

## **Wales Environmental Information Steering Group (WEISG): Progress and Next Steps**

### ***Background/Progress***

The Wales Environmental Information Steering Group has 6 workstreams (Governance, Resource, Data Flow, Data Quality, Technology, Skills). WBP approved a focused new effort on 2 data flow actions whilst collating information on any existing activity on other workstreams:

- To develop and implement a data sharing charter
- To agree data flow roles and responsibilities

The group acknowledged that whilst reviews and activity relating to the Natural Environment Framework and the Single Environmental Body review had diverted members' effort from WEISG activities, there had been progress across all the workstreams. In addressing the amount of time members could dedicate to WEISG it was agreed that the best way to proceed was to have an annual meeting of the steering group and to drive the work forward with specific task and finish groups or projects with improved e-mail updates/communication between meetings.

WBP approved the Data Sharing Charter in February 2011.

Significant updates since then included:

- WG, CCW and WBP signed up to data sharing charter
- Plant Link Cymru (PLINC) and LRC work on drafting a data flow model for plant recorders
- Work towards a Pan Wales agreement for Welsh Government (WG) and Sponsored Bodies to develop a single funding agreement for public sector partners across all 4 LRCs. Wales is leading the way with his approach to LRC funding and progress is being closely watched by e.g. ALERC.
- Sea Trust suite of training courses and WBP funded training events through LRCs
- Partners in Scotland implementing a similar group (SEIF) to complement WEISG.

One issue that was highlighted in WEISG as a priority for WEISG and WG to address is a lack of flow of biodiversity data from WG, FC and EA to LRCs

### ***Plan/Proposals***

Priority actions for the next year were agreed as:

- 1) Agree and implement final data flow models for data exchange between plant recorders and LRCs that include publication through the NBN Gateway
- 2) Finalise and implement the Pan Wales LRC Agreement for WG and WGSBs and include data exchange between WG, WGSBs and LRCs

- 3) Resolve constraints to data supply from EA, FC, WG to LRCs
- 4) Prepare a business case for LRCs in Wales as a supplementary document for NEF consultation documents
- 5) Collate details of signatories to the data sharing charter and draft the supporting MoU
- 6) Collate biodiversity use cases to support NEF

***Decision Points***

To approve the new way of working for WEISG (annual meeting and more frequent updates on project progress during the year)

To endorse the plan for the coming year