Refreshing the National Biodiversity Network Strategy

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions relating to the first draft of the NBN Strategy

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If 'organisation', which organisation are you responding on behalf of? Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Are you currently an NBN member: Y

Questions on the strategy refresh as a whole

1. We have presented a new vision for the NBN – do you support it? Yes, it encompasses the aims of the NBN very well and these have a high degree of correlation with those of NRW.
2. Are you clear what the NBN is, and that you are part of it? Yes, NRW considers the NBN a strategic partner as we use NBN networking, tools and data to help us deliver our work. We also use the Gateway as our primary means of disseminating our biological data in the most efficient and effective way possible.
3. Following the engagement in 2014 do you feel that you have been listened to? Yes, NRW are grateful for the opportunities we have had to contribute to the process of creating this strategy and are keen to continue to engage with ongoing strategy development and implementation.
4. Will you commit to the principles of the NBN strategy and how do you want to be involved in implementation? The principles outlined in the strategy are in line with NRW's Knowledge and Information Management Strategy and we are therefore happy to commit to them. NRW has been an active member of the NBN for sometime, contributing and consuming data through the NBN Gateway, sitting on the Gateway Project Group and on the newly formed Gateway Users Group. We also have representation on the NBN Board of Trustees and participate in the wider elements of the NBN such as attendance at the annual conference and EGMs. We are aware that some elements of our engagement with the NBN could be more effective, particularly the data flow to the Gateway, and this is something we will be focusing on tackling over the coming months.

Strategic aim 1; Capture, diversify, enhance and mobilise wildlife data

5. Do you support accelerated data flow through NBN systems? Yes, NRW are particularly pleased to see a specific mention of online recording strategy, including standards and tools, as we see this as a key method for increasing the speed, connectivity and ease of use and a driver for collecting and mobilising standardised, high quality, validated data which can be exposed to verifiers.
6. Do you have data (in non-digital formats) that you want to mobilise? Yes, NRW has large quantities of paper records, especially in regional offices. We also have large amounts of species licence return data which could be mobilised.
7. What would you like to see done by the NBN to attract new people to biological recording? Creation and promotion of online recording tools and sites and effective linking to local and tax on specific specialists e.g. LRCs and schemes and societies. This would position the NBN as a central hub, connecting to all the disparate recorders, schemes, groups etc. We also feel that the NBN, and biological recording in general, remain relatively unknown outside our own community. It has been shown that recorder recruitment and retention is strongly linked to a sense of contributing to tangible outcomes. Promotion of biodiversity data use in research, policy, land management decisions etc. is something the NBN are well positioned to do and the reporting and promotion of outcomes to local interest groups and local and national media would give current and potential biological recorders a visible, tangible reason for recording. Stories like a site being designated based on data collected by recorders and shared through the NBN are a powerful incentive.
8. Do you and your organisation want a role implementing this aim, and if so what might that role be? NRW will

aid with the implementation of this aim through our partnership work with the NBN. We will continue to contribute to work to develop standards and tools and to share our data through the Gateway. We are also increasing our external communication through our website and our increasing use of social media. Part of this is communicating our role as an evidence based organisation and how biological records are a vital part of this evidence.

Strategic aim 2; Make wildlife data and information available to everyone

9. What does NBN have to do to increase the visibility and openness of UK wildlife data? Continue to promote the benefits. The arguments for restricting data seem to be more 'visible' than those for open sharing at the moment, although this is changing with an increase in the public and political focus on open data and the growth of social media and online sharing generally.

10. What would prevent you sharing data globally? Nothing prevents us from sharing data globally, indeed we are keen to do so. The only restrictions we place on data are statutory such as those outlined in our published policy detailing our interpretation of the Environmental Information Regulations section 12.5(g) where 'disclosure would adversely affect the protection of the environment to which the information relates'. In this case the spatial resolution of the data are reduced.

11. When we use the phrase "Family of projects and systems" do you understand that that includes you and your data management systems? Yes and where closer linking will improve data flow and verification we are keen to improve the linking and interoperability of these systems e.g. automated harvesting of data from NRW systems by the Gateway and the use of web services to consume Gateway data in NRW and display it in combination with other data and information we hold to allow us to take an ecosystems approach to managing the natural resources of Wales.

12. Do you and your organisation want a role implementing this aim, and if so what might that role be? Our role on the Gateway user group and project group will allow us to actively participate in delivering this aim. Also our work with our other partners, including Local Record Centres give us an opportunity to encourage others to adopt this approach. NRW are currently developing our open data policy and this is being done with the aim of maximising the data and information we deem to be 'open' and its availability to external partners and the public.

Strategic aim 3; Captivate and engage people about wildlife

13. How can the NBN captivate and engage people about wildlife and biological recording most effectively? There are a range of organisations who are engaged in this work who are already a part of the NBN such as the Field Studies Council, the RSPB and the National Trust. Sharing the lessons learned by these organisation and promoting their work would be a good start. Also using their experience to promote the full range of benefits e.g. creation of biological records and all the benefits this brings, but also health and wellbeing from being active outdoors, family and child friendly activity, engagement with the natural world etc. Closer engagement with high profile events and campaigns may also possible e.g. large scale surveys run by the RSPB, BTO etc., bio blitz and other recording events. I believe that Universities and other research institutions are also an underused way of engaging students and researchers. There are also other organisations who could be approached to aid in this area, either by becoming part of the NBN or through partnership working on another basis e.g. the UKEOF is heavily involved in creating and promoting standards and tool for citizen science.

14. Do you support the NBN being a one-stop-shop and do you see your data and information as part of this? NRW have identified the NBN Gateway as the most efficient and effective way of disseminating our biological records. We are keen to find ways of integrating the Gateway data with other data to provide an ecosystem level view of the environment of Wales and beyond and this will involve linking biological records with other forms of data for example through the Welsh Governments 'Lle' portal. However, we are very clear that this is a use for Gateway data, not a duplication or replacement for the Gateway.

15. Do you and your organisation want a role implementing this aim, and if so what might that role be? NRW has a clear role in public engagement through participation in events, our education remit, promotion of outdoor recreation etc.

Strategic aim 4; Provide the best wildlife information management infrastructure

16. Is your own data capture and storage infrastructure stable and secure? NRW are currently bringing together the systems and applications used by our three legacy bodies for biological recording into a single platform. This involves a process of proof of concept testing, extract-transform-load and rationalising systems. As a result our systems can be considered stable and secure but are also in a process of change.

17. How mature are your data management systems? Varied, see above. Part of the proof of concept will be assessing, designing and implementing procedures and tools for validation, verification, standards, metadata, lookup tables & reference data, import & export, reporting etc. Our current systems incorporate these capabilities but the disparate systems have different standards and methods.
18. Will you commit to making your systems interoperable with other NBN family members and to following NBN standards? Yes, this is a key part of the proof of concept work.
19. Do you and your organisation want a role implementing this aim, and if so what might tatis role be? Internally this is a current piece of work as described above. In terms of our engagement with the NBN we will contribute through our work and involvement with the various groups and projects we are currently engaged with.

Strategic aim 5; Support the development of the NBN, its Board and the NBN Trust

20. What does the NBN have to do to increase its sustainability? Produce a clear statement of risks and a strategy to address them. Much of this will be incorporated into this strategy e.g. increasing membership
21. How would you like us to improve the NBN membership scheme? Nothing to add to this aim.
22. What membership benefits would make you want to increase your support for NBN? There are no specific benefits other than the continuing improvement of the NBN and all aspects of the work of the Network. This will produce the strongest case possible to show value for money which is essential for NRW to justify contributions of resources including funding and staff time.
23. How would you like to influence NBN governance? NRW are already heavily involved in the governance of the NBN. More regular communication, especially audio/face-to-face would be desirable but resource limitations are a factor for both parties.
24. What leadership would you like from the NBN? Nothing to add to the current situation. NRW are very supportive of the direction of the NBN over the last few months.
25. Do you and your organisation want a role implementing this aim, and if so what might that role be? As above, NRW are already strongly represented in all the groups of the NBN including the Board.

Finally if there any other things you would like us to take into account please write your thoughts below. Linked open data is an exciting opportunity for all forms of data and biological and environmental data and information are no exception. It would be very interesting to have a discussion around this across the network to see if/how this could be taken advantage of by the NBN possibly in the form of a workshop or meeting run alongside the annual conference or other suitable opportunity.