



Programme Advisory Group meeting - Friday 10th March

Present: Hilary Kennedy (chair), Eric Achterberg, Lionel Guidi, Judith Hauck, Colin Jones, Richard Sanders, Anya Waite, Jessica Surma (NERC), Mike Webb (NERC), Adrian Martin (Champion team), Carla Sands (Champion team), Jess Allen (Champion team)

Apologies: Paul Halloran

Stage 1a projects:

Individual projects were discussed using information from reports and talks at workshop. Feedback specific to projects has been passed on. No significant concerns with project progress were raised.

Fieldwork planning

Any PAG members with conflicts of interest were asked not to comment on this section of the meeting. The PAG received a summary and update from the Champion on fieldwork planning for 2024. The question of how this activity might contribute and link to other activity nationally and internationally was raised. This is addressed in the next section.

Linking to other initiatives within UK and internationally

There was discussion on how BIO-Carbon could best build links with other activities, both in UK and beyond. BIO-Carbon comprises a collection of individual competitively won projects so there is value in encouraging PIs (and those writing proposals for the current funding opportunity) to seek out collaborations. The programme could assist in this by establishing a page on its website providing summary details of relevant projects both in UK and abroad.

Recommendation:

The Champion team should do this as soon as possible. PAG members are encouraged to pass on any projects to the Champion team that should be included.

More specific to the current funding opportunity which is focussed on fieldwork, it was agreed that the period in autumn 2023 when proposals recommended by the review panel should be in discussion with NERC, marine planning, NZOC and Champion team to develop a final integrated fieldwork programme would be the most productive time to build specific collaborations with external projects.

Recommendation:

The Champion team should be in discussion in advance with external projects to identify potential collaboration in time for action to be taken to establish them in autumn 2023.

The extent to which physical oceanography can be included in proposals

The question was raised at the workshop of the extent to which physical processes that influence biology and biogeochemistry could be included in proposals. The programme announcement stated a focus on biological processes that influence carbon storage in the ocean. The consensus was therefore that projects should be primarily focussed on biological processes. It was recognised that there are many situations where the physical circulation and environment plays a role and it was felt

that it would be inappropriate to have a strict statement of what level of physical oceanography could be included because in some cases the physical context may be critical. It was anticipated that stage 2 (focussed on synthesis and modelling) was likely to require a greater consideration of physical circulation because of greater focus on global and multi-annual scales.

Recommendation:

The decision on the level of physical oceanography to include in a proposal rests with the PIs who should be aware that the review panel will expect them to explain why it is essential given the programme focus on biological processes.

Next programme annual meeting

The intention is to have annual programme meetings, both to bring together projects and to allow engagement with the wider community. Having the 2024 annual meeting a little earlier, in February, would allow 5 of the current projects (one will already have finished) to attend plus those funded in stage 1b. Holding it in March would be beyond the finish date of two projects. It is possible fieldwork would be starting in April. It was felt that having a hybrid meeting would be optimal, with the in-person aspect important for the development of ECRs in the programme, and the virtual option allowing those to attend who would otherwise be unable to.

Recommendation:

The Champion team should look into a suitable location and date for an annual meeting in 2024 seeking to avoid clashes with other major events like Ocean Sciences.

Next PAG meeting

It was suggested that as the PAG is scheduled to meet every 6 months the next call could be timed to follow soon after the assessment panel provides recommendations on proposals submitted to stage 1b. This would allow PAG those members without a conflict of interest) to provide an independent input to the process of finalising a single integrated fieldwork programme that would then be underway through discussions between recommended projects, NERC, marine planning, NZOC and Champion team.

Recommendation

As soon as the dates of the assessment panel are known the Champion team should arrange a PAG meeting to follow soon after.