

Summary of 'A New Framework for the Delivery of Priority Habitats and Species in England'

Introduction:

- Defra appointed NE as lead delivery body for the England Biodiversity Strategy;
- NE will:
 - establish clear responsibilities/accountabilities for biodiversity delivery;
 - hold organisations accountable for their agreed contributions;
 - develop a framework that is owned by a broad partnership, with all members equally committed to its success.

Why we need a new framework:

- Biodiversity is still declining.
- Shift to reflect devolution (policies/strategies/funding England level);
- Climate change requires step change in approach to biodiversity conservation;
- Action plan approach has often led us to working in silos;
- National and local BAPs have not co-operated or co-ordinated well;
- Habitat and species based approaches have not been well integrated and not complimentary;
- A need for an integrated landscape scale approach to create resilient ecosystems to halt biodiversity loss;

Aims of the framework:

- Encourage the adoption of an ecosystem approach and better embed climate change adaptation principles in conservation action.
- Achieve biodiversity enhancements across whole landscapes and seascapes.
- Achieve our priority habitat targets through greater collective emphasis on habitat restoration and expansion.
- Enhance the recovery of priority species by better integrating their needs into habitat-based work where possible, and through targeted species recovery work where necessary.
- Support the restoration of designated sites, including by enhancing the wider countryside in which they sit.
- Support the conservation of marine biodiversity, inside and outside of designated sites.
- Establish and implement a delivery programme, with agreed accountabilities, for priority species and habitats in England.
- Improve the integration of national, regional and local levels of delivery.
- Improve the links between relevant policy-makers and biodiversity practitioners.
- Strengthen biodiversity partnerships by clarifying roles at England, regional and local levels.

Overview of framework - Framework will bring much greater emphasis on identifying and carrying out actions which are most urgent and have greatest benefit to biodiversity, and much less emphasis on producing HAPs and SAPs. There are four main components:

England Biodiversity Strategy workstreams:

- Sector workstreams will be re-constituted so that they take better account of policy priorities and be better informed by the constraints and opportunities identified by the other elements of framework;
- 6 sector workstreams – agriculture, coastal, marine, wetlands, woodlands, urban;
- 5 cross cutting workstreams – Education & public understanding, Economics, Local & regional, Climate change, Business;
- Responsible for managing the policy environment, leading strategy implementation, setting the strategic direction for the EBS in their sector, monitor and report and link EBS and UKBAP.

Biodiversity Integration Groups:

- Bring together habitat and associated species interests in one group and set standards for integrated delivery;

- Charged with driving delivery of priority habitat targets and associated species by identifying and, where appropriate, carrying out the most important actions required – this will include agreeing and implementing a 3 year work programme with accountabilities;
- Set objectives/targets including identifying priority areas for delivering biodiversity enhancements at landscape scale;
- Engage with regional/local partnerships to align delivery;
- Identify policy blockages;
- Report and identify knowledge gaps;
 - Probably be 9 groups – lowland farmland, uplands, lakes & ponds, rivers, wetlands, coastal, marine, urban & brownfield, woodland;
- NE, FC and/or EA will be expected to lead/chair each biodiversity integration group and work more closely with each other and regional/local partnerships to translate national priorities into local delivery.

Targeted species recovery:

- Not all species met through ecosystem groups;
- Many of the 940 English species on new UK BAP list are rare, or have special needs;
- Re-introductions, targeted interventions and research needs will rarely be met through ecosystem work;
- NE appointing Lead Partners;
- Shift towards identifying the most urgent actions needed for species, not identifying what every species needs.

Regional and local Delivery:

- Most important part of the framework in terms of delivery;
- Landscape scale approaches can only be co-ordinated at regional/local level;
- Role of regional/local partnerships:
 - Confirm regional targets for delivering priority habitats and species, seeking and taking account of advice from the biodiversity integration groups;
 - Agree delivery priorities, taking account of any existing 'vision' maps;
 - Develop a delivery plan with agreed accountabilities by 30th November 2008;
 - Enhance biodiversity at a landscape scale and increase the resilience of habitats, sites and ecosystems;
 - Report actions and their outcomes, and contribute to national reporting rounds as required.

Timetable – Current UK HAP and SAP structure to remain in place until at least early 2009 to support this current reporting round. During transitional period at present new framework put in place and changes implemented throughout coming months ready for implementation early next year.

BioSW update –

- BioSW will be working with partners in 2008, including LBAPs to set annual organisational agreed delivery targets for biodiversity;
- Will work with new framework to ensure that work on Nature Map showcased, integrated, and taken account of in discussions on delivery targets and landscape scale working;
- EBS framework is expected to see shift in way regional/local partnerships prioritise their work and that they will take greater ownership of national priorities and targets. BioSW will work to ensure communication between national and SW is two way, complimentary and discussions around delivery priorities take into account best practice regional/local work;
- Naomi Brookes sits on both coastal and marine biodiversity integration groups;

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