

**TRIPARTITE WORKING GROUP PLENARY MEETING
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, SAUGHTON HOUSE, EDINBURGH
5 OCTOBER 2005**

In Attendance:

Scottish Executive	Gordon Brown (Chairman) Phil Gilmour David Dunkley Ron Stagg (FRS) Pauline Munro (FRS) David Hays (FRS, in place of Malcolm Beveridge) Emma Jones (Minutes Secretary)
Industry	John Webster (SQS) Alan Anderson (Fjord) Jean Balfour (SQS) Julie Edgar (SQS)
Wild Fishery Bodies	Andrew Wallace (ASFB) Jane Wright (RAFTS) Ronnie Picken (SANA) Seymour Monro (AST)
Additional attendees	Ian Sutherland (HIE) Andy Rosie (SEPA) Colin Bean (SNH)

1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

2. Apologies

2.1. An apology was issued on behalf of David Wilson (SEERAD), who was called to an important meeting at short notice so was unable to chair the meeting. Additional apologies were received from Mandie Currie (NDO), Kjersti Birkeland (Argyll and Bute RDO), Anne Marie Maciver (Western Isles RDO), Katherine Ross (WIFT), Malcolm Beveridge (FRS), Brian Simpson (SQS), Jamie Lindsay (SQS), Alex Adrian (Panfish) and James Bromham (COSLA, replacing George Hamilton).

3. Minute of previous meeting

3.1. The Group was invited to comment on the minute of the previous Plenary meeting and the Chairman invited Phil Gilmour to talk through progress on the Actions. The Group discussed greater interaction with the trout farming sector and it was agreed that representatives from this sector could be invited to attend Plenary.

ACTION Industry to arrange comments from trout farming sector and include the British Trout Association (BTA) in their circulation list and ask it to consider future representatives to join the TWG Plenary

4. Matters Arising

4.1. The Chairman summarised personnel developments since the last Plenary, including the appointment of a new Deputy Minister, Rhona Brankin and the appointment of Anne Marie Maciver for the role of Regional Development Officer (RDO) for the Western Isles. The new Western Isles Fisheries Trust (WIFT) biologist, Katherine Ross, has taken over from Mark Bilsby and the Chairman suggested sending a letter of thanks to Mr Bilsby in recognition of work carried out on behalf of TWG.

4.2. In addition, the Chairman noted developments within a number of areas in aquaculture; both the Industry Code of Good Practice (CoGP) and the Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill are entering their final stage and legislation for the extension of local authority planning is intended to be in place by next summer. It was noted that plans were in place to have the Industry CoGP operational by the end of the year.

4.3. Within the Argyll and Bute region, a designation order for the Argyll Fisheries Board looked likely to accelerate progress of two Area Management Agreements (AMAs) that had previously stalled.

ACTION Secretariat to draft letter of thanks to Mr Bilsby

5. Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Value for Money Review

5.1. The Chairman invited Ian Sutherland to present an overview of the findings of the HIE review and the conclusions reached. After circulating an executive summary to the Group, Mr Sutherland outlined the ever-increasing obligation within the public sector to provide an impact evaluation.

5.2. The main conclusion reached, but not included in the TWG Review Group summary annex was the wish, by all relevant parties, to see the continuation of the TWG process.

5.3. The consultants found three years to be an insufficient period to judge the success of the process. In addition, a quantitative measurement of economic benefit could not be readily applied to the TWG process, despite the economic basis of the review.

5.4. When the Group were invited to comment, it was agreed that building confidence was an essential element to the success of the process, despite an inability to quantify benefits in economic terms.

ACTION Secretariat to include the Executive Summary of the HIE review on the TWG website, once implemented

6. TWG Review Group Review and North West View (taken together)

6.1. The Chairman invited Seymour Monro to summarise the near-final review report and then invited the Group to discuss, after reminding members that the TWG has a voluntary and aspirational nature, aimed at resolving issues at a local level.

6.2. The Group agreed that the overall tone of the report should be more positive, with a primary recommendation that the process continue, due to the benefits that have already been delivered since the process was established. The report should emphasise the aspirational, voluntary and local-based nature of the process, which strives to resolve problems at a local, regional and national level.

6.3. All criticisms and recommendations made must be fully justified.

6.4. The recommendation to implement the successful 'model' from the Western Isles across all regions should be reconsidered. In its place, there should be a recommendation to learn from a successful infrastructure and utilise those beneficial elements, wherever possible, to ensure the process can be improved and made to work to suit each Region.

6.5. The recommendation for regional management/steering, comprising a local authority, industry and wild fish sector representative combined with greater access to the Management Group was generally accepted by the Plenary.

6.5.1. However, not all regions would agree to the full-time RDO 'Building Block' approach and would want a more flexible approach. As such, the Group agreed that any region choosing to reject this approach must supply an alternative, which meets with the principles of the TWG process.

6.5.2. In addition, the Group agreed that the exact nature of communication between the RDOs, Regional Steering Group and Management Group should be outlined in detail.

6.6. Plenary therefore agreed a number of drafting changes, which were passed to Major General Monro for consideration during the final drafting process.

6.7. In addition, the Chair requested an annex, detailing those who had been consulted or had contributed to the production of the review document.

6.8. An outlined timescale should be provided to note the commencement of the independent review of the Restoration Sub-Group.

6.9. The Group agreed that there would be little call for closer interaction with the Location/Relocation Working Group.

6.10. Dr Currie's observations were noted and will be considered when completing the final review report.

ACTION A more flexible approach will be considered to suit the Regions that do not want to adopt the recommended model, using a full-time RDO. The Management Group will discuss this with those Regions

ACTION Seymour Monro and the Review Group to consider the suggestions put forward by Plenary and complete the final report

7. TWG Business Plan and Model

7.1. The Chairman invited Phil Gilmour to outline the first Business Plan and Model report. Mr Gilmour stressed the need to move quickly when refining and agreeing the Plan, to put before Ministers as soon as possible, in order to secure funding for the TWG process for the coming years.

7.2. The bulk of future financial contributions were likely to come from the Executive, though this could not occur until the start of the next financial year. Mr Gilmour asked whether HIE would be able to bridge the funding gap and was asked to put an official request in writing.

7.3. Plenary were invited to comment on the structure of the Plan. Certain members asked for option appraisal, objective ..., Sub-group role identification and terms of reference, as well as a detailed future role for the Management Group and Regional Steering Groups. It was agreed that further drafting would be undertaken.

7.4. Once completed by the Management Group, the Chairman noted a copy of the completed Plan would be forwarded electronically to the Plenary, for comment.

ACTION Andy Rosie and Ron Stagg to outline their concerns, regarding the structure and content of the Plan and forward these to the Management Group

ACTION Management Group to identify the exact spending surplus available until March

ACTION Gordon Brown to write to HIE, to cover both the funding gap up to March

ACTION Gordon Brown to alert the Crown Estate that they may receive a request for additional funding, should HIE be unable to help

8. Transparency

8.1. The problematic nature of this issue was noted and Jane Wright outlined the progress made with the initial draft AMA reporting pro-forma; Kjersti Birkeland and Mandie Currie had refined the Linnhe/Lorn AMG reporting form and filled this out as a mock report, which they took back to the AMG for comment. However, some residual problems remained unresolved. Mrs Wright suggested it might be beneficial to resolve the difficulties within AMGs before rolling out a national initiative.

8.2. The Chairman invited the Group to comment, stressing the need to agree the principles of AMA reporting. Andrew Wallace noted as long as the process utilised public funds, it was essential for some form of public visibility within the AMA process, which could also boost public support.

8.3. The Group discussed the perceived trouble with the misuse of information, causing some reluctance within the Industry sector, to sign up. Jean Balfour and John Webster agreed that the production of a paper, outlining which information would be gathered and how it would be used, would likely settle this reluctance.

8.4. It was agreed that the Management Group must discuss what precisely was required and why and then present this to key individuals within Industry.

ACTION Management Group and Gordon Brown (co-opting whoever is required) to work on the pro-forma and present their ideas to Industry

9. PR Strategy (moved forward in agenda)

9.1. The Chairman invited Julie Edgar to outline the proposed PR Strategy. Ms Edgar cited the need for clear objectives that contribute to the TWG process. To this purpose, there was need a for a TWG 'identity', permitting individuals from each sector to offer an opinion on a given subject, or the TWG 'family' as a whole to offer a consolidated opinion, without damaging the principles of the TWG process.

9.2. As such, the TWG family should be kept informed of all press releases, with each sector agreeing the details. All stories should remain positive, to promote the TWG process, though not stray into any controversial issues. Each release should be kept simple and interesting, to catch and retain media interest.

9.3. A six month trial was proposed, with the initial time spent compiling a comprehensive database of individuals who could be consulted prior to a release. The Group discussed various avenues for funding, agreeing any suitable parties would have to receive an official request in writing. However, the Group agreed to allow the trial, in principle. The Chairman requested that the Executive press desk be kept informed of progress and Ms Edgar agreed to liaise with Neil Trotter.

ACTION Scottish Executive to let Neil Trotter know that Julie Edgar will be contacting him directly regarding the TWG PR Strategy once funding is acquired

10. Communication Strategy (moved back in agenda)

10.1. CONFERENCE

10.1.1. The Group was invited to comment on the proposed details for the TWG Conference. It was suggested that the conference either become part of the Aquaculture 2006 exhibition, due to be held in Glasgow on 17th – 19th May or become part of another major aquaculture conference, some time in the Spring.

10.1.2. The Group discussed the proposed agenda, agreeing to look at fewer talks with greater time devoted to discussion and inviting an RDO to present one of the talks.

10.2. NEWSLETTER

10.2.1. The Group was invited to note the second edition of the TWG Newsletter, highlighting any amendments, to allow the newsletter to be distributed within the following week.

10.3. WEBSITE PROPOSALS

10.3.1. The Chairman noted the Management Group were examining the proposals and were close to selecting an appropriate bid. The Plenary would be kept informed of all decisions.

11. NDO Report

11.1. Due to time constraints and the absence of the NDO, the Chairman invited the Group to note the NDO report and forward any comments or queries to Mrs Currie.

12. Any other business

12.1. Concerns were raised regarding the problem of *Gyrodactylus salaris* should live fish be imported and introduced into fresh water in Scotland. Current legislation allows imported fish to enter the country, as long as they are certified to come from a *G salaris*-free area. Fish eggs must be disinfected prior to importation. The Group agreed that this issue could be discussed locally within Area Management Groups (AMGs).

12.2. The date for the next Plenary was agreed at **March 22nd 2006**, with the venue to be confirmed