

NATIONAL MARINE BIOLOGICAL AQC SCHEME
FINAL MINUTES
11 August, 2008 10:30 am
Video Conference: Perth, Peterborough, Belfast

Present:	T. Mackie (TM)	NIEA	(Chair)
	M. O'Reilly (MOR)	SEPA	(Infaunal Contract Manager)
	P. Addison (PA)	EA/JNCC	(Technical Secretary)
	A. Miles (AM)	EA	(Financial Manager)
	A. Prior (AP)	EA	
	C. Scanlan (CS)	SEPA	
	C. Milner (CM)	SEPA	
	M. Service (MS)	AFBINI	(Epibiota Contract Manager)
	D. Hall	Unicomarine	(Infaunal Contractor)
Apologies:	S. Coates	EA	
	K. Cooper	CEFAS	
	L. Oliver	EA/CCW	

1. Update on last meetings ACTIONS:

a) *Committee correspondence list*

- Updated email list was sent out to committee in June 2008.
- JNCC – Jane Hawkrigde needs to be added to all circulations
- Ali Miles is going off line until the end of the financial year, and will be replaced with Amanda Prior.

ACTION:

- ❖ PA to send out new committee list.

b) *HBDSEG – Clarification of NMBAQC's role*

- TM has sent a document to Jane Hawkrigde clarifying the NMBAQC's role

ACTION:

- ❖ Wait for a response from HBDSEG, and then committee must write a TOR.

c) *HBDSEG – Addition of ERMS code in UNICORN*

- TM has continued investigating the cost of the addition of ERMS code into UNICORN:
 - Unicomarine have provided a quote to create an additional field for the ERMS code in UNICORN. Following this there is a maintenance fee (per annum for Unicorn licence holders?) for the modification of the species list (ie name changes, new species).
 - JNCC and/or NIEA may have some money to contribute at the end of the financial year (depending on whether there is any left over money from projects).
 - EA needs this in before UNICORN 5, therefore AM is exploring the potential for EA funding.

- The money from CMA's into MERMAN currently does not support the taxon list, but maybe CMA's can specify that additional money they put in is for the updating of the taxon list.

ACTION:

- ❖ AM to investigate potential of EA funding for Unicomarine to enter ERMS field into UNICORN.
- ❖ TM to investigate potential funding from NIEA (and also JNCC) at the end of the financial year.
- ❖ TM to investigate the potential for MERMAN to cover the maintenance costs (potentially by increasing the charge to CMA's).
- ❖ AM and AP to write a summary report on the benefits of using the ERMS common species list, to be presented at the September HBDSEG meeting.

d) HBDSEG – funding for new QA components?

- TM has spoken with HBDSEG, and they may be able to put money into new QA components, as well as from NIEA. Also PSEG (Productive Seas Evidence Group) may have money for PSA (contact: Zoe Crutchfield, Senior Offshore Advisor, JNCC).

2. General Administration

a) Website Updates

- PA outlined website updates to date (summarised in NMBAQC Summary of Website Updates 070808.doc – provided at the meeting). The website will be updated on a regular basis, and PA has requested any new information to be sent to her and she can then send this on to Gavin Mortimer (CEFAS, web contact).
- Main changes to note: Text about the scheme from MOR has been uploaded; Yr 15 timetable and Application form have been uploaded; Details of Taxonomic Workshop have been uploaded; Epibiota ring test link has been removed; Corrupted links to documents have been fixed. Components that have been updated: Invertebrates; Macroalgae; Phytoplankton, and PSA.
- Committee bios: Still waiting on bios from MS, KC and JS. It was suggested that committee photos go next to bio's – but the committee's general consensus was not to have photos!
- Gavin M has also been changing the coding of the website to make it meet website regulations (to be accessible to people with any form of disability or vision problems), and also to make it easier for him to upload new text and documents. PA will review this website and ensure it appears the same, and has the correct content.
- The 'Photo Library' page still has no photos. Suggestions made were that photos taken of specimens from NMBAQC workshops could be uploaded. PA will have to investigate cost of uploading and storage capacity of our website with our hosts (CEFAS).
- DH comments: The invertebrate participant list has some errors in it; Yr 15 timetable shown on the front page is just for the invertebrate component; Photo scrolling is annoying – either slow it down or only make it scroll when mouse is over the image box; 'Current Activities' section on each components page are generally out of date. Maybe it is easier to collate all 'current activities' and have them on the front page – this will make it easier for updates and ensure content is kept more 'current'.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ PA to still needs bio's from MS, KC and JS.
- ❖ PA to continue updating web as new documents and text come in.
- ❖ PA to review new formatted website.
- ❖ PA to investigate cost of uploading images and the storage capacity of our website (for the Photo Library).
- ❖ PA to make changes based on DH's comments.

b) Centralising NMBAQC Documents

- Generally MOR and TM have all NMBAQC documents. PA at EA does however also need to keep copies of all final documents on EA's national file plan (due to EA's auditing rules).
- It was agreed all new reports must also go onto the website soon after being produced. This will mean contractors (or contract managers) will have to send documents to PA.
- TM is going to investigate the option of NIEA converting hard copies of the NMBAQC Annual Reports 1-10 to pdf.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ TM and DH to send all documents he has to PA, and PA to put onto EA's national file plan (and onto website).
- ❖ TM to check cost of converting NMBAQC Annual Reports 1-10 to pdf at NIEA.

c) Comments on CEN technical documents

- Committee comments include: These documents are very general – particularly the interlab comparisons document.

ACTION:

- ❖ Committee to send their individual comments to Sarah Peaty (EA) by 28 August.

3. Benthic Invertebrate Component

- Seasearch Ascidian Workshop was held last week. Is there any potential for linking such workshops/courses with NMBAQC?

ACTION:

- ❖ AP to investigate potential for collaboration at next Seasearch meeting.

Briefing from David Hall (further details in MtgRpt_11_08_2008.pdf. Also see rpts for RT 32, 33, 34, MB15 and Scheme Evaluation Results):

- Year 13 exercises have all finished and the annual report is currently being written. However it was discussed that the 'statement of performance' is more urgent than the annual report – DH needs to check the status of this.
- Yr 14 OS and LR samples are still being sorted.
- Yr 15 timetable has gone out, and LR13 and OS38-40 have been sent out.
- General comment: Labs are defending their id's based on the taxonomic keys that they use. The literature database that DH created will soon go out to participants with 150 new records. PA to advertise this on the web, to alert potential new participants to the benefits of signing up with the benthic invertebrate component.

- DH has produced a draft of the Nuculidae guide proposed for Porcupine publication. NMBAQC has expressed interest in funding this publication. DH has provided a quote for 1.5 days work.
- Taxonomic workshop:
 - 30 participants (+2 on a waitlist) have expressed interest. The two Russian experts (Igor Jirkov and Vasily Radashevsky) can only make their visa applications 3 months before they intend to travel.
 - Once visa's are confirmed, DH to send PA final outline of the workshop and PA will send final details of workshop and invoices out to participants.
 - DH would like to ask participants whether they can bring specimens as well as reference material as a contribution to the workshop. PA to send DH the list of participants for him to email them about this.
- Request for Module changes for Yr16 are needed ASAP. Such changes could include replacing the current MB samples with artificial MB samples. Unicomarine have suggested that before changes are made, the committee should consult the current participants through the form of a questionnaire.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ DH to follow up on sending out a 'statement of performance' to contract manager from Yr 13.
- ❖ DH to send details of the new literature database to PA, and PA to advertise this on the NMBAQC website.
- ❖ TM to investigate potential of NIEA paying for Nuculidae guide proposed for Porcupine publication.
- ❖ DH to inform PA when to send out final details of workshop and invoices to participants.
- ❖ PA to send DH participant list for workshop, and DH to email participants asking for a contribution of specimens and reference material. (MOR to finalise number of participants from SEPA).

4. PSA Component

- PA has received 11 of the 13 labs' questionnaires, and has begun summarising questionnaire results. PA has been in consultation with Claire Mason (CEFAS) to sort out some of the labs answers, and will have to contact some labs to follow up on getting more specific answers to some questions as well as copies of their SOPs.
 - PA needs to confirm that labs provided answers to the questionnaire based on their PSA for supporting biological analysis.
- Claire Mason has expressed interest in holding a workshop with biologists and sedimentologists (Prior to writing SOP).
 - Workshop Aim: To clarify current methodological differences (revealed from the NMBAQC questionnaire) and discuss what methods should be put into a SOP.
 - CEFAS may provide funding for half of the workshop (including providing the venue – CEFAS, Lowestoft).
- Committee's opinion on the workshop and SOP:
 Make no commitment to a workshop yet. Once PA has provided a summary of the PSA questionnaires, then committee can decide.
 - Potentially the workshop could be an e-workshop, to keep costs down.

- Workshop should be for biologists and sedimentologists, as this is for PSA as a supporting parameter for biological work.

SOP could be titled 'PSA for Supporting Biological Analysis'

- Malvern reporting issue – DH will have to send out an email to all PSA participants and alert them to the updated Malvern spreadsheet. Providing Malvern's permission is given, this could also be advertised on the NMBAQC website.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ PA to send out summary of questionnaires to committee (once completed). Following this committee will have to decide whether or not to run a workshop.
- ❖ DH to send out email to all PSA participants and alert them to the updated Malvern spreadsheet, and let PA know whether this can be advertised on the NMBAQC website.

5. Fish component

- A summary document was provided by Adam Waugh (Update of Fish from Adam Waugh.doc).
- DH is beginning to sort through the reverse ring test samples now.
- Adam's feedback included fish samples should be fixed with chemicals, not just frozen.
 - AM and DH are not concerned about the state of the frozen samples, and do not want to use chemicals in future reverse ring tests.
 - An option to avoid regions complaining about freezing is to provide them with a cool box to send their samples back to Unicomarine.
 - AM said they will probably hold off the next reverse ring test until Spring 2009.
- SC indicated (in an email) that the Id guide could be held up if some nomenclature issues are updated (e.g. Liza ramada/o).
 - The general feeling is that the id guide should just get printed ASAP, as there are always going to be name revisions etc.
 - DH did notice a misspelling of the 6 gilled shark spp name in an earlier draft, and should check with SC if he is aware of this.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ DH to inform SC of misspelling of the 6 gilled shark spp name in the id guide.

6. Rocky Shore Macroalgae

- RT03 has gone out to 13 labs. Results are due to Emma Wells by 5 September, and final report will be sent to PA by the end of September.
- RT04 to be held prior to the field season (May '09)? Discussions about RT04:
 - This will be a more complicated ring test to get out, given that Emma Wells will be in Fiji. EA procurement rules really need to be considered and this work should go out to tender. Other options of contractor: Francis Bunker...? CS to investigate other potential contractors.
 - Should NMBAQC continue to do RT's for this, or move to OS?
 - CS would like the RT04 to go ahead.

- OS needs to be investigated for Y16. CS to lead on this – go to MPTT and see what is being called for.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ CS to ask MPTT what QA needs they have, i.e. keep RT's going or switch to OS?

7. Opportunistic Macroalgae

- Emma Wells has put together a trial ring test for the opportunistic macroalgae methods with photos of quadrats (to test estimation of % cover) and a j-cloth squeezing exercise (to test differences in biomass calculations). This will be sent out to approx 5 labs. The NMBAQC is not involved in this test, and Mike Best (EA) is funding this for the MPTT.
- What do MPTT want for Opportunistic Macroalgae Blooming (MAB) work (from the NMBAQC)? CS said there was a SOP but not all are following it and agencies have presumably diverged. This needs to be addressed by MPTT. MPTT will define QC requirements for MAB work following the test exercise, and will liaise with NMBAQC through Clare.
- PA collecting CMA's SOPs (TM needs to send NIEA's SOP). SOPs may not reveal how different teams around the UK are conducting their methods (e.g. due to differences in interpretations of SOPs, or just budgetary constraints resulting in modification of methods). Therefore the main contact at each CMA will need to ask regions/teams how they actually conduct their opportunistic macroalgae surveys. Alternatively an NMABQC questionnaire could be developed and sent out to regions.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ CS to ask MPTT what QA needs they have – produce a SOP for opportunistic macroalgae that will be followed. Look at MAB QC criteria following the small ring test.
- ❖ TM to send NIEA's Opp Macroalgae SOP to PA.
- ❖ PA to compare CMA's SOPs, and investigate the best way to assess how differently surveys are conducted in the field by different teams/regions.

8. Furoid extent

- PA provided EA's classification tool to the committee for their reference. No action to follow this.

9. Phytoplankton

- MPTT need to review the sampling methodology.
- EA study of auditing phytoplankton samples is continuing.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ JS or CS (whoever is at next MPTT meeting) follow up on whether MPTT is reviewing the sampling methodology.
- ❖ AP/PA to provide results of EA study of auditing phytoplankton samples once it is complete.

10. Epibiota

- MS provided an update on the Video RT:
 - The first test is complete, 12 of the 14 labs have returned their results.

- No report from Envision to date.
 - Feedback provided and is being taken into account for the second test.
 - Suggestion of getting new footage from Rohan Holt (CCW) and Plymouth Marine Labs.
 - Second test will be in Oct/Nov – MS to chase up exact date.
- PA discussed a call from CCW (and JNCC) to update the existing epibiota ring test (which the link has been removed from the NMBAQC website).
 - Work needed would be to update images. Rohan Holt has said he has many photos, which could be used.
 - Work also needed on the database associated with images. The test for users needs to include fuzzy logic and allow for slight spelling mistakes. Also a multiple choice test should include an intelligent selection of species that an image could be of.
 - There is also a call for a subtidal macroalgae online image ringtest. This could be done by developing Francis Bunker's website further, or including macroalgae in the existing epibiota ring test. Rohan Holt's in-situ images of algae and also his scanned images of algae could be used for this.
 - Should such online tests be developed by a contractor but held on the CEFAS server? Or just be on an external site and maintained by the contractor (who is the developer and host)?

ACTIONS:

- ❖ MS to chase up the exact date of the next video rt and inform the committee of this.
- ❖ PA to investigate the cost involved in an updated/new epibiota and subtidal macroalgae online image ring test. Also investigate potential for funding from JNCC and CCW.

11.CSEMP

- MERMAN database – PSA is not consistent or fit for purpose (biologically)
- Exploratory analysis by EA of CSEMP data revealed missing QA flags for the EA data, therefore EA data couldn't even be accessed properly. The issue of data flags (both historical and future) on Merman has still to be resolved and needs to remain on the committee's agenda.
- General committee comment is that the program does not seem to be fulfilling it's statistical aim (to detect temporal change). MOR comment: This needs further discussion in relation to changes in the programme. It would be beneficial if a summary could be produced (by someone?) of what the NMMP/CSEMP programmes aims were (in relation to invert community data) for Phase 1 and 2, what the aims are for current/future programme and how the changing sampling strategies might meet this!
- Processing Requirement Protocol (PRP) and Taxonomic Discrimination Protocol (TDP) need to be looked at. PA to follow up and get comments.

ACTIONS:

- ❖ PA to follow up on PRP and TDP and get comments

**12. Next Meeting – Wednesday 3 December. Video conference
(teleconference as a backup)**

ACTIONS:

- ❖ MS to investigate hosting a video conference from AFBI.
- ❖ PA to investigate using JNCC's facilities rather than EA.