

NOC Association Steering Board
10th June 2022: 10:00 – 11:30 UK time

Minutes

Participants:

Professor Icarus Allen (IA)
Professor Angela Hatton (AH)
Dr Kate Hendry (KH)
Professor Ed Hill (EH)
Professor Mark Inall (Chair) (MI)
Dr Mark James (MJ)
Professor Claire Mahaffey (CM)
Mike Palmer (MP)
Professor Martin Solan (MS)
Professor Ros Rickaby (RR)

Professor Carol Robinson (Chair of the Marine Facilities Advisory Board)

Item 2: Minutes

2.1 The minutes from October 2021 were approved for publishing on-line.

Items 3: MSCC

3.1 The Marine Science Coordination Committee (MSCC) is under review. It needs to become more focused around government departments. The International Working Group doesn't appear to have become active yet. MJ referred to the Sustainable Management of UK Marine Resources (SMMR) programme, noting that when having direct conversations with policy makers, progress is made, so there needs to be better connection between research outputs and policy. MI asked how the NOCA links with the MSCC; RR noted that there haven't been any interactions between the Challenger Society and the MSCC in last two years. There is no obvious communication channel so this is of concern. MI agreed that there is also a challenge around the NOCA link with the MSCC.

3.2 EH explained that there have been conversations in government, Whitehall, Defra and devolved administrations and there has been discussion for some time, about the future of the MSCC. The issue had been raised by some of the MSCC sub-group chairs about a confusion in reporting lines and this has required a think about the role of the MSCC. The NOC provides the Secretariat but should NOC be supporting this alone? The marine science community may need to link up on an issue by issue basis but we need to think about how this can be brought together in a coherent way. The NOCA is focused on stakeholder engagement around NC capability for the UK. The Challenger Society is the obvious body for leadership for the UK academic scientific community, rather than IMarEST or the Society for Underwater Technology. Gideon may be interested in providing some temporary funding but this might be difficult in the current climate. MI agreed asked if there are other potential organisations that can provide the academic interface? MASTS offers some useful lessons on marine coordination. There needs to be a willingness for someone to step into the void but this will need support and finance.

- 3.3 RR added that there is a building momentum in Challenger to do this and a sense that colleagues at the more advanced career stage may not have the voice they need. The challenge is to be resourced. There are other institutes who are interested but coordination is needed. The Challenger Society is the prime candidate to do this.
- 3.4 EH noted a suggestion by Gideon Henderson to take one of the existing bodies, e.g. the Challenger Society and either elevate it or take the existing bodies and establish the full range of what each can offer. If we do the latter, we would get a wider constituency but resourcing remains a problem. There are many other marine-related learned societies and professional bodies - where do they fit? (CR commented that the idea of creating a federation between Challenger, IMAREST and SUT was discussed about 30 years ago). MP added that to focus on addressing policy challenges is central to current thinking. AH suggested starting the process by engaging with technology, the coastal zone and Net Zero etc. MI: Ideally, we need one body to provide an interface between science, academia and policy. RR commented that it was good to hear that the ToRs have been tightened up. The last NOCA AGM did have some topics that probably should have been done by the Challenger Society.

4. Challenger Society and NOCA Paper

- 4.1 CM found the paper on the Challenger Society and the NOC useful and suggested it be published before the next NOCA AGM. JFP to email the document to the AGM. KH found it useful and is separate to the MSCC conversation. It is helpful for people to understand what the NOCA is about and about other organisations. MASTS and Challenger sit on the NOCA but there are reciprocal arrangements on the other groups. Action: JFP to circulate around the Board and then publish. KH asked if we could also circulate it to the Challenger membership. **Action 1: JP**

6. Agenda for NOCA AGM

- 6.1 EH spoke about the SSOOP consultation and commented that the community considers that all the observations are important, although there are some nuances. NERC/UKRI needs to know what the community thinks is most important, in the event that funding goes up or down. We also need to know what key scientific questions are crucial, by sustained observation. We need the community to choose three via a voting system. This consultation is about the Sustained Observations (SO) that NERC supports. Not all are through NC, though the majority are. NERC has asked that we don't focus on how these are funded. MI added that it would be helpful to know which are NC. AH added that we should think about what we should be doing by 2030 and what is not already supported. There will be reference to the upscaling autonomy group. Kho asked if this is an opportunity to say, what should be happening?

7. Decade Working Group (DWG)

- 6.1 The DWG is working to feed ideas to NERC Council. One idea, selected for development, came from the Royal Society meeting and the "Biocarbon call" was the result. This two stage programme is labelled under the UN Decade topic area. Sea level was suggested as a Highlight Topic area. There was a Centre for Doctoral Training call that will take place in the second half of Decade, to train students to work in coastal communities. In terms of the Strategic Priority Funds, we are having to await the outcome of the Spending Review and are trying to work with Defra on the Blue Planet Fund which is ODA supported. There is the possibility of a joint-funded

proposal. Peter Liss (now on NERC Council) is feeding back on the Working Group to the MSCC. The National Decade Committee is still having discussions and is working through the International Working Group. It is important to have a group that is dealing with Decade issues. MI asked if this information could be fed to Lowri Griffiths in advance of the NOCA AGM. **Action 2: AH**

6.2 KHo was pleased to hear about what has happened since the RS event. There had been an idea put forward on deep sea biology but she has not heard anything since. AH advised that Prof Al Tagliabue will be contacting the leads on that idea and agreed to check progress. **Action 3: AH**

6.3 KHo asked about how communication works with UN Decade programmes that are already endorsed and will be UK-led? AH explained that the DWG is only trying to create funding opportunities and is not submitting ideas. In terms of endorsed programmes, it is up to individuals to find funding. CR added a note to the comments that there has just been a UN Decade programme approved which will be co-led by China and the UK. CR asked if she should be contacting the National Decade Committee about this as she was unaware of it. MI asked that Lowri is given some info on this for the AGM.

7. EDI and Respect at Sea

7.1 AH spoke about this video about behaviour on the NERC ships. It involved the international community, including the USA and also Cefas. It will be shown at the ocean conference in Portugal. It was agreed to show it at the NOC AGM. Americans are showing it on their ships and it will be launched formally, at the end of the month. MJ asked for the video link to be sent to MASTS so that it could be added to our website. **Action 4: AH/JP**

7.2 IA said it is a great video and these issues take place in the workplace too. He would be keen to show this to PML staff.

8. Marine Facilities Advisory Board (MFAB)

8.1 CR is Chair of the MFAB which is part of the governance system, reporting to Ed. We have Terms of Reference and, in keeping with CPEB's practice, have been looking at the ToRs and mapping what we do at the meetings against the ToRs. It is time now to look at these again and it would be good to have the NOCA's perspective. There are things that are missing, e.g. sustainability, Net Zero, strategy etc. so these need to be updated. There are also too many acronyms. JP and CR to create a new draft to send round Board and MFAB for comments. **Action 5: JP and CR.**

8.2 MI commented that as MFAB and CLASS are sub-committees to the NOCA Board, should their key representatives come to these meetings now? MI agreed to talk to Ed and Ange on this. CR added that it has previously been the intention that she would be invited to NOCA Board meetings if there was a relevant item on the agenda.

Actions

1	Circulate around the Board and then publish and circulate to various groups.	JP
2	Update Lowri Griffiths about the work of the Decade Working Group in advance of the NOCA AGM.	AH
3	Check with Al Tagliabue on progress of deep sea biology idea that evolved from the Royal Society meeting.	AH
4	EDI video – send link to MASTS so that it could be added to our website.	AH/JP
5	MFAB ToRs redraft	CR/JP