

## NATIONAL MARINE BIOLOGICAL AQC SCHEME

### MINUTES

16 June, 10:00 am

Teleconference

#### Present:

T. Mackie (TM) (pm)	NIEA	(Chair)
M. O'Reilly (MOR)	SEPA	(Infaunal Contract Manager)
S. Coates (SC) (am)	EA	(Fish Contract Manager)
C. Scanlan (CS)	SEPA	(Macroalgae Contract Manager)
C. Milner (CM)	APEM	(Contractors Representative)
D. Hall (DH)	Unicomarine	(Infaunal Contractor)
M. Service (MS) (pm)	AFBINI	(Epibiota Contract Manager)
M. Charlesworth (MC) (am)	(BODC)	
A. Prior (AP)	EA	(Financial Manager & technical secretary for this meeting)

#### Apologies:

J. Silke (JS)	MI	(Phytoplankton Contract Manager)
M. Robertson (MR)	FRS	
K. Cooper (KC)	CEFAS	
L. Oliver (LO)	EA/CCW	
C. Mason (CIM)	CEFAS	

**NB:** The minutes of the last meeting were addressed at the end of the meeting.

#### ITEM 1:

##### Fish Key

Key finished and published, books have recycled car tyre cover. All those at the Fish ID workshop at Millport in April have received a copy. A limited number were produced due to cost (300). A copy will be sent to each committee member so long as they provide SC with their full address.

#### **ACTION:**

- ❖ If committee members require a copy of fish id book they must send their full postal address to SC

The electronic pdf version of the key will be available on the Environment Agency (EA) intranet. Committee asked how the pdf will be made available outside of the EA, and how contractors can get a copy e.g. could it be put on the NMBAQC website – there may be copyright issues with this.

#### **ACTION:**

- ❖ SC to clarify the copyright rules for the fish key pdf to establish if it can be put on NMBAQC website and to clarify the copyright licence/payment position on its provision to contractors

### **Fish Workshop**

A repeat workshop in March/April next year is proposed. A venue that can cope with more people would be better as the demand for this years workshop was high. Some thoughts on venues were:

Millport – everything on site, although numbers limited

Dove – good venue, accommodation not available – has to be booked separately

Plymouth – limited lab space, expensive

Milford Haven – Field Study Centre at Dale, runs lots of courses through the year so would have to book well ahead to ensure a booking

Heriot-Watt University – use of lab space out of term time

#### **ACTION:**

- ❖ ALL to email SC with further ideas of venues for SC to scope for a future workshop

### **Fish ring tests**

DH gave a review of all past standard and reverse ring tests for fish, and though each basic errors often re-occur, gobies in particular are often misidentified. Agreed that the fish scheme should continue with a standard ring test (early in year) and a reverse ring test (autumn). There is no time in year 16 to run the standard ring test, therefore, it will start in year 17. The reverse ring test is proposed to run this autumn.

#### **ITEM 2:**

##### **Opportunistic Macroalgae**

It was proposed that a workshop should be organised for April/May 2010. The workshop would deal with how patches defined in the field, how they are measured, how measured data used, how biomass measurement undertaken. It was suggested that the venue for a workshop should be in the Northeast of England.

A trial run of cover estimates, possibly biomass (there were not enough participants in test last year).

A draft tender has been circulated to committee, which includes development of a test for judging 15% cover and determining the edge of a patch.

#### **ACTION:**

- ❖ ALL to email CS with feedback on the tender **by 10<sup>th</sup> July**.

#### **ITEM 3:**

##### **WoRMs**

WoRMs dictionary covers all marine species not just invertebrates. It will provide a standard list which should allow easier sharing of data. Unicmarine are currently matching Unicorn list up to the WoRMs list.

##### **MEDIN**

Have proposed the use of a standard template for sharing of sediment benthos data. This template captures all the supporting information that

should accompany raw data, for it to be used in context and interpreted correctly. MEDIN ask NMBAQC for their feedback on this template. It is proposed that this will be the first of many such templates to cover the sharing of data for all types of marine monitoring (e.g. litter).

**ACTION:**

- ❖ ALL to email MC with their feedback on the MEDIN sediment benthos template **by 23<sup>rd</sup> June**.

**Submission of QC information of benthic data in MERMAN**

MC asked for a system to be put in place so that the QA of samples is tied to CMA's to be inputted to MERMAN to indicate whether data has passed QA or not. There is a time lag of upto 2 years on this information. DH can provide the legacy data QA. For recent data this can be provided to MC and MOR as it becomes available.

**ACTION:**

- ❖ DH to email MC and copy to MOR the pass/fails for legacy data.
- ❖ DH to email MC and copy to MOR the pass/fails of Yr. 14 onwards as it becomes available.

**ITEM 4:**

**Rockyshore Macroalgae**

Standard ring test either end of this year and/or beginning of next. A trial of own samples to be looked into, some worries over whether this would be financially viable. A full species list ring test should be carried out early next year.

**ACTION:**

- ❖ AP to send CS faunal ring-test contract for reference.

**ITEM 5:**

**Phytoplankton**

No update on scheme provided at meeting. No further work on the inter-worker variability report, funding is required to take this further.

**ITEM 6:**

**Benthic Invertebrates**

It was raised by participant that nomenclature in T-Rex does not reflect that in WoRMs. It should be noted that T-Rex is a snapshot of the unicorn taxon list and aimed to ensure that taxa are supplied in a form which matches with CMA database, and in this respect T-Rex is a useful tool.

It was also raised by participant whether or not ring tests fauna could be kept. This is not viable as time and resource to gather specimens for ring tests is great and therefore they should be returned, as is the current practice.

**Benthic Invertebrates meeting report (#5)**

Yr 14 own samples – last set to do and then all finished and reported. Reminder to all taking part in scheme that sampling material must be kept until you have received all the audit feedback.

PSA exercise outcomes should be passed to Claire Mason – essentially difference in method resulted in significant differences in results.

**ACTION:**

- ❖ DH will pass on the outcome of the different methods used for analysing PSA test sample.

**ITEM 7:**

**PSA SOP update**

CIM provided an update via email on the progress of the PSA SOP:

- 1/ Richard Hartley (PML) is running a Malvern SOP comparison
- 2/ A second lab session is planned for 7th/8th July to finalise Malvern SOP as well as PSA methodology overall.

**ITEM 8:**

**Fees**

Single operator scheme fees discussed following feedback that the cost of the scheme is too high. It was noted that the shared membership option had already been implemented to address this burden. The change from the ring-test being mandatory to optional should also help. There is no scope currently to reduce the number of own samples, but this could perhaps be considered in future contracts although 3 is considered the barest minimum.

**ACTION:**

- ❖ ALL to consider and input to development of tender to try to address concerns of single operators.

**ITEM 9:**

**Epibiota**

The workshop and epibiota exercises have not provided a workable scheme. There is a lack of differentiation between QA and training, and it seemed consultants were looking for training rather than QA. Decision was that in the short-term all participants would provide their in-house video with species circled and identified to share and circulate. Otherwise there was no clear lead on how to progress – needs main epibiota people to get together to discuss.

The contract set up by AFBI as now finished. And a small loss made on the whole exercise. 2/3 of cost was pump-primed from AFBI (and not likely to be provided again) and participants to the exercise only covered a 1/3 of the cost. The scheme would be very expensive, estimated at 20K/yr which can not be covered by subscription.

A much smaller exercise in estimating abundance on a small number of clips maybe twice a year might be viable. AFBI would be happy to continue managing it if a viable option is found.

**ACTION:**

- ❖ TM and MS to draft a specification for modest epibiota scheme for autumn meeting
- ❖ TM and MS to get CMA video group meeting together to see how best to progress epibiota scheme.
- ❖ ALL to try and investigate more funding

**ITEM 10:**

**Minutes of last meeting:**

***Taxonomic Literature Database***

DH to send PA details of the literature database for the website when it is ready – DH will get to out ASAP.

***NIEA cost for converting Annual Reports 1-10 into pdf***

**ACTION:**

- ❖ MS still to give TM Annual Reports 1 – 3.
- ❖ TM to let MOR know what hard copy annual reports he needs from 1-10.

***Progress on TOR to HBDSEG***

**ACTION:**

- ❖ AP to amend current ToR with HBDSEG feedback and circulate to committee.

***BEQUALM and the NMBAQC – how do they fit in (annual reporting, budget reporting) – how does this fit in with HBDSEG?***

**ACTION:**

- ❖ KC and TM to investigate this further and find out who the HBDSEG contact in CEFAS is and whether they expect to receive annual reports from us. – John Pinnegar is the HBDSEG contact in CEFAS – whether we need to report to HBDSEG and BEQUALM needs to be made clear in our ToR

***NMBAQC scheme in Europe (interest from the Netherlands)***

Agreed to drop N and change acronym of group to BMBAQC (BEQUALM Marine Biological AQC) scheme. We should plan to roll this acronym change out by Year 17.

CM asked contractors feedback on the option of having participant's Statement of Performance advertised on the NMBAQC website. – initial feedback was that contractors did not want this, but it was thought that it was not appreciated that this should make things easier for the contractors as they can show their perspective clients and can get statement of performance earlier than current system.

***Porcupine published article***

***ACTION:***

- ❖ MOR to give PA the final copy his article and PA to put a pdf version up onto the website. Note article title should read "...Friend or Foe to the Benthic Ecologist."

***Website updates***

***ACTION:***

- ❖ PA to check whether the Marine Protocols Database, MEDIN and EDIT are going to advertise the NMBAQC on their websites.

***Green Book Revision***

The update to Green Book likely to continue into the new year as CP2 is currently focus of attention. Therefore, likely that PSA issues will be resolved and can be put into the Green Book.

***PRP/TDP Report – committee comments***

***ACTION:***

- ❖ AP to gather committee's specific comments for the PRP and give to DH who can provide a quote for time/money estimates to make the changes.

***Fish Key***

***ACTION:***

- ❖ All of the committee to provide SC with fish photos which would be used in a training CD (not the published book).

***Marine Institute's Phytoplankton Component***

- See file: PHYTO - NMBAQC Bequalm Phytoplankton Component Update.pdf.
- TM has talked with JS about the fact that the Phytoplankton component should fall under the NMBAQC which comes under BEQUALM. The Phytoplankton tests and workshops should ensure that the NMBAQC is mentioned.
- We would like to learn how the MI are attracting European participants so successfully (this could be translated into all other components).
- The Statement of Performance certificates given to participants should be in the same format as the Invertebrate SoP.

***ACTION:***

- ❖ MOR to discuss the above points with JS (including standard NMBAQC SoP format).

**ITEM 11:**

**Next Meeting**

6<sup>th</sup> October 2009 in person at the SEPA Riccarton offices in Edinburgh

***ACTION:***

- ❖ MOR to check on meeting room availability.