

**NMBAQC Committee Teleconference Meeting Minutes
19th January 2010**

Present:

Tim Mackie (TM)	NIEA	(Chair)
Myles O'Reilly (MOR)	SEPA	(Invert/PSA Contract Manager)
Prue Addison (PA)	EA/JNCC	(Technical Secretary)
Carol Milner (CM)	APEM	(Contractors Representative)
Steve Coates (SC)	EA	(Fish Contract Manager)
Clare Scanlan (CS)	SEPA	(Macroalgae Contract Manager)
James Strong (JSt)	AFBI	(Epibiota Contract Manager)
Lucie Skates (LS)	EA/CCW	
Keith Cooper (KC)	CEFAS	

Apologies:

Amanda Prior (AP)	EA	(Finance Manager)
Mike Robertson (MR)	MSS (Marine Science Scotland)	
Joe Silke (JS)	MI	(Phytoplankton Contract Manager)
David Hall (DH)	Unicomarine	(Invert/PSA Contract Administrator)

1 Minutes / actions from last meeting

See: 081009 NMBAQC Minutes_final.doc

1.1 Fish ID guide

SC sent JS a copy of the fish guide, although has not received confirmation that JS received the copy.

☆ **ACTION:** SC to send JS to confirm that JS received a copy of the fish guide.

1.2 Annual Reports

TM found out that NIEA can digitise the NMBAQC annual reports, these can be either as scanned images or text (with text recognition software). It was agreed that using text recognition would be too time consuming, therefore TM will trial creating a pdf of one annual report with each page as an image.

PA found out that the maximum file size limit for the NMBAQC website is 20MB (but this can be raised). Currently there is 7GB free disk space on the Cefas web server, so space shouldn't be an issue.

☆ **ACTION:** TM to arrange one annual report to be scanned (as images, not text), and the quality and file size of the report can be reviewed at the next meeting (13/4).

1.3 BEQUALM

PA and KC have both spoken with Tom Fisher (an ecotoxicologist at Cefas) who has recently become the primary BEQUALM contact person. Cefas run the Water and Sediment Bioassays and Fish Disease components for BEQUALM, which are

currently very low on participants and are running at a loss. There doesn't appear to be a committee or chair of BEQUALM, therefore the NMBAQC are not currently expected to report to or join in discussions with BEQUALM. Tom Fisher was going to speak with John Thain to discuss the future direction of BEQUALM, and he will get in contact with PA and/or KC.

- ☆ **ACTION:** PA will keep Tom Fisher informed about the NMBAQC by including him on our NMBAQC committee circulation list.

1.4 Phytoplankton

MOR still needs to send JS the Benthic Invertebrate statement of performance reports which state that this is not a certificate of accreditation. The Phytoplankton statement of performance reports also need to clarify that the Marine Institute are accredited for carrying out intercomparison studies, but this does not make participants accredited themselves.

- ☆ **ACTION:** MOR to send JS the Benthic Invertebrate statement of performance reports which state that this is not a certificate of accreditation

1.5 Name change to BMBAQC

PA discussed the cost of re-branding in terms of the NMBAQC's website:

Currently our domain name (nmbaqcs.org) costs £30 for two years (which is currently arranged through Unicomarine and paid through the EA's benthic contract). If we were to change our name, the following web domains are available: bmbaqc.org, bmbaqcs.org, mbaqc.org, mbaqcs.org. There would be no fee to set up one of these new domain names, and it would just cost £30 every two years. It would take approximately 3 days of work by the NMBAQC technical secretary and the Cefas webmaster to change over and update the content of the site (e.g. removing all reference to NMBAC and fixing up the logo).

All of the committee agreed that we won't change our name at the moment (particularly as we have been given a strong steer from HBDSEG to stay national!).

1.6 Flagging options for MERMAN – what pass / fail criteria do we chose?

Actions left over from last meeting:

- ☆ **ACTION:** MOR to speak to Mark Charlesworth about the cost implications of altering the Merman database to show a traffic light AQC system for biology samples and get back to us.
- ☆ **ACTION:** MOR to continue email/phone correspondence with committee on developing a protocol.

2 General

2.1 *HBDSEG comments on the NMBAQC Terms of Reference*

TM and MOR were at the HBDSEG meeting on 13 January, where the HBDSEG committee went over the NMBAQC TOR. There were a few changes, which TM sent to the committee for their final comments during the meeting. Once the NMBAQC committee are happy with this document it will become a final version and will be put on the NMBAQC website.

☆ **ACTION:** TM to email committee with TOR, and get final comments by beginning of Feb. Then hand to PA to put on the website.

Left over from last meeting:

☆ **ACTION:** TM to contact CSSEG chair to see how we go about getting an NMBAQC rep on the CSEMP steering group.

2.2 *NMBAQC's reporting requirements to HBDSEG*

See: 1.1 NMBAQC and HBDSEG 241109rp.doc

Jane Hawkrigde (HBDSEG Chair) would like the NMBAQC chair to provide the following at HBDSEG meetings:

1. A document outlining the job description of the NMBAQC Technical Secretariat, including several funding models to ensure the long term funding of the post.
2. A brief finance report (to be delivered in the autumn/October each year). Including: The financial status of each scheme component; proposal of how any planned work areas will be resourced; highlight any significant difficulties encountered in resourcing new work areas.
3. A brief progress report (to be delivered in the spring/April each year). Including: progress against the agreed HBDSEG work programme; highlight problem areas (e.g. contractors running behind schedule); a new work plan for the coming year.

TM raised the issue that NIEA only have allocated 1% of his time to the NMBAQC (which is equivalent to 2 days in the year – this is a problem since we have 4 meetings a year!). He therefore does not have the time to fulfil HBDSEG's requirements. ALL supported TM in continuing to be the NMBAQC Chair, and have agreed that HBDSEG's requirements will not be met (particularly given the current economic climate/tough times for the CMAs).

In response to the funding options for the NMBAQC Tech Sec: ALL agreed that it the Tech Sec provides a valuable role in pushing forward new QA work through the NMBAQC. However none of the CMA's have the resource to secure the long-term funding of this post. ALL agreed that the only realistic funding option for the NMBAQC Tech Sec is to come from Defra (or equivalent), which will need to be pushed by HBDSEG (as they have more leverage).

☆ **ACTION:** TM to communicate to HBDSEG the proposal for HBDSEG to chase funding from Defra (or equivalent) for the NMBAQC Tech Sec.

- ☆ **ACTION:** PA to come up with the format for the two brief reports to address points 1 and 2 of HBDSEG's requirements.

2.3 *Porcupine*

See: 1.2 PMNHS - NMBAQC - Setting the record straight V2.doc

MOR has submitted his article 'Setting the record straight' to Porcupine at the beginning of January 2010 to meet the press deadline. MOR assumes this article will be published in the Winter edition of the journal. We hope that this will be the end of the criticism of the NMBAQC in the Porcupine journal, however MOR will have to contact the Porcupine editor and make it very clear that if any further articles are to be published in Porcupine then we must be given the opportunity to rebut this in the same edition of the journal.

- ☆ **ACTION:** MOR to contact the Porcupine editor and make it very clear that if any further articles are to be published in Porcupine then we must be given the opportunity to rebut this in the same edition of the journal.

2.4 *QA for Marine Monitoring (Paper presented to HBDSEG)*

See: 1.3 QA in marine monitoring paper to HBDSEG.doc

PA wrote a paper outlining the QA system that all agencies, their contractors, partners and data providers are expected to adhere to (for European directives: WFD, MSFD and OSPAR). A spreadsheet was also given to all HBDSEG members to fill out to assess the level of QA that their organisation has in place for an example biological element. PA will then review the current state of QA in different types of marine monitoring in the UK

This paper will be put on the NMBAQC website.

- ☆ **ACTION:** ALL to provide comments to PA on the paper by Friday 29 January.
- ☆ **ACTION:** PA to send the QA spreadsheet to the NMBAQC committee members by Monday 8 February.

2.5 *Website*

MEDIN and the Marine Protocols Database are now included in the NMBAQC's link's page. The NMBAQC is now referred to on each of MEDIN and the Marine Protocols Database websites.

PA is re-hauling the NMBAQC website's 'Links' page, and will contact the committee once this is done.

See: 1.4 Website new section on Standards.doc

PA will be creating a new webpage on the NMBAQC website which outlines the existing international/European/uk data and method standards. MOR commented that we have to be careful that people don't confuse these standards with the NMBAQC's standards (of our testing scheme).

- ☆ **ACTION:** ALL to provide comments to PA on the Standards section of the website by Friday 29 January.

2.6 Accreditation of the NMBAQC's scheme administrators?

PA raised the question whether all of our scheme administrators (e.g. Unicmarine for Benthic Invs) should be accredited in running inter-laboratory comparison: CEN/TC 230/WG 2/TG 6: N 59 (*Working document*). Water Quality – Guidance standard on the design and analysis of interlaboratory comparison studies for ecological assessment.

UKASS Accreditation would be too expensive.

Other options are for our scheme administrators to state in their contracts with the NMBAQC that they adhere to or comply with the CEN 230 standard. The committee thought that adhere to is a more loose term, which means they follow the general principles of the standard, whereas comply with means the scheme administrator is 100% following the standard or at least not doing anything that contradicts the standard.

- ☆ **ACTION:** PA to send out the CEN 230 working document to the committee for them to assess whether it is realistic to get our scheme administrators to adhere to / comply with the standard.

3 Benthic Invertebrate, PSA and Fish Contractors Update

3.1 Quarterly progress report

See: 2.1 MtgRpt_19_01_2010.pdf

MOR outlined Unicmarine's progress for the last quarter. Overall each of the modules are running to time.

Sample/data return time (from participants) has been an issue in the past, and has led to substantial delays in the completion of scheme years, and the writing of annual reports (we are currently in scheme Yr 16, but only have up to Yr 12 Annual Report published). Return time by the deadline will have to be more strongly enforced from Yr 17 onwards.

MOR and DH have agreed on deadlines for drafts and final versions for the Yr 13 – 15 Annual Reports. Following the Unicmarine annual report submission, PA and MOR will create a NMBAQC annual report for the website, participants and HBDSEG.

3.2 Beginners Benthic Invertebrate workshop, November 2009

See: 2.2 2009 Workshop Feedback Summary

The Beginners Benthic Invertebrate workshop feedback was generally very positive. Only a few participants thought it was too easy, and a few weren't very impressed with their accommodation.

3.3 Taxonomic Literature Database

DH emailed the database to participants on 15/12/09. ALL were interested whether it is possible to get a quote from Unicmarine for ongoing updates.

☆ **ACTION:** MOR to request a quote from DH for the ongoing update of the taxonomic literature database.

4 Benthic Invertebrates

4.1 Processing Requirements Protocol

MOR is continuing to edit the PRP (reducing the repetition and clarifying some technical aspects of the paper).

Unicmarine still need to add the Taxonomic Discrimination Protocol as an Appendix.

Once MOR is finished with the PRP, he will send it to LS for a final proof read (and fixing up formatting), and then MOR will send to DH for their approval for it to be published on the NMBAQC website.

Aiming for a Spring 2010 deadline for the PRP and TDP to be available on the website.

5 Fish

5.1 Fish Key

SC is still battling with IP issues associated with the EA's Fish Key. This means that copies of the key cannot be sold and none of the contents of the key can be put up on the NMBAQC website (e.g. example fish drawings, text and distribution map).

5.2 Fish images for training

SC is looking for images (and short clips?) to put into a proper fish key for either internal training or something that could be expanded externally. The NMBAQC website maximum file size limit is 20MB (bit this can be raised), and currently there is 7GB free disk space on the Cefas web server, so space shouldn't be an issue.

☆ **ACTION:** SC to contact PA once he is ready to put fish images up on the NMBAQC website.

5.3 Workshop for 2010

SC has received quotes from Dale Fort (Wales, 20-22 Apr) and Milport (Scotland, 6-8 Apr) to run an NMBAQC taxonomic fish workshop (no gear trials as this gets too expensive). SC mentioned that the EA will be running it's own workshop in April 2010.

LS raised the question whether many people would be interested given the current economic climate and that no EA staff would attend (as they have their own workshop).

SC highlighted that he will have very little/no time to arrange the workshop, so PA offered to send an email to participants to register their interest for a workshop (we would only go ahead and arrange a workshop if we reached a minimum number of interested people).

There is a very short lead in time to arrange this workshop.

- ☆ **ACTION:** PA to send out an email to register people's interest in a potential fish workshop in April.
- ☆ **ACTION:** SC to decide whether he has enough time to arrange a contract for the running of this workshop. If not, the workshop can not go ahead.

6 Macroalgae

6.1 *Macroalgae Blooming and Rocky Shore Algae contracts for 2010-01-28*

The Macroalgae Blooming contract (biomass j-cloth exercise and % cover photo ring test) has been given to Wells Marine, and the Rocky Shore Algae contract (photographic identification ring test) has been given to the Queens University.

TM raised the issue that some people weren't happy with the j-cloth exercise. CS thought that NIEA and all others were happy with the exercise. He was going to chat to his NIEA staff to see whether they would be happy to do this again.

- ☆ **ACTION:** TM to ask his staff about the j-cloth exercise, and get some recommendations about whether it can be improved. TM to communicate this to CS.
- ☆ **ACTION:** CS to talk with Wells Marine to determine the feedback from the j-cloth trial and work out what improvements can be made to the test before it is run again.

The EA has funds carried over from previous years for the Macroalgae component of the NMBAQC. This will be used to set up a trial Reverse Ring Test for the Rocky Shore Macroalgae component.

There is still a possibility to arrange a workshop to cover the standardisation of methods for the WFD Opportunistic Macroalgae Blooms tool.

- ☆ **ACTION:** CS to develop a proposal for the workshop and provide PA with details (workshop content, pricing, accommodation options etc) so an expression of interest email can be sent out to the NMBAQC email list. PA can also advertise this on the NMBAQC website.

6.2 *Taxonomic Literature*

CS to investigate compiling a list of macroalgae taxonomic literature which can be listed on the NMBAQC website. This could either be done by CS or CS could investigate whether it is possible to get this work done through the new Queens University Rocky Shore Macroalgae contract.

* This idea came up in response to the Benthic Invertebrate Taxonomic Literature Database.

☆ **ACTION:** CS to investigate compiling a list of macroalgae taxonomic literature which can be listed on the NMBAQC website

7 **PSA**

PA gave an update on the production of the guidance document for PSA for supporting Biological Analysis and the method trial being run by Cefas.

The method trial was run through Cefas in Dec 2009. Results were due on 16 Jan, so CM is now collating and analysing the results.

The sample collection section of the guidance document has been drafted by PA and sent to CM in Jan 2010. CM is leading the write up of the remainder of the guidance document. A complete draft will be available for comment 1 month prior to the workshop.

The workshop (for final approval of the method and guidance) was originally proposed for March 2010 at the EA's NLS lab in Llanelli. TM said it would be better to have at the beginning of next financial year (e.g. April 2010), as more people would be likely to attend.

☆ **ACTION:** PA to tell CM to arrange with David Johns at NLS to have the workshop in April.

8 **Epibiota**

8.1 *Trial Ring Test*

Update from JSt: Comments on the final Envision reports (from PA, MS, JSt and Emma Verling) have been collated, and will be sent to Envision on 20/01/10. JSt has spoken to Envision and is confident that the final report will be corrected and returned to him by the end of January. AFBI will attached a covering report/note and release it all in the first week of February.

AFBI are also investigating how to migrate the website from Envision to AFBI. Once done, this will be available as a familiar portal for the epibiota ring test candidates.

PA and TM mentioned that the website front end developed by Envision should be migrated to the NMBAQC website, not the AFBI website.

☆ **ACTION:** TM to talk with JSt about the finances and location of the website.

- ☆ **ACTION:** JSt to provide the final ENVISION reports (RT1-3, Workshop Proceedings and Final Report) and AFBI covering report/note by 5 February. JSt to send out all reports to all participants, and send to PA so all reports can be published on the website

8.2 *Collection of video clips for future ring test*

TM sent out another reminder in late 2009 for participants to send in their annotated video clips for use in a future ring test. TM has received annotated clips from: JNCC (3), CCW (4) and Cefas (3). Still awaiting clips from AFBI and NIEA. No actions needed here, as this is enough video clips to use in a future ring test.

JSt said AFBI will provide footage to TM for the development of the next test.

- ☆ **ACTION:** TM and JSt to discuss the next ring test in the week commencing 8 February.

8.3 *Questionnaire – Review of video/stills analysis*

PA has developed a questionnaire to assess the current state of video/still image analysis in the UK. The idea was to send this out with Envision's final Epibiota trial ring test report (to provide context to this new work). However we have waited too long for this report (over two months) therefore PA is going ahead and sending out the questionnaire on 25 January (requesting returned questionnaires by 19 February), and will provide the Envision workshop proceedings instead.

- ☆ **ACTION:** PA to send out the questionnaire to all Epibiota participants by 25 January.

9 Next Meeting

The next teleconference is planned for 13/4, starting at 10.30am.