



NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Statement of Intent on working with the National Biodiversity Network

Document History

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between which the Natural History Museum (NHM) and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), including the NBN Trust (NBNT) and the principle partners. It provides an outline both of the commitment by the NHM over the course of the financial year 2009-2010 and of the expectation of services to be provided by the NBN. This document will be reviewed annually.

2. Statement of commitment

- 2.1. The NHM is a founder member of the NBN and remains committed to support and promote the NBN.
- 2.2. The NHM will, during 2009, be setting up the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Biodiversity (AMC). Situated within the new phase of the Darwin Centre at the NHM, the AMC will provide the focus for the NHM's activities related to UK Biodiversity, including an enquiries service, innovative research projects and citizen science activities.
- 2.3. The NHM is committed to maintaining the Species Dictionary Service, as a nomenclator service for UK Biodiversity and to support the information requirements of the AMC. Data from this resource will be made freely available to the public and to support the NBN Gateway and Recorder projects.

3. Proposed NHM contribution 2009-2010

3.1. Species Dictionary Service

- 3.1.1. The service will be supported through a staff allocation of no less than 1 full-time equivalent.
- 3.1.2. Charles Hussey will continue as Project Manager
- 3.1.3. Public access to the Dictionary will be provided through a website. This will be enhanced during 2009-2010, subject to availability of funding.

3.1.4. Direct assistance is available to NBN partners and projects (e.g. Environment Agency, UKBAP, Forestry Commission) to help manage their taxonomic requirements (Work that requires substantial staff time may be chargeable).

3.1.5. The NHM will validate names of species proposed for inclusion on UKBAP.

3.2. The OPAL Project

3.2.1. Move to make selected UK species distribution data that are held in our collections available through the NBN Gateway, using our Earthworm dataset as a trial.

3.2.2. Share all suitable biological records that are gathered through the OPAL project with the NBN. This could be via their delivery to existing NBN Gateway data providers (e.g. recording schemes or LRCs), or directly to the NBN (tbc).

3.3. Venue for events and courses

3.3.1. The NHM will continue to provide meeting rooms for the NBNT meetings.

3.3.2. The AMC will be actively encouraging schemes and societies, and NBN partners, to use the facilities of the centre. This includes seminar and demonstration spaces.

3.4. Management Resources

3.4.1. Johannes Vogel will continue to act as a Trustee for the NBNT.

3.4.2. The NHM will, if required, organise and chair a taxonomic committee for the benefit of NBN partners.

3.5. Education and Outreach

3.5.1. The AMC will promote awareness of the NBN, its services and products.

3.5.2. The existence of the AMC will allow a re-examination of the role of the NHM in assisting with outreach and training for the NBN.

3.6. International initiatives

3.6.1. NHM staff are involved in a number of biodiversity informatics initiatives (research projects, content providers and standards bodies) in Europe and globally. Where appropriate, they will help raise awareness of the NBN and its successes. In particular they can act as a conduit for the integration and exchange of UK and European data.

3.7. Technical Resources

3.7.1. The NHM has expertise in biodiversity data standards and in delivering data to the web.

3.7.2. NBN partners are encouraged to make use of the Museum's reference collections.

3.7.3. The NHM has the capacity to host websites for partner organisations.

4. NHM requirements from NBN partners and NBNT

- 4.1. Timely notice of data requirements.
- 4.2. Notification of any technical considerations that might affect operation of the Dictionary service.
- 4.3. Recognition of the Species Dictionary service when negotiating contracts and sponsorship (e.g. with Defra).
- 4.4. Partners should follow best practice in biological nomenclature and classification, in line with international standards.
- 4.5. Partnerships
 - 4.5.1. NBN partners are encouraged to become collaborators in bids for research funding.
 - 4.5.2. Partners to develop projects and activities associated with the AMC.
- 4.6. Taxonomic expertise to complement in-house experts.
- 4.7. Access to datasets that are relevant to the PESI project (www.eu-nomen.eu/pesi), which will integrate European biodiversity data.
- 4.8. Speakers for public programme of talks and workshops.
- 4.9. Sponsorship for events and research.
- 4.10. Continued access to NBN technical expertise in the field of biological recording and mapping, particularly in the context of development of public-friendly web-based recording and visualisation tools. This includes Web Services that allow NBN data to be viewed within the NHM and OPAL websites. i.e. a continuation of the working relationships between technical IT staff that have been established through the OPAL project.