



JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT BOARD

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Paper by Marcus Yeo

Since the last report to the Committee, the Executive Management Board (EMB) has met four times: on 10 June, 9 July, 18 August and 9 September. Minutes of the meetings are available on request.

EMB has overseen the work involved in the preparation of Committee papers. Additionally the main items discussed by EMB relating to the Committee's reserved matters are summarised below. A corresponding report has been made to the Board on relevant matters.

Government reviews

Defra has written to JNCC providing information about a number of reviews of Defra's programmes and corporate service functions, tied into the Government's need to tackle the economic downturn. One review will look at the landscape for delivering public services through arms length bodies, including levels of independence over policy and operational issues and options for merging and abolishing bodies where appropriate. Further information about how these review will relate to JNCC will be sought at a meeting with Defra later this month.

JNCC research agenda

EMB welcomed the results of a project to determine JNCC's highest priority research needs. This was undertaken in consultation with country conservation body staff. The research priorities will be made available through JNCC's website with the intention of stimulating research on the topics identified. A link to the web pages will be provided to JNCC members in their next inter-sessional bulletin.

Marine Bills and executive devolution

EMB has monitored progress with the UK and Scottish Marine Bills and executive devolution. Agreement has been reached between the UK and Scottish Governments on the offshore nature conservation functions to be executively devolved and the safeguards to be put in place. Agreement has also been reached that JNCC's role will remain as it is currently with regard to advice on offshore matters. Targeted consultation is expected to take place shortly with a view to functions being devolved from April 2010. A full report will be brought to Committee in December.

UK Government biodiversity strategy for the Overseas Territories

Defra have agreed that they will take the lead in co-ordinating the work of Whitehall departments on biodiversity conservation in the Overseas Territories. Ministers have recently signed off a strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Overseas Territories (which was drafted by JNCC).