

UK COMMITTEE FOR IUCN-UK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 57th meeting held on 13th January 2009

Defra Office, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EB

0930-1300hrs



Present: Chris Mahon (Chair), Stuart Brooks, Sally Cunningham, Alistair Gammell, Mike Pienkowski, James Robinson, Trevor Salmon

In attendance: Tom Tew

Secretariat: John Henson Webb

1. Chair's welcome

Chris welcomed everyone to the Defra office in Temple Quay, especially Tom Tew of Natural England, who had been invited to sit in on the meeting in preparation for Natural England's likely assumption of position as lead agency in regard to IUCN on behalf of the other country agencies.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Vin Fleming, Joanna Robertson

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

SC asked that the comment under ExCo 56 item 8, relating to TS no longer having responsibility for IUCN be amended. TS will retain overall responsibility but SC (or another) will deputise if TS is not available for a specific meeting.

Action 57.3.1 Secretariat to amend ExCo 56 minutes and publish to website

4. Chair's scene setting

• **Progress with UK Committee Strategy**

Chris noted that he had received a number of revisions to the initial draft Strategy, but that the Mission, as written, required further revision. If the draft could be agreed then it could be presented to the members at the AGM later.

In discussion a number of suggestions were highlighted.

- Representing the European interests of UK members by addressing those circumstances where otherwise there might be a restriction on their direct involvement; for example developing a relationship with Regional Councillors or engagement on Pan-European networks to promote or raise UK issues.
- Was it more appropriate for the Committee to develop a funding strategy to direct its 'future sustainable growth' or decide on the direction of possible membership expansion and potential objectives, such as engagement with the private sector? And was there a need for a specific target for membership expansion?
- The UK Committee needed to clearly define its niche, given its size and membership, and determine what mechanisms were necessary/possible to deliver on its objectives.
- Dissemination of IUCN information should be noted under background item 8.

At the AGM the Strategy would be introduced as a work in progress and the Members' encouraged to provide their thoughts and comments, especially on Objective 3.

5. December 5th Business meeting

• **Feedback and follow up proposals**

CM reported that the Institute of Directors (IoD) business meeting had been well attended, with 35 people representing a wide range of business and funding bodies. IUCN Headquarters had been represented by Director General Julia Marton-Lefèvre and Hans Friederich, Head of Strategic Policy, with Tamas Margeschu there in his capacity as Head of the Regional Office for Pan-Europe.

The purpose of the meeting was to 'test the water' – to gauge the level of interest in developing a business initiative. Although seemingly intangible, there was agreement that the UK Committee had a convening role and this aspect needed to be pursued. It also demonstrated to Gland that the UK Committee was a credible organisation and could take a lead in an important area of engagement.

The next step was to develop a methodology for effective engagement, possibly to include another high-level event to include business sector input. TS noted that some work strands within Defra also address this issue, giving the potential for strategic engagement.

6. December 5th Members' meeting

- **Feedback and follow up proposals**

CM noted that there had been good feedback regarding the second IoD meeting, which provided another opportunity for members to meet the DG and better understand how IUCN functions. JM-L and HF were both pleased with the meeting. CM had been invited to Gland in March 2009 to discuss how IUCN can further assist the UK Committee and would consult with UK ExCo prior to the meeting on messages and issues. AG suggested that the consultation paper provided as an attachment to Motion CGR4.MOT001 (Strengthening the links between IUCN members, Commissions and Secretariat) would be a useful information source as it addresses how IUCN should engage with its members; using its worldwide membership as a form of consultancy.

Action 57.6.1 AG to circulate CGR4.MOT001 attachment paper to ExCo

CM noted that TM had provided a brief presentation on the Pan-European programme review and it was hoped that Chantal van Ham would provide more detail at the AGM.

7. Preparations for 2009 AGM

There were a few items of business to put to the members. It was not anticipated that there would be any 'matters arising' from the Report on the 2008 AGM. AG would give a brief 'farewell' report. The Secretariat noted that three nominations to ExCo had been received. A fourth had not been supported by the correct paperwork and so was not counted. Therefore the three nominations could be elected to fill the vacant positions *en bloc*. This would be put to the Members to see if there were any objections.

The Constitutional amendments would also be put before the membership with an explanation of the reasoning behind the changes. Again, objections could be discussed.

CM noted that he would need to thank Harriet Nimmo for developing the agenda for the Members' meeting, reporting that Committee attendance at the event could easily have exceeded the room capacity if greater notice of the agenda had been available. SB indicated that there was the potential for repeating the agenda at a separate CEC/UK Committee joint event.

8. UK Overseas Territories

MP briefly reported that UKOTCF had convened a meeting with BiOverseas regarding the reconstitution of the agreement in order to make it operational again.

AG indicated that the UK Inter-Ministerial Group on Biodiversity were meeting tomorrow (14th January) to address two main issues: (i) Who is responsible for biodiversity in the OTs and (ii) what funding is necessary (supported by a JNCC report)? The outcome was considered important.

MP indicated that he would continue to circulate papers from UKOTCF meetings.

9. Activities 2009

- **Future Parliamentary Seminars**

ExCo needed to consider opportunities for a further seminar. Though issues relating to OTs had been previously suggested nothing had been decided and a degree of flexibility was required to exploit opportunities. Direct engagement with the devolved Parliaments was also proposed, their conservation-related activities a potential area for UK Committee involvement.

Action 57.9.1 SB to provide Secretariat with dates of Environment Week

- **Communications Strategy**

In discussion it was agreed to avoid a specific wording format that might be seen as negative. Flexibility was required and the form of wording used should reflect the circumstances; e.g. "it was considered inappropriate...". ExCo agreed the principle and would consider the form of words to be adopted.

Action 57.9.2 MP to provide TS with copy of wording from Andy Brown's letter

Action 57.9.3 TS to draft potential wording then circulate to ExCo for approval

- ***IUCN Programmes – Global and European***

There was brief discussion on how to improve and take forward the “Funding for Biodiversity” project. TS noted that Defra was concerned that some of the data appeared inaccurate or potentially misleading

Action 57.9.4 TS (Defra) to liaise on “Funding for Biodiversity” with AG and Paul Morling

It was agreed that following its revision and clarification more use could be made of the report, perhaps as the basis of a future seminar or meeting, but that revision would be necessary. The report was seen as a 'snapshot' of the funding situation but that the information could become dated quite quickly, however AG was unsure whether it was a priority at RSPB.

Action 57.9.4 AG to discuss “Funding for Biodiversity” with RSPB and Paul Morling

It was suggested that biodiversity funding form part of the UK Committee work programme and that a revised report could be taking more widely into the public domain.

SB then proposed a potential UK Committee project, which would require no funding. The Peter de Hann Charity Trust were promoting an advocacy programme to get peatlands status to be included under global carbon trading. SB is on the steering group and reported that they were seeking IUCN backing for the proposal, targeting specific partner organisations. It was agreed that this issue may fit into the UK committee Strategy under Objective 3 and it was also relevant to both the IUCN European and global programmes. The issue would be discussed further at ExCo 58.

Action 57.9.5 SB to provide ExCo with details on Peter de Hann proposals

Action 57.9.6 Secretariat to add Peter de Hann proposal to agenda for ExCo 58

CM noted that though there had been previous discussion on staging a high profile event during 2009 or 2010, ExCo did need to consider how it could incorporate the 2010 target in an appropriate manner.

10. Secretariat Report and contract renewal

- ***Tenders and assessment process***

It was reported that three candidate organisations had provided tenders and that an assessment process was required. TS provided a spreadsheet used by Defra to assess potential contractors and it was agreed that this could form a basis for a tender assessment document.

The extra requirements relating to long-term provision of Secretariat services to the Sibthorp Trust were discussed. It was agreed that the priority was to address the UK Committee's needs and then assess areas of beneficial overlap.

Action 57.10.1 TS to amending Defra 'score sheet' and circulate to ExCo

Action 57.10.2 Secretariat to circulate copy of original tender requirement

The deadline for ExCo comment on the score sheet is February 2nd.

- ***Membership update***

The Secretariat reported that two new subscribing organisations had joined the UK Committee, these being the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) and the Wildlife & Countryside Link (W&CL).

With regard to Committee funding, AG noted that both RSPB and WWF-UK paid voluntary contributions greater than their required subscriptions. It was also noted that from 2009 the subscription paid by the JNCC would drop to £0 but it was anticipated that each of the statutory agencies would pay their own subscription directly. (should we have an action here for Joanna to contact the relevant agencies and ensure these subscriptions are in place?)

In a point of clarification it was noted that non-subscribing UK IUCN members could attend meetings, but had no voting rights when it came to decisions on UK Committee business.

11. Countdown 2010 Focal Point activities

It was noted that with the completion of the Secretariat function by JNCC, the role of Countdown 2010 Focal point by JHW will also terminate and that a replacement will need to be considered.

The Secretariat reported that a list of UK businesses had been drawn up and the next stage was to draft an appropriate letter. This could be combined with an introduction to the UK Committee and act as a first opportunity to promote the 'business and biodiversity' issue.

Action 57.11.1 Secretariat to discuss content of introductory letter with CM

Action 57.11.2 Secretariat to draw up job specification for C2010 Secretariat

12. Financial Report

It was agreed that the Secretariat would announce the financial report at the AGM. SB agreed to act in the capacity of Treasurer and suggested that an indicative budget for 2009-2010 could be produced, based upon known subscription income.

In response to a question it was noted that there was no requirement for an external audit, but that it provided an independent check on Committee expenditure. It was suggested that WWF-UK be approached regarding the audit.

Action 57.12.1 Secretariat to contact WWF-UK (Mark Wright) regarding audit of UK Committee

13. Actions and matters arising

All items were discharged.

14. AoB

There were no other items of business.

15. Dates and topics of future meetings

- **Tuesday 13th January – AGM & Members' meeting (Bristol)**

It was agreed that ExCo 58 (March 2009) should be held face-to-face, but should not exclude the option of people joining by teleconference.