued by stakeholders. As CITES licensing advice in particular cannot be absorbed into core Defra, any transfer would also have to be to another organisation. This would be unlikely to result in any significant savings, but could cause severe short- to medium-term disruption, while the new organisation assimilates its new role. It would certainly involve the development of new and more complex arrangements for securing advice in those areas which would be retained by JNCC, and vice versa. This would be especially important to ensure that the work continued to be informed by the best available scientific and technical evidence, much of which would be available still within JNCC.



Moreover, any change of form could be seen to be disproportionate in terms of effort and cost, given the size and scale of the global operation in JNCC. This is especially the case in the absence of any apparent savings that could be accrued by any other arrangement.

As a result, having regard to the views of policy officials and stakeholders, as well as the generally positive feedback we have received on JNCC's ongoing performance, we suggest there is no overriding case for change, and it is therefore recommended that JNCC continues to carry out its functions as it does currently, reviewing where opportunities for greater efficiencies may be secured.

In addition, JNCC should examine possibilities for improving the work they do both globally and specifically on OTs, given the stakeholder comments reflecting concerns in particular about the level of NGO engagement. This might *inter alia* involve an examination of the balance they have to strike between being an impartial adviser and critical friend of Government, and at the same time interacting constructively with NGOs.

# Annex 6: Access to Information Programme

## Annex Overview

The report below was requested by the JNCC TR Working Group as part of the function analysis carried out for the Review. It provides an analysis of JNCC functions under their Access to Information programme.

## Background

- One of JNCC's core functions has been the provision of evidence and developing and maintaining a pool of technical expertise to underpin this. The Data Services team provides a focus for this within the organisation and maintaining this centre of excellence role is an important element of JNCC's forward strategy.
- The work of Data Services stretches across national, UK, regional and global scales (Access to Information programme) to supporting other programmes and teams across JNCC including a major role within the Corporate Services programme.

## Overview of current work

Annex A provides an overview of the key areas of the Access to Information Programme. It should be noted that it does not include all of the work areas. Broadly indicative resource levels are included to show the scale of each element along with the most appropriate funding stream. The estimates are provisional and in many cases vary significantly between years.

Annex A. Summary of main work undertaken by Access to Information

Broad work area	Approximate annual funding	Outlook
<p>IT infrastructure – Maintaining and supporting the basic IT infrastructure. There has been a period of significant change towards the end of the current year, and start of next, bringing in additional storage capacity, improved backups and virtualising the servers and some elements of the desktop environment.</p>	<p>UK Coordination (Corporate Services): 5.5 posts £200K  (plus additional £140K in 2012/13)</p>	<p>The current phase of investment should be the last significant change to the internal infrastructure for some time. It is anticipated that effort will switch to general running and continuing to drive the information management project.</p>
<p>JNCC websites – Maintaining the main JNCC website and developing technical enhancements as needed.</p>	<p>UK Coordination (Access to Information): 0.8 posts £20K</p>	<p>More work is needed to review the current website and ensure it is current and adequately reflects JNCC’s unique role and strategy.</p>
<p>GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility) - UK generally and JNCC specifically has invested much around GBIF as a means of mobilising biodiversity data at a global scale. All data publicly available through the NBN are automatically published to GBIF. GBIF also provides a mechanism for integration across Europe and in particular between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.</p>	<p>Reserved (Access to Information): 0.1 posts £10K  (plus additional £48K in 2012/13)</p>	<p>There is a need to begin to integrate GBIF into real applications and particularly establish it as a key data provider to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). JNCC is very well positioned here (now Chair of the Nodes Committee representing the participants).</p>
<p>MEDIN (Marine Environmental Data and Information Network) – This provides a co-ordination</p>	<p>MGIA (Access to Information):</p>	<p>The importance of MEDIN is emphasised through the recent review of implementation of the</p>

Broad work area	Approximate annual funding	Outlook
<p>mechanism for mobilising data across the marine community. It fits well with JNCC's more general role of evidence provision but should also begin to directly feed the internal demands and provide a framework for taking these forward.</p>	<p>0.2 posts £6K</p>	<p>nature directives and there are a range of areas that need to be driven under this theme.</p>
<p>Improvements to internal data holdings - There is now a fairly high volume of data held by JNCC, particularly in the marine area. The general pressures around delivery mean that not all of this has been made openly available. In the current year we have made some progress towards improving this through beginning to restructure how data are held on the network, describing GIS sources, etc. However, there is more work to do to consolidate this.</p>	<p>Marine (Access to Information / Corporate Services):  0.75 posts</p>	<p>There is more to be done in this area.</p>
<p>Analytical capability - Often rather than mobilising raw data it is more beneficial to mobilise partially processed data. In addition there is an important role to develop and experiment with approaches to ascertain whether they could be applied operationally. JNCC has been working with CEH to develop techniques for distribution</p>	<p>UK Coordination (Access to Information):  1.5 posts</p>	<p>The actual application of the evidence (e.g. NBN) within partners is still limited and there is a strong need (and demand from country conservation bodies) to assist with catalysing potential uses of the data within operational nature conservation. JNCC's skill set is ideally suited to this sort of activity.</p>

Broad work area	Approximate annual funding	Outlook
<p>modelling and changes in abundance using NBN data. Most recently applied these as part of the assessment of the impact of <i>Chalara</i>.</p>		
<p>NBN (National Biodiversity Network) - JNCC lead the technical development of the Gateway, the service around this, and contribute a reasonable amount towards the standards developed and applied through the NBN more broadly. Within the current year there has been a major change to the Gateway (almost a complete rewrite) which has resulted in a very scalable, robust and more flexible system.</p>	<p>UK Coordination (Access to Information): 2.5 posts £35K</p> <p>External funding: £100K (funds one post and external contracts)</p>	<p>The new Gateway opens up many more possibilities for embedding the data into other systems. We anticipate closer working with the country conservation bodies to help meet internal needs and this is likely to lead to enhancements to the system to deliver the data in the optimal way to meet the requirements. This is likely to include the generation of processed outputs such as modelled distributions. It is also likely to require more proactive data mobilisation to meet anticipated uses and working more closely with the providers to ensure that the Gateway does more for the recording sector and hence encourages more open data provision.</p>
<p>BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System) - This system captures conservation related activity, including geography, in a standardised format to allow consistent reporting. The current year's focus is on improving the user interface in response to requirements from partners and increasing the volume of data</p>	<p>UK Coordination (Access to Information): 1.5 posts</p> <p>External funding: £35K external</p>	<p>There is high demand from the country conservation bodies (especially Wales and England) for additional functionality. The basic capability is very powerful but more work is needed to clearly identify the priority areas of business to which it should be applied and the precise requirements of these. This is the primary focus over the next</p>

Broad work area	Approximate annual funding	Outlook
(particularly to include the agri-environment Higher Level Stewardship data).	(funds a post)	six months. Assuming consistent requirements can be identified across the countries this area would be expected to increase.
European work –small input into the European Topic Centre work and a slightly larger one around the INSPIRE Directive specifications and implementation of the biodiversity-related elements within the UK. Additionally there has been a small amount of work with other GBIF partners to mobilise data on non-native species.	Reserved:  0.1 posts	The marine area is likely to be the one where the requirement for genuinely sharing evidence at scales beyond national is real. Much of the detail of this is currently being worked out as part of the MSFD reporting.
UK reporting functions - JNCC has a role to provide a range of reporting products at a UK scale (often collating evidence from the four countries). Within the current year has been the Article 17 reporting which has been fairly onerous. Other work includes the submission of new Natura sites to Europe and creation of UK indicator figures for protected sites.	UK Coordination (Conservation Advice/Marine):  1.5 posts	The evidence-based approach taken to the Article 17 reporting has good support from the country conservation bodies. It is likely that this approach will be adopted elsewhere which begins to increase the demand on JNCC to provide the necessary feeds and mechanisms to support this (as well as providing the UK collation function). There may be emerging requirements within the marine area – not explored yet.
Developing data management applications - Historically JNCC has invested in two desktop data management systems: Recorder and Marine Recorder.	UK Coordination / Marine (Access to Information):	The country conservation bodies (especially NE) have heavy reliance on this area particularly as a mechanism for reducing ongoing investment levels in the

Broad work area	Approximate annual funding	Outlook
<p>In recent years the level of investment in these has been significantly reduced and focused more on support (supplemented with external investment from the country conservation bodies). The current focus is more on on-line data capture and particularly the iRecord implementation under NBN/CEH as a means of improving efficiency across NBN and some of JNCC surveillance data capture. We also advise on the creation of other equivalent systems.</p>	<p>0.2 posts 30K  External: £25K external (funds external contracts)</p>	<p>data supply sector. The priority is making iRecord work well in order to position for making efficiency savings across the network and integrating into other more structured surveillance activity.</p>