

**NMBAQC Committee Meeting  
Minutes  
8th October 2009, 10:30 am  
SEPA, Riccarton, Edinburgh**

Present:

Tim Mackie (TM)	NIEA	(Chair)
Myles O'Reilly (MOR)	SEPA	(Invert/PSA Contract Manager)
Prue Addison (PA)	EA/JNCC	(Technical Secretary)
Lucie Oliver (LO)	EA/CCW	
Keith Cooper (KC)	CEFAS	
Carol Milner (CM)	APEM	(Contractors Representative)
Steve Coates (SC)	EA	(Fish Contract Manager)
Clare Mason (CMs)	CEFAS	

Phone:

Amanda Prior (AP)	EA	(Finance Manager)
Clare Scanlan (CS)	SEPA	(Macroalgae Contract Manager)
Joe Silke (JS)	MI	(Phytoplankton Contract Manager)

Apologies:

Mike Robertson (MR)	MSS (Marine Science Scotland)	
Matt Service (MS)	AFBI	(Epibiota Contract Manager)
David Hall (DH)	Unicomarine	(Invert/PSA Contract Administrator)

## **1 Minutes / actions from last meeting**

*See: 160609 NMBAQC Minutes\_final.doc*

### ***1.1 Fish ID guide***

SC: good take up so far but currently unable to sell due to various copyright / intellectual property issues. May need to change some of the wording to make the EA the IP owner. More funds needed for extra print runs. Running quite low on hard copies now.

AP: There is some money left in fish component budget of NMBAQC as Millport workshop and ring test were self funding. Might be able to do something with this but SC says this will get eaten up very quickly by publishing costs.

MS: mentioned to PA that CEFAS are not happy that their logo doesn't appear on the key.

SC: CEFAS only contributed £1K and the EA had to pay a lot more than that so he thinks they should be happy with having their name mentioned as it is prohibitively expensive to get each agency's logo's converted into a publishable form. Also AFBI is down as DARD in the key so this should be changed if they have another print run.

☆ **ACTION:** SC to send JS a copy of the fish id guide.

### ***1.2 Opportunistic Macroalgae***

CS: PA and AP sent comments on the draft tender to CS.

### **1.3 MEDIN**

The MEDIN benthic data standard has been finalised and is available at: [http://www.oceannet.org/marine\\_data\\_standards/medin\\_approved\\_standards/](http://www.oceannet.org/marine_data_standards/medin_approved_standards/).

### **1.4 Participation Fees**

We need to address the issue of fees for single operators and MOR is keen to have a discount for single analysts who don't have anyone to join in with.

TM: would we need to get people to legally register as sole traders for this or take them on trust?

CM: need to be careful that the other participants don't get upset about this.

☆ **ACTION:** AP and PA to see how many participants could be considered 'sole traders' and how a discount would impact our finances.

### **1.5 Epibiota Video Ring Trial**

CCW have sent 4 clips but ideally TM would like at least 10 from a range of organisations, habitats etc. Envision still to write RT03 report, and a final report bringing together all 3 ring tests and the outcome of the workshop.

TM: this turned out to be much more expensive than he anticipated.

MS did say he would get everything together for mid Nov. MS handing over his NMBAQC role to James Strong for the next meeting.

☆ **ACTION:** TM to extend deadline for receiving clips from participants and ask people again to send more clips for the ring test.

☆ **ACTION:** MS to provide details (to the committee and funding agencies of the trial scheme) of finances of the trail Epibiota ring tests, workshop and report.

### **1.6 Annual Reports**

MS was to get reports 1-3 for TM (didn't happen). MO'R needs to provide TM with old reports to be scanned into PDF form.

PA: is it worth doing if the files are going to be too big to go on the website? Can we use text recognition software instead?

LO: can we just scan them and send them to people on a CD if they ask for them then? They should be more securely stored then at least.

☆ **ACTION:** TM to investigate getting NMBAQC Annual Reports digitised one way or the other. PA to find out from Cefas webmaster how large a file can we have on the website.

### **1.7 BEQUALM**

PA has spoken to BEQUALM rep from CEFAS (Sonia Kirby) and she said they currently do not expect the NMBAQC to report to them (i.e. provide annual report and attend meetings). There could be an opportunity for a NMBAQC rep to meet with them in the near future to discuss way ahead for both groups for biological AQC.

JS: BEQUALM do the admin for their phytoplankton scheme (through Cefas Technologies Ltd. (CTL)). JS suggests that putting BEQUALM in the name of NMBAQC could give them the shot in the arm that they need.

PA: has spoken to Sonia about CTL about the possibility of them taking over the admin of other new NMBAQC schemes for us (she estimated that it would cost approx £60 admin fee per participant per test).

PA: The new BEQUALM contact at Cefas is Tom Fisher.

☆ **ACTION:** KC and PA to talk to new CEFAS representative for BEQUALM about a way of working together in the future.

### **1.8 Porcupine article**

MOR response to first porcupine article now published in Porcupine (O'Reilly, M. , 2009. The NMBAQC Scheme - Friend or Foe to the Benthic Ecologist. *Porcupine Marine Natural History Society Newsletter*, No.25, Winter 2008/09, 9-13) and is also available on NMBAQC website (<http://www.nmbaqcs.org/about/rationale-and-aims.aspx>). Since the publication of Myles' article, Roger Bamber has added to Peter Garwood's article which criticises the NMBAQC (published summer 2009). TM has drafted a response to Roger's article and sent this to MOR for comment.

☆ **ACTION:** MOR is happy to work on TM's draft response to Roger Bamber's article, but needs help with the rebuttal of the legal aspects of some of Roger's arguments.

☆ **ACTION:** AP to clarify the legal aspects of Roger's article (e.g. 'demanding membership of the scheme as a prequalification for tendering falls foul of Restraint of Trade Laws and is illegal') and communicate these to MOR.

### **1.9 Website updates**

MEDIN are going to advertise the NMBAQC on their website. Marine Protocols Database are also going to advertise the NMBAQC. In return links to MEDIN and MPD will be put on the NMBAQC website. People should let Prue know if any other updates on the website are required.

☆ **ACTION:** PA to add links to MEDIN and MPD on the NMBAQC website, and update the links page with any new websites that we think should be added.

### **1.10 Fish key**

SC still looking for images (and short clips?) to put into a proper fish key for either internal training or something that could be expanded externally.

KC says Jim Ellis in CEFAS is thinking of developing something similar.

- ☆ **ACTION:** PA to find out what the maximum capacity of the NMBAQC website is and what the maximum file size for individual files is and report this back to SC.

### **1.11 Phytoplankton**

Need to add a line to the phytoplankton statement of performance reports to state that this is not a certificate of accreditation. Also Marine Institute need to be careful that there is no confusion when they get accredited for carrying out intercomparison studies this doesn't mean that people who they QA are accredited themselves. JS agrees. JS has devised a questionnaire to ask participants whether they want the scheme to just apply to WFD or should they widen the scope? Should be sent out in the next month and will pass results to committee.

- ☆ **ACTION:** JS to add a line to the phytoplankton statement of performance reports to state that this is not a certificate of accreditation.

## **2 Macroalgae update**

Tenders sent to 7 contractors and got no responses. Wrong time of year as everyone was busy with field work or holidays, but some said they would be interested another time. Two other contractors asked to be included in the tender circulation next time. CS and AP have re-drafted the tender to omit RTs for this year and reissued invitations to tender: people have until 30th Oct to respond. They have the option to run the OMA workshop as well but this isn't compulsory. We said we would provide photos for OMA as they have missed the chance to get their own now. Contractors should be able to get photos for RSL throughout winter though.

- ☆ **ACTION:** CS and AP to review the tender applications in mid-November and make a decision on who will be the contract administrator for the macroalgae component.

## **3 Phytoplankton update**

*See: PHY - Bequalm PHY-ICN-09-MII Final report vr3.0.pdf*

Intercomparison exercises held in Jan 2009. Taxonomic and enumeration components included. 34 participants from 17 labs all over Europe (UK, Ireland, Holland, Germany, Spain). Also had video clips on a steaming website (Unique Media) for people to id live phytoplankton. The exercise went outside diatom and dinoflagellate groups this year so challenging participants more. A workshop was held in April to discuss results and to get feedback, training on taxonomy from guest scientist. Some lack of reproducibility within and between labs but only one came in under 70% pass threshold, and 7 labs got over 90%.

A ring test and workshop are planned for January 2010.

Marine Institute are seeking ISO accreditation for inter-comparison. Internal audit later this month.

Questionnaire to be issued as mentioned above.

Unique Media streaming site was used for the ring test. This is a restricted website, therefore avoids any copyright issues with an open site such as You Tube. Participants feedback was positive - there were no problems with access and video was supplied in HD so all features could be clearly seen.

MO'R: asked JS if they have considered using real samples for comparison but JS says you could only do it if you have everyone in the same room at the same time (could maybe do it at a workshop). Can't you use fixed and homogenized samples? JS not sure at the moment. TM: suggests getting a live video of the QA analyst working up a sample and then streaming that to people.

#### **4 NMBAQC name change implications (based on the suggested name BMBAQC)**

PA points out implications of name change:

- We sit under HBDSEG as well as BEQUALM. Our name change will have to be supported by HBDSEG, and they do not want us to change our name to BMBAQC (based on a brief discussion between PA and Jane Hawkrige, HBDSEG chair).
- Are we too focused on getting more EU participants? What's in it for us?
- We would have to rebrand everything, redo the website, get a new domain name (our current one is owned by Unicmarine)

TM: would more Irish labs join if it wasn't called the National MBAQC? KC thinks this puts off other EU labs too.

JS: it's useful to have the BEQUALM brand when talking to European labs.

LO, AP and PA pointed out the risks of attracting too many more participants in our current form, as Unicmarine seem to have a very full schedule with the current level of participation (44 labs).

JS: also if you expand too much you're going to need to provide new components for different biogeographic regions which also makes the N irrelevant.

☆ **ACTION:** We're going to stay as we are (NMBAQC) for now but PA will look into costs of re-branding (new website domain name, logo etc..) so we know for the future.

#### **5 Terms of Reference (ToR)**

*See: GEN -NMBAQC\_ToR\_DRAFT\_V5.doc*

Everyone happy with changes and for ToR to be forwarded to HBDSEG when AP has done the final edits.

- ☆ **ACTION:** TM to contact CSSEG chair to see how we go about getting an NMBAQC rep on the CSEMP steering group.
- ☆ **ACTION:** AP to amend the ToR as discussed at this meeting and will forward to HBDSEG by the end of October.

## 6 Fish

### 6.1 Fish Workshop 2010

SC: are we going to run a fish workshop in spring 2010?

- ☆ **ACTION:** SC will review the options for a Fish Workshop in terms of venues, number of experts needed etc. and email the group with cost estimates for participation by mid-November.

### 6.2 Specification for fish component (ring tests)

See (nb: not shown to contractors): *Fish Ring Test and Reverse Ring Test Specifications.doc*

Do we want to change anything? Should we have reverse RT and normal ring test still? SC feedback from EA was they weren't that happy with the ring test because of the state of the samples by the end of it.

PA: One option could be to hold a workshop and ring tests in alternative years – as these are both training aspects of the Fish component.

- ☆ **ACTION:** SC to send AP a finalised specification for the fish component by the end of November. This will also be discussed further at the Benthic Invert / PSA / Fish specification teleconference.

## 7 CEN standard

See: *GEN -TG6N72 revised NWI Interlab Comparison.doc*

The committee's general comments are that Annex B is very univariate stats focused. It would be good to get a bit more detail on multivariate in there (e.g. Bray Curtis Similarity - that the NMBAQC use). We also think that the descriptive Annex (C) should actually be placed before Annex B (as Annex B describes the statistical variables). These could almost be merged together so that a text description matches each statistic.

- ☆ **ACTION:** PA to send Sarah Peaty the table of how we analyse our benthic own samples (i.e. using Bray-Curtis similarity) which is included in our certificates of performance so that she can pass these on to CEN. Comments due to Sarah by 09/10/08.

## 8 Contractors update

CM: Royal Haskoning wanted their website added to the NMBAQC website – PA: this has been done.

- ☆ **ACTION:** Inga's email - DH emailed TM today with a response to this and MO'R will respond to her directly.
- ☆ **ACTION:** PA to ring DH and smooth out the confusion about PSA.

## 9 Benthic Invertebrates

### 9.1 PRP

See: *INV - PRP Draft\_5\_021009.doc* and *INV - PRP teleconf minutes 300109\_final.doc*

AP has amended the PRP by removing repetition and reformatting.

It was decided that as long as MOR doesn't want a complete rewrite then we should only need to get Unicmarine to agree to the new format and text and that they want to remain as the authors rather than ask them to do any more work on the text themselves.

We agreed that the Time, Cost and Health and Safety sections in each of the procedural guidelines are not necessary. These will be removed and a few sentences added to the Introductory text, explaining that these are important considerations but will not be covered in this document.

We would like to have details of best practice internal QA procedures for labs to follow. E.g. 10% check of identification, enumeration, and extraction of samples. 10% check of data entered into database/spreadsheet.

We would like to include details of best practice external QA (other than participation in NMBAQC or equivalent), e.g. the types of ISO accreditation available to labs doing benthic invert lab analysis.

- ☆ **ACTION:** MOR is going to do a track changes on the text and send to Mandy by the end of October.
- ☆ **ACTION:** LO will just send Mandy her comments as there are not many by the end of October.
- ☆ **ACTION:** PA will draft a paragraph on internal QA and external ISO accreditation options available for labs and send it to the committee for comment the end of October.
- ☆ **ACTION:** LO will help AP to finalise the PRP document by Nov 20, and sent to Unicmarine and the committee for final approval.
- ☆ **ACTION:** AP to ask Unicmarine if they can add a draft Taxonomic Discrimination Protocol table to appendix?

### 9.2 *Flagging options for MERMAN – what pass / fail criteria do we chose?*

See: *INV - Guide for amending audited Own Sample.doc* and email: *INV - Sample Flagging on Merman - MC comments*

Agreed to go with retrospective application of Year 8 pass/fail criteria and we'll see what it does to the older samples. Do we want to explore a more complex flagging

system? Yes. KC suggests having a traffic light system with red for a definite fail, green for a pass and orange for if an own sample from the same CSEMP strata has failed AQC – this should then lead to a further column where details of why the own sample failed AQC ie. was it due to enumeration, extraction or the mis-id of one taxa in particular which could then be left out of any analyses if need be.

- ☆ **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.

### **9.3 New Benthic (incl PSA) tender specification**

See (nb: not shown to contractors): *Benthic Invert Specification03\_11896*

Didn't have time to cover this in the meeting. A teleconference will be arranged to discuss this soon.

- ☆ **ACTION:** AP to send an email round with some suggested dates for a telecon on this to be held before the end of October.

### **9.4 Unicmarine Report**

See: *INV -MtgRpt\_08\_10\_2009.pdf*

There was no time to go over the Unicmarine update report in this meeting.

- ☆ **ACTION:** All to send comments to MOR and MOR to pass on comments to DH.

## **10 PSA update**

See: *PSA - Update on Production of Guidance.doc*

Draft SOP will be sent out to all participants by 14 November. The aim is for everyone to trial the new method as a part of PS35, or in a separate 'new method trial'. This will involve 3 mixed sediment samples to be analysed by laser and sieve.

Clare will present new method at the marine measurement forum in November.

Final workshop in Feb 2010 to discuss how the new method had been working out, after this new method can go in the Green Book.

- ☆ **ACTION:** TM, MOR, CMs, and KC to respond to PA by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct on the sample collection section of the new SOP text.

## **11 Epibiota update**

See: *EPI - Proposal for Review of Video Analysis.doc*

PA is preparing a questionnaire to send to participants from the epibiota RT and workshop and other interested parties to work out what people are doing for video analysis.

Decided that PA should send this out with the final Envision report so that people who are not participants in this part of the NMBAQC at the moment can have some background information into what has been done on this so far.

☆ **ACTION:** PA to chase up MS and ENVISION to get their final report by mid-November, so that the questionnaire can be sent out!

## **12 Next Meeting**

We forgot to arrange this at the meeting!

☆ **ACTION:** PA to send out an email to the committee to arrange a date for mid-late January teleconference.