

NATIONAL MARINE BIOLOGICAL ANALYTICAL QUALITY CONTROL SCHEME
Teleconference meeting 5th August 2015, 10.00-15.00

Attendees: Myles O'Reilly (MoR, SEPA, meeting Chair), Tim Mackie (TM, NI EA), Clare Scanlan (CS, SEPA), Astrid Fischer (AF, Technical Secretary, SAHFOS), Keith Cooper (KC, CEFAS), Jim Ellis (JE, CEFAS), Mandy Prior (MP, Finance Manager, EA), Grant Rowe (Contractors' representative), David Hall (Contractor PSA/Benthic component) and Carol Milner (Contractor Benthic component)

Apologies: Claire Mason (CM, CEFAS), Rafael Salas (RS, MI), David Johns (DJ, Chair, SAHFOS), Emma Verling (EV, JNCC), Joe Silke (JS, MI), Matthew Green (MG, Natural Resources Wales)

1. Meeting Actions from 22nd April 2015

Rafael

- take legal advice in the matter of obtaining the name BEQUALM. *Ongoing. It will be useful to know what has exactly happened to BEQUALM as Claire Mason mentioned that some parts of Cefas are still doing BEQUALM exercises. Action Astrid to find out what has happened exactly.*

Keith

- send the QA proposal of testing surveys instead of agencies to Astrid. *Done, this is for surveys by the aggregate dredging industries, who have never done QA before. This is work for a commercial project and the experience could be of use to other committee members, as just being part of the NMBAQC scheme doesn't always automatically guarantee quality. The design so far includes 3 random samples per survey in each region, with added checks for laboratory reference collections and dataset checks. The final design should be ready by Christmas. Action all to send comments to Keith.*

Astrid

- Implement changes from Myles to minutes before putting on web site. *Done*
- Put **Epibiota** operational guidelines up on web site once document has been signed off. *Done*
- Proofread Epibiota draft analysis guidelines before wider circulation. *Done*
- Put Saltmarsh ring test on agenda for next meeting to discuss further. *Done*
- Update NMBAQC terms of references to reflect the ISO17043 standard. *Action on hold, due to ongoing investigation into ISO 17043 content, together with Clare Scanlan.*
- Liaise and investigate people outside NMBAQC doing deepsea species for offshore monitoring. *Done*
- Put deep sea species for offshore monitoring on agenda for next meeting to further discuss this and decide how to proceed. *Done*
- contact Emma about epifaunal targeted photo-ring test, and ensure that David Hall gets a copy of the epifauna analysis guidelines. *Done*

Emma

- investigate setting up a private youtube channel. *The concept is a good one, but it would take time to put together. Also, another platform like Vimeo might actually be*

better than YouTube. Joe Turner mentioned that the EA had a 'turbidity' library and that he would speak to the relevant staff there about how they've gone about doing that.

- set deadline for comments for Epibiota draft analysis guidelines. *Done*

Tim

- Email David J about the effect of budget cuts so that David J can take this to HBDSEG. *Done.*
- Contact Defra to find out about monitoring programmes submitted to Defra and to find out areas of vulnerability. *Done, has spoken to Roger Proudfoot about area coverage and monitoring for the habitat directive.*
- Investigate with their organisations which would be the option their organisation is least uncomfortable with to share QA of video files. *Done.*
- See if other NIEA department could get involved in the saltmarsh ringtest, when the final report on the current ring test is available. *Done, has spoken to Paul Corbett, however, he was not particularly interested.*

Sarah

- Liaise with Jim to get the Fish component Statements of Performance out. *Done*
- Ask laboratories which type of preservation they would prefer for their ring test and send out samples accordingly. *Done*
- Raise issue again for IFM fish workshop collaboration with NMBAQC. *Done*
- Discuss the possibility of an NMBAQC Fish workshop (with Jim). *Done*
- circulate photo protocol for next year to NMBAQC committee (with Jim). *Done*

Jim

- discuss the possibility of an NMBAQC Fish workshop (with Sarah). *Done*
- circulate photo protocol for next year to NMBAQC committee (with Sarah). *Done*

Mandy

- Contact Roger Proudfoot to see if he has an address database for licensing authorities. *Mandy has a contact list of her own that includes the ports of harbour.*
- discuss the possibility of an NMBAQC Fish workshop *Ongoing, awaiting to hear from Jim/Sarah*
- Look into guidance protocol and the financial viability of a Saltmarsh ring test (with Clare S). *Done, the EA has stopped doing the ring tests, due to the expense and will be using in field auditing instead. But the EA is still interested in participating in ring tests if NMBAQC would hold a test every 2-3 years. The ring test would have to be a photo exercise, and we would need to look into if this would be financially viable. The contract would have to go out to tender.*
- Contact Tina to find out information from current ring test and send to Clare S and Grant. *Done*
- Investigate: who has the copyright to NMBAQC pictures, how can photos/video be used, and how can we protect ourselves from abuse. *Ongoing, this is to look into how to prevent ourselves from abuse.*

Claire Mason

- Check within Cefas that tender contracts, including those for universities, should provide a sampling and processing protocol as well as a QA specification). *Ongoing.*

- talk to Jim about concerns from Apem regarding photo quality of the ring test and make sure that matters get resolved. *Done.*
- contact Keith and Jim to see if they know more about deepwater sampling initiatives *Done.*

David H./Carol

- To come up with transport guidance of samples (together with Myles and Paul McIlwaine from Cefas). A note on transport will be added to the revised process and requirement protocol. *Ongoing.*
- Update the Benthic Invertebrate Guidelines for next year. *Ongoing, this will be part of the new requirements protocol.*
- Chase up the outstanding PS-OS samples one last time. *Done.*
- Draft an expression of interest for a Benthic Beginner's workshop for 2015-2016. *Ongoing, this is on top of David's list.*

Clare S

- Chase up feedback on the seasonality of macroalgae sites and what can be found there to decide on a good location for a workshop. *Done.*
- Investigate with their organisations which would be the option their organisation is least uncomfortable with to share QA of video files. *Done, this would be via FTP.*
- Discuss if the saltmarsh ring test could be an NMBAQC field test instead of a photo exercise with Mandy/ Tina. *Ongoing, needs to look into costs and viability.*
- Circulate costs for Macroalgal blooming/Seagrass workshop to the committee for comment. *Ongoing, this is on the agenda.*
- Look into guidance protocol and the financial viability of a Saltmarsh ring test (with Mandy). *Ongoing.*
- Send information on parts of ISO17043 standard where we may not be compliant. *Done.*
- Contact Joe/Rafael to see if they are aware of the ISO17043 standard *Has emailed Joe but not heard anything back.*

Grant

- Contact the deep sea species for offshore monitoring contractor to see if he would be able to provide specimens for a ring test for deep sea species and to assess how many labs would be interested in such a test. *Ongoing, Grant to report back by next meeting.*
- Send an email gauging interest from participants for a deep sea species test, even if it was only for a one-off test. *Ongoing, Grant to report back by next meeting.*
- Liaise and investigate people outside NMBAQC doing deep sea species for offshore monitoring. *Ongoing, Grant to report back by next meeting.*
- Get a contractor's perspective on Saltmarsh ring test, we might need to add terrestrial contractors to our list

2. Priorities from HBDSEG (Update by e-mail from David J)

David was unable to attend the last HBDSEG meeting. The funding for the Tech Sec position is very tight; in fact it will only last until December this year. Roger Proudfoot and a number of others have been investigating other avenues to support the position, so far with nothing really to report, but a meeting with Steven Crum from QUASIMEME is supposedly planned for early September.

3. Phytoplankton update (Update by e-mail from Rafael Salas)

The enumeration part of the phytoplankton test has been distributed and deadline for returns has passed. The online identification test has been delayed until the end of September. The subsequent workshop has now been planned to take place 8-12 November in Hillerød, Denmark.

4. Epibiota update (Update by e-mail from Emma Verling)

As most people know, the operational guidelines are now online! I am arranging for JNCC to tweet about them to increase their exposure 🙄. As regards the Interpretation Guidelines, we received hundreds of comment which we have sorted through. We have had a good think about how to proceed next. I don't think sending the document out again at this stage would be a good use of people's time. Nor do I think we are quite ready for a workshop. Therefore, Joe and I are co piling a very short questionnaire about some specific issues, which we will circulate around the Epibiota group in the next two weeks. We also intend to send the taxonomic tables originally developed by Becky H to the relevant experts for comment. Following this, we will decide whether a workshop approach is appropriate.

I'm really pleased that we are making good progress with the work. I'm sorry that I will have to step away from the work now, as I'm leaving JNCC having been here ten years. I'm confident that resources are in place for the work to continue at the same pace. Specific names will be provided very soon.

Action Astrid: to contact Charlotte Johnston to find out who is going to replace Emma on the NMBAQC committee.

5. Contractor's update APEM Ltd (David Hall)
PSA Update

2014-2015, Year 21 Operations

Subscriptions

LabCode	PS52/53/54/55	PS-OS01/02/03
PSA_2101	1	1
PSA_2102	1	1
PSA_2103	1	1
PSA_2104	(1)	(1)
PSA_2105	1	1
PSA_2106	1	-
PSA_2107	1	-
PSA_2108	1	-
PSA_2109	1	-
PSA_2110	1	(1)
PSA_2111	1	-
PSA_2112	1	-
PSA_2113	1	-
PSA_2114	1	-
PSA_2115	1	-
PSA_2116	-	1
PSA_2117	-	1
PSA_2118	-	1
PSA_2119	-	1
PSA_2120	-	(1)
	14 (15)	8 (11)

2014-2015, Year 21 Operations

Exercises have been distributed in line with the 2014-2015 timetable (available on the scheme website), with slightly delayed circulations of PS54 and PS55. The deadline for PS-OS submission was extended to increase returns. Returns and results, to date, are summarised in the table below.

Exercise	Status	Returns / Comments
PS52	Samples distributed 15/09/14 Interim report circulated 19/12/14 Final version submitted for website Exercise complete	Mud/Sand Test 13 out of 14(15) returns received Excluding 1 extra multi data set
PS53	Samples distributed 15/09/14 Interim report circulated 19/12/14 Final version submitted for website Exercise complete	Diamicton Test 13 out of 14(15) returns receive Excluding 1 extra multi data set
PS54	Samples distributed 19/12/14 Interim report circulated 10/03/15 Final version submitted for website Exercise complete	Gravel Test 13 out of 14 (15) returns received
PS55	Samples distributed 19/12/14 Interim report circulated 10/03/15 Final version submitted for website Exercise complete	Diamicton Test 13 out of 14 (15) returns received
PS-OS01-03	Samples requested 14/10/14 Data and sample submission deadlines passed Deadlines extended Analysis in progress Exercise active	8 out of 8(11) lists of samples 8 out of 8(11) datasets received 24 out of 24(33) samples selected 12 out of 24(33) samples received

Issues arising

The deadline for PS-OS submission was extended to encourage full participation. Twelve of the twenty-four requested samples are still outstanding (these all relate to one participant). Pass/Fail criteria and new z-score formulae are yet to be applied in interim reports, but will be trialled in the annual PSA component report. **Action Claire M to send references to assist smoothing PS curve prior to applying pass fail criteria so that odd anomalies in the gravel do not produce false fails.**

It appears that some of the received PS-OS samples are not complete samples. PS-OS submissions require all sample components, i.e. <1mm, >1mm and laser sub-sample, if they are to be analysed by the AQC laboratory effectively so that results can be compared.

It is important that all relevant sections of the workbooks are filled prior to submission. Correct completion will also highlight any processing or data entry errors that may have occurred, ahead of data submission. Except for minor issues, e.g. a missing value, the results

and workbooks will not be altered for mistakes that have been made by the participant after the circulation of interim reports.

2015-16, Year 22 PROGRESS REPORT

Subscriptions

LabCode	PS56/57/58/59	PS-OS04/05/06
PSA_2201	1	-
PSA_2202	1	-
PSA_2203	1	-
PSA_2204	1	1
PSA_2205	1	-
PSA_2206	-	1
PSA_2207	-	1
PSA_2208	1	1
PSA_2209	1	-
PSA_2210	1	1
PSA_2211	1	1
PSA_2212	1	1
PSA_2213	1	1
PSA_2214	1	-
PSA_2215	1	-
PSA_2216	1	-
PSA_2217	1	-
PSA_2218	1	-
PSA_2219	-	1
	16	9

2015-2016, Year 22 Operations

Exercises PS56 and PS57 have been distributed in line with the 2015-2016 timetable (available on the scheme website), PS58 and PS59 are not due to be distributed until 14/10/15. The deadline for PS-OS submission has been extended to increase returns. Returns and results, to date, are summarised in the table below.

Exercise	Status	Returns / Comments
PS56	Samples distributed 13/05/15	Mud/Sand Test
	Sample deadline 31/07/15	15 out of 16 returns received
	Interim report in progress (due 14/08/15)	
	Exercise active	
PS57	Samples distributed 13/05/15	Gravel Test
	Sample deadline 31/07/15	15 out of 16 returns received
	Interim report in progress (due 14/08/15)	
	Exercise active	
PS58	Samples to be distributed 14/10/15	Diamicton Test
	Sample deadline 18/12/2015	
	Exercise not yet started	
PS59	Samples to be distributed 14/10/15	Diamicton Test
	Sample deadline 18/10/15	
	Exercise not yet started	
PS-OS04-06	Samples requested 13/05/15	5 out of 9 lists of samples
	Data submission deadline passed (08/06/15)	5 out of 9 datasets received
	Sample submission deadline (31/07/15)	15 out of 15 (27) samples selected
	Deadlines extended	12 out of 15 (27) samples received
	Analysis in progress Exercise active	

Issues arising

The deadline for PS-OS submission has been extended to encourage full participation. Four out of nine datasets are still outstanding and three of the fifteen requested samples are still outstanding. Pass/Fail criteria and new z-score formulae were trialled in the annual (2014/2015) PSA component report and will be applied in the 2015/2016 interim reports.

It appears that some of the received PS-OS samples are not complete samples. PS-OS submissions require all sample components, i.e. <1mm, >1mm and laser sub-sample, if they are to be analysed by the AQC laboratory effectively so that results can be compared.

It is important that all relevant sections of the workbooks are filled prior to submission. Correct completion will also highlight any processing or data entry errors that may have occurred, ahead of data submission. Except for minor issues, e.g. a missing value, the results and workbooks will not be altered for mistakes that have been made by the participant after the circulation of interim reports.

Benthic Invertebrates update
2013-14, Year 20, PROGRESS REPORT

Subscriptions

LabCode	LR18	OS53/54/55
BI_2001	-	1
BI_2002	-	1
BI_2004	-	1
BI_2005	-	1
BI_2007	-	1
BI_2008	1	1
BI_2009	-	1
BI_2016	-	1
BI_2017	-	1
BI_2019	1	1
BI_2021	-	1
BI_2023	-	1
BI_2026	-	1
BI_2027	-	1
BI_2029	1	1
BI_2030	1	1
BI_2031	-	1
BI_2033	-	1
BI_2034	1	-
BI_2036	-	1
BI_2044	-	1
BI_2045	-	1
BI_2046	-	1
BI_2047	-	1
BI_2048	-	1
BI_2049	-	1
BI_2050	-	1
BI_2051	-	1
BI_2052	-	1
BI_2054	-	1
BI_2056	-	1
BI_2058	1	1
BI_2059	-	1
BI_2060	1	1
BI_2071	-	1
	7	34

2013-2014, Year 20 Contract Carryover Operations

Samples that remained unprocessed at the contract handover point were transferred to APEM for completion (authorised 23/12/14). All have now been reported. Returns and results are summarised in the table below. Year 20 OS draft report is now with the contract manager for review (4/8/15). Text has been supplied for the LR18 section of the forthcoming Year 20 annual report.

Exercise	Status	Returns / Comments
LR18	Exercise complete	General 7 sets of specimens received 7 specimen sets reported
OS53 - 55	Exercise active	102 samples received , including 16 samples for external audit All 102 samples analysed & reported, including 16 samples externally audited

Issues arising

A number of participants have come back with queries, the tone of some of these has been offensive and allegations have been made against APEM's auditing methods, for example, swapping specimens and adding specimens into residues. **Action David H to forward these allegations to Myles.** These outstanding queries are currently being dealt with. Some participants have asked for specimens to be checked again.

2014-15, Year 21 - PROGRESS REPORT

Subscriptions

LabCode	RT47/48	LR19	MB22	OS56/57/58
BI_2101	1	1	1	1
BI_2102	1	1	1	1
BI_2103	1	1	-	1
BI_2104	1	1	-	1
BI_2105	1	1	-	1
BI_2106	1	1	-	1
BI_2107	1	1	-	1
BI_2108	1	-	-	-
BI_2109	1	-	-	-
BI_2110	1	1	1	-
BI_2111	1	-	1	-
BI_2112	1	-	-	1
BI_2113	1	-	-	1
BI_2114	1	-	-	1
BI_2115	1	-	-	1
BI_2116	1	-	-	1
BI_2117	1	-	-	-
BI_2118	1	-	-	1
BI_2119	1	-	-	-
BI_2120	1	-	-	-
BI_2121	-	1	-	1
BI_2122	-	-	-	1
BI_2123	-	-	-	1
BI_2124	-	-	-	1
BI_2125	-	-	-	1
BI_2126	-	-	-	1
BI_2127	-	-	-	1
BI_2128	-	-	-	1
BI_2129	1	-	-	1
BI_2130	-	-	-	1
BI_2131	-	-	-	1
BI_2132	-	-	-	1
BI_2133	-	-	-	1
BI_2134	-	-	-	1
BI_2135	-	-	-	1
BI_2136	-	-	-	1
BI_2137	-	-	-	1
BI_2138	-	-	-	1
BI_2139	-	-	-	1
	21	9	4	32

2014-2015, Year 21 Operations

Exercises have been distributed in line with the 2014-2015 timetable (available on the scheme website), with a slightly delayed circulation for RT48. All circulations have been sent out to participants; RT48 and OS56-58 are the only active exercises. Returns and results are summarised in the table below.

Exercise	Status	Returns / Comments
RT47	Samples distributed 15/09/14 Submission deadline passed, 31/10/14 Interim reports circulated 25/11/14 Ring Test Bulletin circulated 13/02/15 Exercise complete	General Ring Test 20 out of 21 returns received
RT48	Samples distributed 18/12/14 Submission deadline passed 06/02/15 Interim reports circulated 19/03/15 Ring Test Bulletin in progress Exercise active	Targeted (Syllidae and alike) 18 out of 21 returns received
LR19	Request for specimens distributed 15/09/14 Submission deadline passed, 31/10/14 Analysis / reporting complete Exercise complete	General 5 out of 9 returns received and reported
MB22	Samples distributed 15/09/14 Submission deadline passed, 31/10/14 Exercise complete	Marine Sample (1mm) 2 out of 4 returns received
OS56 - 58	Samples requested 15/09/14 Data submission deadline passed, 26/09/14 Sample submission deadline passed, 31/10/14 Analysis / reporting in progress Exercise active	31 out of 32 lists of samples 31 out of 32 datasets received 93 out of 93(96) samples received 12 samples to be externally audited 81 samples reported, to date

Issues arising

The ring test bulletin for RT48 (target – Syllidae and alike) is almost complete. Prof Guillermo San Martin has reviewed specimens and has provided input for the bulletin. Images to be added and final checks to be made (including one by GSM) within the next week. Issue of the final bulletin should be within the month.

Taxonomic Workshops & Taxonomic Guides

The 2014 workshop guide for sabellids and fabricids produced by Prof Adriana Giangrande has been added to the Scheme website. Bastian Brenzinger's 2014 workshop guide to interstitial opisthobranchs was submitted but an error was spotted before upload to the website. We expect the updated draft imminently.

2015-16, Year 22 PROGRESS REPORT

Subscriptions

LabCode	RT49/50	LR20	OS56/57/58
BI_2201	1	1	1
BI_2202	1	-	1
BI_2203	1	-	1
BI_2204	1	1	1
BI_2205	1	1	1
BI_2206	1	-	-
BI_2207	1	1	1
BI_2208	1	-	1
BI_2209	1	-	1
BI_2210	1	1	1
BI_2211	1	1	1
BI_2212	1	-	-
BI_2213	1	-	1
BI_2214	1	1	-
BI_2215	1	-	-
BI_2216	1	-	1
BI_2217	1	-	-
BI_2218	1	-	1
BI_2219	1	1	1
BI_2220	1	-	1
BI_2221	1	-	-
BI_2226	-	-	1
BI_2227	-	-	1
BI_2228	-	-	1
BI_2229	-	-	1
BI_2230	-	-	1
BI_2231	-	-	1
BI_2232	-	-	1
BI_2233	-	-	1
BI_2234	-	-	1
BI_2235	-	1	1
BI_2236	-	-	1
BI_2237	-	-	1
BI_2238	-	-	1
BI_2239	-	-	1
BI_2240	-	-	1
BI_2241	-	-	1
BI_2242	-	-	1
BI_2243	-	-	1
BI_2244	-	-	1
	21	9	34

2015-2016, Year 22 Operations

Exercises have been distributed in line with the 2015-2016 timetable (available on the scheme website). All circulations have been sent out to participants; all exercises are active. Returns and results are summarised in the table below.

Exercise	Status	Returns / Comments
RT49	Samples distributed 27/05/15 Submission deadline passed, 31/07/15 Reporting in progress Exercise active	General Ring Test 18 out of 21 returns received, to date
RT50	Samples due for distribution 14/10/15 Submission deadline 18/12/15 Exercise ready for distribution	Targeted (Amphipoda)
LR20	Request for specimens distributed 08/05/15 Submission deadline passed, 05/06/15 Analysis / reporting in progress Exercise active	General 4 out of 9 returns received, to date 3 sets of samples analysed
OS59-61	Samples requested 08/05/15 Data submission deadline passed, 05/06/15 Sample submission deadline passed, 31/07/15 Analysis / reporting in progress Exercise active	17 out of 34 lists of samples received 17 out of 34 datasets received, to date 48 out of 102 samples received, to date Currently unknown number samples to be externally audited 12 out of 102 samples analysed

Issues arising

The deadline for data submission for some participants OS59-61 could not be met due to sampling being carried out over the summer months. It has been extended for 13 participants until the end of October to allow for completion of 2015 sample by external contractors. This may have a knock on effect on the Annual Report but should not impact the component reporting, which will still be completed by the end of March 2016.

Taxonomic Workshops & Taxonomic Guides

APEM have made contact with the Daniel Moncrieff, Head of FSC Scotland, regarding using Millport Marine Station for future taxonomic workshops and potential NMBAQC macrobenthic processing best practice training courses. He is very keen to link with the NMBAQC Scheme. A competitive workshop quotation will be requested for comparison with the Dove Marine Laboratory in due course. Progress to be made on contact with Millport regarding the beginners workshop asap.

Mandy asked if everyone was aware of the cut off points, after which samples could no longer be processed. David H replied that regular reminders were sent out.

David H has also had a request for a letter of participation to the scheme. The Pass/Fail certificates should prove participation to the scheme, plus the web site has the current list of participants on it. **Action Astrid and David H to update the web site with information to indicate which exercises of the benthic inverts and PSA component participants take part in.**

6. Contractor's update Thomson Ecology (presented by Jim Ellis)

Fish update

Action Jim to inform Sarah that if she cannot make a meeting, a deputy will be required as a contractual obligation.

2015 / 2016 Participation

Laboratory Code	Fish Reverse Ring Test	Fish Ring Test
F_2201		Y
F_2202	Y	
F_2203	Y	
F_2204	Y	
F_2205	Y	
F_2206	Y	
F_2207	Y	
F_2208	Y	
F_2209		Y
F_2210	Y	
F_2211	Y	
F_2212	Y	Y
F_2213	Y	Y
F_2214	Y	Y
F_2215	Y	
F_2216	Y	Y
F_2217	Y	
F_2218	Y	
F_2219		Y
F_2220	Y	Y
F_2221	Y	Y
F_2222		Y
F_2223	Y	
F_2224		Y
F_2225	Y	Y
F_2226	Y	Y
F_2227	Y	
F_2228		Y
F_2229		Y
F_2230	Y	

(List correct as of 28th July 2015)

Progress on circulations

Scheme Year 2014/15 Fish

Exercise / Report	Event / Date	Notes
F_RRT06	Protocol and request for specimens to be distributed 08-09-14. Completed. Analysis of fish specimens. Published.	<u>Fifteen fish taxa to be from Northwest European waters</u> (CSEMP samples where appropriate).
F_RT08	Distribution of samples 03-12-2014. Completed.	<u>General Fish Ring Test</u> – Assorted Fish Taxa (fifteen taxa).
Annual Report	Report pending.	<u>Annual Report</u> – detailing exercises and results from RRT and RT exercises.

Scheme Year 2015/16 Fish component

- We have welcomed our first International fish participant!
- Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM) have agreed to an NMBAQC focused news item for their quarterly magazine.

The IFM have already run their beginner's Fish workshop, it may be an idea to consider again next year if we can run it together. We could also maybe have a specialist workshop for trickier species.

Other issues

The traditional key used for identification of fish did not include one of the species in the test. As this is a training exercise, the primary literature on this species should be included in the bulletin. It would also be good to have a communications log and residual outcomes in the reports for the transparency of data, especially for the reverse ring tests. This would also fit in with the ISO 17043 standard and is something that should also be included in the future tenders for all components. **Action Jim to discuss reporting with Sarah and come up with ideas. Action Astrid to put on agenda for next meeting, action Clare S with Jim to write a note on this.**

Fish photo protocol

Sarah has sent around a fish photo protocol. Astrid had a look at it and noticed that some of the issues mentioned before were missing. Jim mentioned that he had already commented on an early version, **action Jim to send comments to Astrid. Action Astrid to send Jim her comments too.**

IFCA meeting (Inshore Fishery and Conservation Authority)

Astrid gave a presentation on all the aspects of NMBAQC at the previous IFCA meeting. Mandy was also at this meeting. The IFCA reaction was that the scheme was too expensive and that they felt confident in their identifications. Jim mentioned that for adult commercial species the identification would be easy, but juvenile fish could cause problems, so this would be dependent on the type of work you are undertaking. **Action Mandy to look into the pricing side of participation.**

7. Macroalgae (Clare Scanlan)

The contract for the macroalgae has gone to Emma Wells for one more year and the contract will be retendered next January. All certificates for this year have now been sent out. Clare has applied for some SEPA funding to hold the macroalgae blooming workshop and hopes to hear the outcome soon. The estimated cost per person would be £300-350, plus travel and accommodation costs. The workshop could possibly be held at NRW Bangor in October, but there would be limited lab space. The workshop would be limited to a couple of days, another possibility is to leave it until the Easter holiday but there will be less seagrass around that time of year. We will have to investigate how many people we need to make the workshop viable and also involve Tina from the Environment Agency. October is relatively short notice, plus coincides with the Autumn fish season. **Action Mandy to discuss with Tina regarding timing of the workshop. Action Clare S to email further information after the meeting.**

Saltmarsh ring test

Clare has spoken to some people about the saltmarsh photos. Scottish Natural Heritage weren't interested in Saltmarsh ring tests; they contract a lot of their work out. If the macroalgae workshop goes ahead in October, this is something that could be discussed.

8. Zooplankton update (Astrid Fischer)

The test results were very promising, with all of the CMA laboratories achieving scores of 80% or higher. Also, the analysts were very keen to get their results right. The workshop was a good success too, and it was worthwhile to receive comments on the test. Everyone was interested in having further future ring tests, and SAHFOS is happy to provide these. A request was made for the next ring test to have an enumeration component as well. The NMBAQC committee was happy for SAHFOS to run the zooplankton component of the scheme, in a similar way as the Marine Institute, Ireland, is running the phytoplankton component. **Action Mandy to send specifications on this type of contract and reporting requirements for the component back to the NMBAQC committee to Astrid.**

9. AOB

'BS EN ISO/IEC 17043:2010 Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing'

Clare and Astrid have been looking into this standard, Astrid found a word version checklist on a German website, the UK version is the same but could only be found as a PDF document. Overall we sort of follow this standard, but we would need better document control and a formal procedure for when discrepancies arise. It would also be good to have all our protocols in one place. **Action Astrid to draft a general paragraph that can be included by all the contract managers, in liaison with Myles and David H. Action Clare S to further expand on the requirements where we think we may be lacking and all contract managers to further expand on this.**

Deep sea species for offshore monitoring

Craig is in the middle of his PhD work. He has got deepwater fauna from various places, including Rockall bank 500-900m depth and west of Shetland 500-700m depth. Grant has contacted Apem who are happy to gauge interest from current participants in the inverts tests. Who is responsible for deepwater monitoring? It is a 'distance from shore' related issue, so in most cases JNCC, but for some waters CEFAS, Marine Science Scotland (MSS) or Marine Institute (Ireland) may be responsible. Industry wise, larger companies are doing the research and some subcontractors. It will likely be people who have already signed up to the scheme, so we will have to await a quote and measure its viability.

Sole trader enquiry

Grant received a query from a sole trader, who was really eager to participate in more than one component of the scheme, but this was financially not viable. Therefore the sole trader asked if it was possible to do the OS every other year (as it would always be the same person doing all the analysis so this was not likely to change) and the Ring Test exercise the other year. The NMBAQC committee said this is why the option to share costs between two/three sole traders had been made in the past, and this would be a better avenue to pursue. The names of the participating laboratories are on our web site so it should be possible to contact other sole traders that participate in the scheme.

Pass/fail rates

Mandy queried if we are aiming to set pass/fail rates for all of our exercises? The pass/fail rates were introduced for the marine monitoring strategy and CSEMP for data sets going on the Merman database. The current driver for pass/fail rates is the WFD. Should there be a pass/fail on macroalgae? What would be the consequence if you had failed? It could be that this data would have to be avoided, but it is not submitted to any other database.

In principle it is good to set accessible levels of performance, but not sure what happens after that. Would you need to have more training, or more checks? **Action Astrid to put on the agenda for next time and to make a table with all the exercises which includes whether or not it currently has a pass/fail.**