

NATIONAL MARINE BIOLOGICAL AQC SCHEME
FINAL MINUTES
10 March, 10:30 am
Carron Suite, SEPA, Riccarton, Edinburgh

Present:	T. Mackie (TM)	NIEA	(Chair)
	M. O'Reilly (MOR)	SEPA	(Infaunal Contract Manager)
	S. Coates (SC)	EA	(Fish Contract Manager)
	C. Scanlan (CS)	SEPA	(Macroalgae Contract Manager)
	P. Addison (PA)	EA/JNCC	(Technical Secretary)
	C. Milner (CM)	APEM	(Contractors Representative)
	D. Hall (DH)	Unicomarine	(Infaunal Contractor)
	M. Robertson (MR)	FRS	
	K. Cooper (KC)	CEFAS	
	L. Oliver (LO)	EA/CCW	
Apologies:	A. Prior (AP)	EA	(Financial Manager)
	M. Service (MS)	AFBINI	(Epibiota Contract Manager)
	J. Silke (JS)	MI	(Phytoplankton Contract Manager)

1. Update on last meetings ACTIONS:

a) Taxonomic Literature Database

- DH to send PA details of the literature database for the website when it is ready – it's not ready yet and DH has had no comments from committee on the v02 sent in November.

ACTION:

- ❖ DH to resend v02 for committee comment. This has been done (PA forwarded onto the committee 27/03 for their comments to DH by 24/04).

b) 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.

c) Progress on TOR to HBDSEG

- AP gave TM comments from HBDSEG on the NMBAQC. TM now has to draft the NMBAQC's TOR.

ACTION:

- ❖ TM now has to draft the NMBAQC's TOR.

d) PSA and MERMAN

- TM chased up whether it is possible to identify PSA samples collected for biology (>5cm depth integrated core) vs chemistry (2cm surface scrape) in MERMAN – and the answer is “No”, chemistry PSA results are not entered into MERMAN.

e) Summary report of the benefits of WoRMS list presented to HBDSEG

- HBDSEG (Jane Hawkrige) would like to know what is being covered (ecological components wise) by the NMBAQC's current process as she suspects there may be a few other organisations that need to look at their databases – this needs to be fed back to HBDSEG.
- Mark Charlesworth (MERMAN) commented (after the meeting in an email) that BODC ran the Marine Recorder species list, the DASSh list, the BODC list and the UNICORN list on behalf of UNOCO MARINE against the WoRMS list and have the results. We are considering this in MEDIN and once the UNICORN list is compliant then we will move onto getting the Marine Recorder list compliant.

ACTION:

- ❖ KC to investigate what marine species are covered by WoRMS and report to TM, who will then pass on this info to Jane Hawkrige.

f) Benthic Invertebrates

- DH was provided a quote for Igor Jirkov's key to be translated into English (£10-20,000). DH thinks this quote includes substantial improvements being made to the key as well as translation.

ACTION:

- ❖ DH to request a quote for work on type specimens and other small scale work, but this could be expensive as it will involve visiting several museums in Europe to view type material.

g) Phytoplankton

ACTION:

- ❖ CS still to follow up on whether MPTT is reviewing the Phytoplankton sampling methodology. CS to talk with Rick Park about this.

2. General Administration

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

- The NMBAQC was appended to BEQUALM when we were already in existence.
- BEQUALM is self funding, so the NMBAQC was appended on to avoid repetition.
- For some reason (unknown to the NMBAQC), the NMBAQC and Phytoplankton components are advertised as separate components (rather than Phytoplankton within the NMBAQC).
- Currently the NMBAQC are reporting to HBDSEG, and probably should give annual reports to BEQUALM (but no one even knows who is the contact person for this – apparently someone in CEFAS).

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.

b) Clarify the role of the Contractors Rep Committee Member

- The role contractors representative is to be the primary contact person for all participating contractors (in all of the components) in the NMBAQC, and is to bring contractors concerns to the committee.
- The contractors representative should also provide feedback to the contractors, through providing them with the approved minutes from each meeting.

ACTION:

- ❖ PA to provide CM with a complete list of Yr15/16 participating contractors who are involved in all components (not just the invertebrate scheme).

c) Contractors feedback

- Feedback from the Institute of Aquaculture: They had an issue with the website not being updated with participants names (and what tests they are signed up for) quickly enough.
 - NMBAQC Response: This problem has been fixed! PA has asked DH to let her know as soon as any new participants have signed up, and she can then update the website asap.
- Feedback from Hunter Biological: Julian Hunter was wondering when the 2008 Workshop keys will be sent out by Unicmarine?
 - Unicmarine's Response: The workshop keys are still a work in progress but hopefully money will be found to help finalise them. These will be sent to workshop participants on a CD when they are finished and will also be available on the website.
- Feedback from Hunter Biological: Julian Hunter was wondering whether they can keep the RT specimens?
 - Unicmarine's Response: Generally, no (as these belong to Unicmarine's reference collection, and can be re-used in future RT's). But some specimens could be kept by participants at the discretion of Unicmarine to add to the own invertebrate reference/voucher collection.
- Feedback from Hebog: Dave Barnes was wondering whether the NMBAQC had any objection to him running his own expert workshop this year in Bangor.
 - NMBAQC's Response: This would be fine, but Dave Barnes will have to discuss this with DH to ensure there is no overlap with any plans DH has for future workshops. The NMBAQC would be happy to support such a workshop, through assisting with advertising (through the NMBAQC website and sending out information to all participants) if in return the NMBAQC was given any outputs from the workshop (e.g. keys, proceedings etc.). It is assumed that this workshop would be run by Hebog and all finances would be dealt with by Hebog (i.e. NMBAQC has no financial liability for this workshop).

ACTION:

- ❖ NMBAQC could consider having new Yr17 invertebrate contract to include RT specimens as being given from the contractor to participants to keep.

- ❖ PA to put Dave Barnes (Hebog) in contact with DH to discuss another expert workshop for 2009 in Bangor.

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

- TM, KC and DH met with Herman Hummel and Pim van Avesaath from the Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO). The following points were discussed in their meeting:
 - Their perception of the NMBAQC scheme was very different to how the scheme is run in reality. They are interested in starting up a separate European scheme to the NMBAQC, as there is now a drive from Europe for external QA schemes (even though the NMBAQC is beginning to have European participants).
 - The level of fees which they would want to charge would be 5-10 times what the NMBAQC charge, as their aim would be for their scheme to be profitable. The fees charged would operate on a sliding scale and would be dependent on the type (government/private) and size of the organisation.
 - They thought it was very good that CMA's have their QA/QC needs documented in contracts with contractors (this is not done in Europe).
 - They were confused about the invertebrate RT, which they thought had a pass/fail rate (like the OS). This is because in their dutch contracts the definition of 'ring test' is that it has an associated pass/fail rating given to participants. The NMBAQC's RT's are clearly defined on the website (it is a training exercise), and this was explained to Pimm and Herman.
- The NMBAQC committee discussed the following points in response to the Netherlands desire to set up an equivalent European scheme:
 - There is a current perception that the NMBAQC is for the UK only (because of the 'N' for National). But this is not the case as the NMBAQC comes under BEQUALM which is European. Maybe we should consider dropping the 'N' and becoming the MBAQC? MOR also suggested that since we are still linked to BEQUALM, our full name should be the "BEQUALM Marine Biological AQC Scheme". This name change is dependent on our links with BEQUALM, and the EU (e.g. ICES), and the name change would be rolled over a 6 month period (it would involve website, logo, participation form etc. changes).
 - There really isn't an issue with expanding the species in all components to cover Baltic and/or Mediterranean in order to be a more European scheme.
 - DH suggested that participant's Statement of Performance (SoP) could be displayed on the NMBAQC website. This is mainly to avoid having the rather long current time lag for issuing the SoPs as the committee recognise that many contractors are required to provide their Scheme SoP to clients. This could be implemented for Yr16, but only with participants consent. There could be a tick box on the participation form where you can say whether it is something you would want or not (ie have your lab name or code shown) - it will be totally optional.

ACTION:

- ❖ All to consider dropping the 'N' and becoming the 'MBAQC', or BEQUALM Marine Biological AQC Scheme. Send ideas to PA.

- ❖ TM to contact HBDSEG and ICES working group chairs, and see what they think about us becoming the 'MBAQC'.
- ❖ CM to ask contractors feedback on the option of having participant's Statement of Performance advertised on the NMBAQC website.

e) Comments on Document CEN/TC 230 N 622

- See file: GENERAL - CEN TC230_N_621_NWIP_Multimetric_Indices_new work proposal_Feb09.pdf
- Title: Water Quality – Guidance standard on the design of Multimetric Indices.
- SC has requested that all biological classification people in the NMBAQC read this document and provide him with comments. He highlighted the importance of providing comments on this, as it will become a standard which is referred to by the WFD requirements.
- General committee comments were this document has been written from a freshwater perspective.

ACTION:

- ❖ All to give comments to SC by end of March. Alternatively committee can contact their own CEN reps within their agency with comments.
- ❖ All to communicate about it: CS to MPTT; TM to BTT; PA to EA benthic people; SC to Fish people.

f) Porcupine published article

- MOR published a response to Peter Garwood's article about the NMBAQC in the latest edition of Porcupine.
- This article was edited by TM and reviewed by Jane Hawkrigde.
- No feedback from this article to MOR to date.

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."

g) Website updates

- The new website (which meets requirements for use by people with vision and hearing impairments) is now live. Committee comments on the website includes:
 - MOR – what happened to his blue boarder request?
 - Icons and Menu tabs could be bigger
 - FAQ should be updated to answer more common questions
 - Check to see if Paolo's email address is still on the website somewhere and replace with PA's email.
 - Need to make sure the list of participants is always up to date and correct
 - Larger screenshot's of each Organisation's webpage need to be shown on the 'Links' page.
 - Marine Protocols Database should be advertised through our 'Links' page. TM has asked them to link to our website, but this has not been done to date.
 - MEDIN and EDIT should also advertise the NMBAQC on their websites (and vice versa).

ACTION:

- ❖ MOR to check whether the Marine Protocols Database, MEDIN and EDIT are going to advertise the NMBAQC on their websites.
- ❖ All to give PA comments on website (on text in particular) by the next NMBAQC meeting.

3. PSA

a) Summary of PSA workshop and work needed before a SOP

- See file: PSA - Workshop Feedback Summary 050309.doc
- Feedback from PSA workshop has now been circulated, most people were happy with it, and the only negative feedback came from those who had different expectations of what the workshop was going to involve before they arrived.
- NIEA conducted a small experiment that involved running 80 PSA samples through 8 different analytical treatments and found significant differences in the EUNIS classification given to the samples depending on how they were treated, e.g. clumps formed in the oven dried samples led to considerable underestimation of the silt/clay fraction.
- Some big issues were raised at the PSA workshop with respect to the merging laser and sieved fractions of samples due to the fact that the results of these are proportions of two different parameters (i.e. % by vol versus % by weight). This means that the 1mm cut off for sieve / laser analysis currently used by CMAs is probably the worst one possible (as it occurs in the middle of the 'sand' fraction). TM suggested that this may mean samples will be sieved down to 63 microns or up to 2mm in future.
- There was also much debate on the topic of whether to subsample from a biology grab vs a separate grab.
- PA is drafting proceedings of the workshop have been sent to TM, MOR and KC and will be distributed more widely when their comments have been collated (e.g. on the NMBAQC website, along with talks given by non-commercial participants).
- The group as a whole agreed that it would be good to have a secure forum on the website where people could discuss some of the issues raised at the PSA workshop and that if this proved successful the forum could be widened to include other NMBAQC components as well.
- MOR mentioned that the sieve element of the NMBAQC PS component tests has been dropped in recent years (now just a laser test) due to the fact that most labs have focused on laser analysis for CSEMP sites. However, Sieving AQC may have to be reinstated if, under WFD, labs begin to routinely use sieves for coarser fractions. We all agreed that no changes will be made to the PS component until the SOP has been produced.

ACTION:

- ❖ TM to circulate results of NIEA's experiments to the committee.

b) Financing the production of a SOP

- The next step is to secure more funding to take the PSA work forward. We should consider putting in an application for Aggregates Levy whose next bidding round opens in April/May 2009.

- TM did say that the Aggregates Levy is looking to the NMBAQC to rectify methodological issues with PSA, therefore this is good argument to get funding from them.
- KC pointed out that you have to be very careful to show the benefits of any bids to the Aggregates industry and also that the call for bids may come in the form of a number of topic areas. He also mentioned that up to £15,000 may be available from CEFAS's CSEMP budget for 'method development', which may in fact cover the entire project.
- Other funding option: Richard Newell

ACTION:

- ❖ KC / PA to chase up the CEFAS funding potential (incl'd getting Claire Mason (CEFAS) to price up hers and Ken Pye's work so we know how much money we're likely to need).

c) Green Book Revision

- Members of the committee asked what was happening with the new edition of the Green Book at the moment and whether any updates could wait until the issues with PSA could be resolved?

ACTION:

- ❖ TM to discuss this with John Thain who is editing the new version of the Green Book
- ❖ TM to put John Thain in contact with SC who also wants to discuss the fish text as well (as he feels it is far too vague at the moment).
- ❖ TM to let ALL know when the Green Book revision deadline is.

4. Benthic Invertebrates

a) Contractor update – Dave Hall, Unicmarine

- See file: MtgRpt_10_03_2009.pdf
- Yr 13 update:
 - Statements of Performance given to MOR to sign and send out (07/10/08). SOPs were signed and distributed to participants in early March 2009.
 - Production of draft annual report for invertebrate, particle size and fish components is underway.
- Yr 14 update:
 - LR12 and OS35-37 – Analysis and reporting underway (however maintaining the Yr15 timetable is the priority).
- Yr 15 work:
 - RT35 now reported and on the website.
 - RT36 is active, with samples having been distributed in 02/02/09. Deadline: 27/03/09.
 - PS32 now reported and on the website.
 - PS33 is active, with samples having been distributed in 02/02/09. Deadline: 27/03/09.
 - DH is in the process of replacing one of the two replicate analysts that Unicmarine use for the PS component. He is currently in discussion with Bob Kennedy from Martin Ryan Marine Science Institute, Ireland about becoming one of the replicate analysts. This would be ideal, as Bob

has an old Mastersizer which DH would like as a comparison to the newer model (Mastersizer 2000).

- LR13 is active, with requests for samples on 31/07/08. Deadline has passed with 7 of the 15 sets of specimens received.
- OS38-40 is active, with requests for data on 31/07/08. Deadline has passed, with 29 of 34 data sets received, and 42 samples received.
- MB16 now reported and on the website. But this will be reviewed based on an issue found with Jirkov's Ampharetid key. DH will revisit the Ampharetidae specimens. DH is not sure where the error lies, with Jirkov's key or Holthe's key; original descriptions and type material review may be necessary to resolve this (Jirkov funding request; see item 1f).
- Good news that Unicomarine now have courier clearance to send specimens into Europe.
- Laboratory Reference Fish Trial 2 (autumn). This involved 12 teams (11 EA and 1 SEPA). The logistics of this ran better than the first trial. No participant feedback on the results to date. Those specimens which were not requested for return could be sent to the Fish Workshop in Millport. DH discussed that maybe the naming of this should not have been Laboratory Reference Fish, but Reverse Ring Test Fish – as labs don't actually have their own laboratory reference collections.
- Yr 16 work:
 - DH will need to begin work on the Yr16 timetable at the end of July.
 - KC suggested that future RT's should avoid the end of the financial year as a deadline, and instead be before the end of the financial year.
- Taxonomic Literature Database V02 was circulated to the committee for the 02/12/08 meeting but somehow no one commented on it! This needs to be re-circulated and comments collected by PA.

ACTION:

- ❖ PA to re-circulate the Taxonomic Literature Database V02 for comments by the committee. This has been done (PA forwarded onto the committee 27/03 for their comments to DH by 24/04).
- ❖ DH to revisit the Ampharetidae specimens (related to MB16). The original descriptions and type material review may be necessary to resolve this (Jirkov funding request; see item 1f).
- ❖ DH to contact Adam Waugh re: the fish specimens which were not requested for return could be sent to the Fish Workshop in Millport. This has been done 18/03/09.

b) Beginners Workshop Update

- There are currently 13 interested participants for the workshop on 9-13 November 2009. DH asked that numbers be capped at this amount and will get back to PA if he can take more.

ACTION:

- ❖ PA to email everyone and confirm their interest, and also alert all that places are now full. This has been done (02/04).

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

- See files: INV - PRP comments to Unicomarine.doc; PRPAQCDraft2.doc; TDP_March09_MeetingDraft.pdf
- Unicomarine's Draft PRP/TDP reports were sent to the committee for comment in Dec 08.
- PA provided DH with comments in Feb 09.
- The original driver was WFD, but the committee now think that it should not be WFD or CSEMP specific – instead be titled: title: 'Benthic Invertebrate Sample Processing Guidelines' which would discuss best practice methods.
- DH provided the committee with an addition to the PRP – a 'sample PRP checklist' which could be used by labs to ensure they are following the NMBAQC's best practice recommendations. All of the committee liked this addition, and would like this briefness to be adopted for the PRP document itself as well.
- The committee would still like to see the PRP edited (mainly reducing the wordiness of the text, and details filled in for QA/QC, Transport, and Health and Safety sections). AP will get together a more specific list of the edits the committee would like, then DH can provide a quote for time/money estimates to make the changes.
- Other details that committee would like include:
 - Highlighting the difference in sieve mesh size used (e.g. Conservation Agencies use 0.5mm, but CMA's use 0.5mm for Estuaries and Offshore and 1mm for Coastal waters.)
 - Discuss the difference between splitting and sieving samples fresh in the field vs in the lab (where samples are preserved and specimens potentially brittle).
 - Room for labs to choose: e.g. Staining method.
 - There should be greater detail for e.g.: a standard mix formaldehyde solution should be.... for a muddy sample (organically enriched). These details should be in the text of the report, not in the checklist.
 - Details of packaging requirements (for using couriers) – DH does not want to write about this as it is always changing and dependent on individuals' contracts with couriers.
 - Internal QA/QC details could be elaborated. E.g. QC of identification and extraction: 10% of samples must be re-checked; QC of identification: a full reference collection must be held by the lab.
- DH discussed that the Taxonomic Discrimination Protocol (TDP) as it stands is only a basic list which demonstrates the level of detail that it would go to in the future for species (e.g. Oligochaetes).
- The PRP will be adapted to go into the Green Book – possibly just use the Procedural Guidelines as Appendices (as is done in the Marine Monitoring Handbook).
- DH said there have already been 10 days work on the TDP/PRP which has been paid for by the EA. He has offered to charge the same day rates as from 2007 for any additional work, which he thinks will be in the vicinity of 5 days.

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.

5. Fish

a) *Fish Key*

- The fish key has been completed and will be available in pdf form by the end of March (and will be ready for Millport Workshop).
- Currently there is not enough funding to have a print run of the key. If it was to be printed it would be in just two colours (black and blue) and in paper back form with a glued spine. This would cost £7,500 for 300 copies. NIEA may be able to contribute some money towards this.
- SC is trying to build a photo library to compliment the fish key drawn images. These photos would be put on a training CD for the CMAs.

ACTION:

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

b) *Fish ID Workshop*

- See outlook email: FISH - Estuarine Fish ID workshop Spring 2009
- There has been a lot of interest in the Millport Fish ID workshop (20-23 April, 2009), and 32 places have been filled.
- This is a trial workshop and therefore only CMAs involved.
- If this format of workshop is to be repeated by the NMBAQC (and opened up to all interested parties) will depend on how well received it is by participants this time.
- LO suggested an alternative location for future workshop: Dale Fort, which is at the mouth of Milford Haven in Wales.

c) *Yr 16 Fish Component*

ACTION:

- ❖ DH to write a brief recommendation report as to where the NMBAQC's Fish Component can go for Yr 16 based on the Trial Laboratory Reference-Fish and Fish Ring Tests.

6. Rocky Shore Macroalgae

a) *Plan for RT04*

- See file: ALGAE - Outline for NMBAQC Macroalgae Quality Control Scheme.doc
- To date the NMBAQC have run one trial and two full ring tests. There has been a lot of feedback from people on these ring tests, most of which has been positive.
- CS raised the question of whether we continue the Macroalgae Ring Tests as training exercise or move into a testing format:
 - This would involve setting a pass/fail criteria. Then there would have to be different pass criteria for analysts undertaking FSL level identification and those undertaking identification to RSL only. An RSL only pass level could be set on genus only, while an FSL one would be on species level ID. Both pass rates could then be set to say 80% (previous exercises will be reviewed to see if this is a reasonable pass rate).
- This work will need to go out to tender, and CS has a couple of people in mind for who would apply for this work.

ACTION:

- ❖ CS to prepare a tender document (with PA's help) for a RT04 in Yr16.

b) MPTT QA needs and Yr 16 plans

- The MPTT would like to have some form of Own Samples component for rocky shore macroalgae.
- CS has proposed trialling an OS component by submitting ten taxa per annum to an expert. These may be any combination of fresh, preserved, part-dried, pressed, scanned or photographed, which will allow an expert to make an identification (there would need to be clear guidance on this). The same taxa should not be repeated from year to year, unless the plants show significant morphological variations. For example the common alga, *Chondrus crispus*, has great morphological variation. Data on habitat and season should be submitted with the plants.
- Pass rates would need to be agreed. A suggestion is that FSL level participants should achieve 90% and RSL level participants 80%.
- Also suggested a scheme where reference specimens can be sent to experts. The committee commented on this and said that really each person in the field should know who the experts are and be able to deal with them directly. A list of experts (or some form of paid expert service) should not be provided by the NMBAQC.

ACTION:

- ❖ CS to research and write guidance for an OS option.

7. Opportunistic Macroalgae

a) Review of Emma Wells biomass and % cover trial ringtest

- See file: ALGAE - Outline for NMBAQC Macroalgae Quality Control Scheme.doc
- CS believes this test should be run again this year, but with a greater number of participants and clearer guidance as to what participants need to do for this test.

ACTION:

- ❖ CS to prepare a tender document for a repeat test in Yr16.

b) SOP comparison between CMAs, and MPTT % cover test

- PAs SOP comparison of CMAs WFD Opportunistic Macroalgae methods is nearly complete (just waiting on SEPA to fill in). This has been used to design a small piece of work where difference between % cover estimation methods used by each CMA is being tested. This is being funded by the EA and done by Ecomaris.

ACTION:

- ❖ CS to fill out PAs SOP comparison asap.
- ❖ PA to send out results of Ecomaris's test of %cover estimation methods to the committee once finished.

8. Phytoplankton

a) *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).

b) *EA inter-worker variability test*

- See file: PHYTO - EA Phytoplankton AQC notes_v3.doc
- Ecomaris have done a small test of inter-worker variability in identification and enumeration of phytoplankton samples.
- Generally the committee found this a bit too brief and more detail is needed.
- Committee asked whether Joe Silke was aware of this report?
- Is this report finished? Where to from here?

ACTION:

- ❖ AP to feedback comments to Ecomaris.
- ❖ AP to advise committee as to what the status of this work is.

9. Epibiota

a) *Envision's Update for the NMBAQC meeting:*

- Dates and progress for Next Circulation (3rd Test):
 - We are currently working on the website and video footage for the next (3rd and Final test) and are planning to send this on the 26th March to arrive on the 27th and with 5-6 week completion time.
 - This third test is a simplified version of test 2 and is focused on species and habitat recognition and therefore should enable more rapid completion.
 - An e-mail will be circulated this week to inform participants of the dates and to allow for the test in their work schedules.
 - Currently we have 23 participants registered for test 3
- May Workshop
 - We propose to have this workshop at the Centre for Life, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on the 13-14th May 2009. Registration will run from 12 noon on the 13th May, but the workshop itself will start after lunch from 1pm - 5pm, and from 9am – mid-afternoon on the 14th May. Included in the workshop costs, there will be an evening meal on the first night, and lunch will be provided on the second day.
 - Currently we have 13 people who have expressed a wish to attend the video workshop. Is this workshop worth advertising more widely, the video workshop in Belfast attendees could be contacted and invited? This

raise and issue of cost as a lot of these attendees could contribute but there is no budget for paid speakers/invitees.

- A draft agenda will be submitted to AFBINI 1 month before the workshop and a final agenda produced once test 3 is complete and this will be circulated to all participants, below are current recommendations for topics:
 - Quality of Video Footage – how to assess if the footage is fit for purpose, and to maximise and assess resolution for viewing;
 - Training – is there a need for compulsory training for video analysis, or just recommend types of existing training opportunities;
 - Stills – is it possible to translate back information from stills to video analysis without recording separately for still images (i.e. the information is only definitely correct for that instant when the still image was taken);
 - Metadata – obviously as much metadata as possible is preferable, but is use of the MESH metadata standard minimum requirements for data collection sufficient?
 - Use of the SACFOR scale – ranges of count per area, the inclusion of a ‘Present’ or ‘P’ category, and the use of the encrusting/small/large category which is difficult to decide between (e.g. do you use largest extent of species, or those being recorded from video?);
- Species Identification – where an organism cannot be identified to species or genus level:
 - Should the organism be identified either to higher taxonomic level, or common term, or life form (often more informative than taxonomic term)?
 - Should all the organisms of this ‘higher taxonomic level’ then be counted, especially where it is difficult to distinguish between individuals because of video quality?
 - Should participants be penalised for guessing to species level when this level of identification is not possible?
 - When it is possible to identify one creature to species level, do you then assume all similar organisms are the same species, even if video quality makes the identification unsure?
- Feedback on tests
- Future possibilities

b) Video RT Discussion

- A report by Envision on the RT02 (NMBAQC Video Ring Test 2 Report v3.doc) was sent from MS to TM, and shown to the committee on TM’s computer at the meeting.
- Committee are concerned about the method of analysis of the “marking scheme’s”. i.e. the use of ‘average correct values’ – what about definitive answers or using Bray Curtis similarity to measure participants performance?
- Marking scheme for Identification (p8) – marks are too lenient.
- SACFOR Abundance scale is not intuitive for TM.
- RT02 video didn’t give a scale for the red dots. This comment was fed back to Envision.
- We need to make sure that each of the funding agencies are invited to the workshop.

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- Committee would like to have a teleconference before the Video ring test trial workshop, to make sure the NMBAQC's objectives are met.

ACTION:

- ❖ TM to forward Envision's report to the committee for comment.
- ❖ MS to ensure all funding agencies are invited to the workshop.
- ❖ TM and/or MS to organise a teleconference before the Video ring test trial workshop, to make sure the NMBAQC's objectives are met

10. Next Meeting

- PA won't be around from May, and may come back in July if she gets offered her EA/JNCC job again and is successful in obtaining a work permit.
- The next meeting will be organised by AP in June (proposed date: Tuesday 16 June). This will be a teleconference, as video conferences and the NMBAQC don't work!

ACTION:

- ❖ PA to check if the proposed date of Tuesday 16 June for a teleconference meeting is ok with the committee.