



JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

**DEVELOPING GUIDANCE FOR WORK ON UK-WIDE CONSERVATION
STANDARDS: RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

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DEVELOPING GUIDANCE FOR WORK ON UK-WIDE CONSERVATION STANDARDS: RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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1. Background

- 1.1 This paper is a follow-up to the earlier paper reviewing work on UK-wide conservation standards in JNCC (JNCC 09 P09). The review does not deal with implementation of standards in the agencies, and is focused on standards applied to terrestrial and freshwater habitats and species. Marine standards are not specifically considered and will be subject to a separate review.
- 1.2 At the meeting in June, Committee asked for work to revise the guidelines for selection of biological SSSIs to be given a higher priority. Committee also asked for further information on resource requirements and delivery mechanisms for the work.
- 1.3 Since then the Parliamentary Innovation Universities Science and Skills (IUSS) Committee has published its report on Sites of Special Scientific Interest¹. The report concluded:

“We welcome the news that the JNCC is giving this work a higher priority but, given that it is now 20 years since the Guidelines were first produced, this work must not be allowed to drift: a timetable should be established and published as soon as possible and there should be a process of consultation with interested organisations.”
- 1.4 Defra are currently preparing a Government response and we have indicated that, following advice from the Chief Scientists Group, we intend to undertake further consultation with the agencies on the scope and organisation of work.
- 1.5 This paper considers all identified work on UK-wide conservation standards – whether assessed as being high, medium or low priority (for existing work); and highly desirable or desirable (new work). Delivery mechanisms are considered in the broadest sense, including inter-agency options and external contracts.

¹ IUSS ref:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmdius/717/717.pdf>

2. **Resource estimates and delivery mechanisms**

- 2.1 In most cases, a range of options for how work is delivered can be envisaged, depending in part on the proportions of time required from Support Company and/or country conservation body. To simplify the presentation and to enable comparison, a mid-range estimate of resource requirement is provided in Table 1.
- 2.2 The resource requirements are classified as low - less than 2 weeks' staff time; medium - 2-8 weeks' staff time; high - more than 8 weeks' staff time. These are broken down into Support Company and country conservation body staff time which, in effect, indicates the likely delivery mechanism. Further details on the work envisaged and the proposed delivery mechanisms are provided in Annex 1.

Table 1: Summary resource requirements for prioritised work on UK-wide conservation standards.

		Existing work		
		Description	JNCC Support Company resource requirement	Country conservation body resource requirement
High priority		SSSI selection guidelines	M	H
		Common Standards Monitoring – UK reporting	M	L
		Habitats Directive	H	L
		Surveillance strategy framework and principles	H	H
		Principles for UK reporting on BAP	M	L
		NBN Habitats Dictionary	M	L
Medium priority		GCR data quality	L	nil
		Water Framework Directive	L	H
		NBN Species Dictionary	H	nil
Low priority		Protected site data	M	M
		Common Standards Monitoring – data archiving & accessibility	L	L
		Common Standards Monitoring – management information (guidance and standards for implementation)	H	M

New work			
	Description	JNCC Support Company resource requirement	Country conservation body resource requirement
Highly desirable	INSPIRE	H	M
	Target-setting and aggregation rules	L	L
	Remote sensing and habitat classification	H	L
Desirable	Habitat polygon and metadata	H	L
	Availability of data for meta-analysis	M	L
	Habitat classification & evaluation	H	H

*This refers to the overall package of work, as opposed to separate components (see Annex 1).

3. Summary

3.1 Table 1 shows that significant resources are required for the JNCC Support Company and country agencies to deliver work on UK-wide conservation standards. In most cases the work will involve inter-agency co-ordination. These priorities will need to be considered by JNCC and the country conservation bodies as part of their corporate planning processes and it is envisaged that, subject to resources available in future years, work of high and medium priority will be taken forward. It may be necessary to support some minimal work to complete or terminate existing commitments and avoid reputational damage with regard to low priority work.