



NRA

**A REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION & RECREATION  
MARKET TESTING PROJECT ON:**

- **Conservation Operational Advice**
- **Conservation Collaborative Projects**
- **Recreation Collaborative Projects**
- **Landscape Assessment.**

*National Rivers Authority*

GK/AS - views please.  
please pass on  
to each other.



NRA

# M E M O R A N D U M

National Rivers Authority  
Thames Region

To: Recreation & Conservation Project Team.  
From: Giles Phillips, Regional Technical Manager, KM3  
Date: 18 September 1995

Well done! I am now able to enclose your copy of our report, containing the four sections. I hope you feel happy with it. It needs signing off by the Project Board (6th October reserved) but I hope they won't want to change anything.

For some of you, I also attach an extra copy for any Liaison contacts you have made. I suggest that you decide, for the relevant Region(s), whether you pass it first to the Regional FRCN manager or to the liaison contact. Its status, though, should be as our feedback to the Region, and I would expect the information in it to be disseminated as the Region sees fit. Please satisfy yourselves that the report will be handled sensibly.

Finally, please note that we have now settled on the 11th/12th October for our final meeting. Fran will make arrangements and contact you shortly. I hope everyone will be able to get together to celebrate our completion of the work and to discuss lessons, steps forward, etc. Probably in the 'Midlands', start informally 6.30ish 11th October, finish around lunchtime on the 12th October.

I'll look forward to seeing you on the 11th.

Regards,

Pete

Giles

Project Manager

If you are happy to do it  
I'll leave it in your hands  
to disseminate as you  
feel necessary.

Thanks to all  
for your help.

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E.G. paper summarizes conclusions  
well. Operational Advice

- (1) There are no standards for quality of conservation advice
- (2) There is little follow up (PPA) so Value for Money can't be worked out!
- (3) GVA/E & inc. workload unclear

Are various deadlines for outputs that we need to be aware of (frequencies, Cos)

### Collaborative Projects

Is a core activity & little quantification of projects. Again follow up (PPA) is important so Value for Money can be established!

Gary

we need to make Areas aware of outputs & what they consider are priority exercises.

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# CONSERVATION & RECREATION MARKET TESTING PROJECT

## FOREWORD AND OVERVIEW

Early in 1995 a project was initiated to carry out, as requested by the NRA Board, a "Market Testing" Review of four activities in the Recreation and Conservation areas, namely

- |   |                      |   |                        |
|---|----------------------|---|------------------------|
| - | Conservation         | - | Operational Advice     |
| - | Conservation         | - | Collaborative Projects |
| - | Recreation           | - | Collaborative Projects |
| - | Landscape Assessment |   |                        |

A Project Board and Project Team were set up in February 1995; names are attached at appendix 1. An early decision was made to define the four activities clearly; definitions are at appendix 2.

The Project culminated in four activity reports, attached, and a 3-page summary paper to the NRA's Executive Group, also attached. These comprise sections B - F, (the sections being indicated in the page numbering).

Features of the activities which emerged very early on included a lack of reliable data and a lack of common standards and approaches. As a result a great deal of "data" collection was required, and the Project Team decided to attempt to arrange real liaison over the Project and its issues, with all eight Regions and Head Office. The liaison approach does not appear to have been seriously attempted for (at least, most) other Market Testing Projects and that, whilst it certainly did not make our task simpler, it gave us much more confidence in what is reported in the four papers, and it also resulted in certain misconceptions being corrected in good time.

We are very grateful for the time and thought given to this process and to our data collection, by many staff in the Regions and Areas.

The four activity reports follow essentially the structure suggested by the Market Testing Unit; that is, they cover

- profile of the current service
- profile of current costs
- service required
- practice elsewhere
- service options
- option appraisal

They finish with conclusions and recommendations, which are summarised in the report to the Executive Group.

The four activity reports we have produced are essentially "stand alone" ones, but they tend

to reflect the situations of the same small groups of staff. We found in general very small units (often only 1 or 2 people) providing all conservation services and sometimes recreation or other functions as well. The range of conservation activities, and the high levels of demand for these specialists, means the staff are kept very busy and the way they prioritise or approach the different tasks naturally varies significantly.

A particular conclusion of our liaison with Regions is that the NRA's "over-arching" conservation and recreation duties depend very much on the attitudes and support of local (Regional/Area) management. In some places, the management and financial support (the latter often from the "parent" function, flood defence especially) are excellent and good proactive results can be produced; in others, the support seems to be minimal and co-operation and results are the poorer. This is not only difficult for the specialist staff, but it produces different results on the ground and different relationships with customer groups.

Our reports, summarised in section F, recommend a number of steps to make more sense of this situation. We believe that a lot of good work is going on, and we hope our proposals will lead to a levelling up, rather than levelling down, by contributing to identifying and using good practices. Not only will this help us to achieve and demonstrate better value for money, but it can provide tangible evidence, welcomed by the community we serve, of our making a difference in favour of the environment.

## **Recreation & Conservation Market Testing:**

### **ACTIVITY : CONSERVATION OPERATIONAL ADVICE (COA)**

**DEFINITION :** for these purposes, Conservation Operational Advice, COA, has been defined to be the input of conservation [taken to include nature conservation/ecology, landscape, heritage and archaeological] contributions to NRA capital schemes or operating schemes or maintenance activities (i.e. where the NRA is the developer or operating authority). These should always be other-function led, eg Flood Defence, Water Resources. Contributions include initial input, consultation with other environmental organisations, assessment of environmental impact, ongoing advice and implementation arrangements (including design) and appropriate quality assurance measures and monitoring during or after the scheme.

The COA activity considered does not include responses to external initiatives such as planning proposals, or applications for abstraction licences or discharge consents.

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The NRA is entrusted with conservation responsibilities in respect of wildlife, landscape and natural beauty, geological and physiographical features, buildings and other objects of archaeological, architectural or historic interest. These responsibilities relate to all inland and coastal waters, and to land associated with them in England and Wales.
- 1.2 The Conservation duty is a fundamental requirement for the NRA in carrying out all its regulatory, operational and advisory activities. The Water Resources Act 1991 imposes duties to further and promote conservation and to consult with respect to sites of special interest.
- 1.3 The Key objective is to ensure that the NRA's regulatory, operational and advisory activities take full account of the need to sustain and further conservation. This is achieved partly through having "conservation" staff based in 8 regions. The distribution of staff time within regions, as reported for 1994-1995 is shown in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**

**DISTRIBUTION OF FTE'S PER REGION/AREA**

<b>REGION</b>	<b>No. FTE's providing COA</b>
Anglian	2.5
North/Yorks	4.5
North-West	3.2
Severn-Trent	9.9
Southern	1.3
South-Western	3.5
Thames	5.0
Welsh	1.4
<b>TOTAL NATIONAL</b>	<b>31.3</b>

- 1.4 The COA is required in order to ensure the NRA meets its statutory obligations as contained within Water Resources Act 1991; Land Drainage Act 1991; Statutory Instrument 1988 No.1217 The Land Drainage Improvement Works (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Reg. 1988; Town & Country Planning Legislation (various Acts); Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 1.5 Guidance is given in the interpretation of these duties in various practitioners' guidelines and handbooks, particularly:
  - Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation (DoE, WO 1989)
  - Conservation Guidelines for Drainage Authorities (MAFF 1991)
  - Environmental Procedures for Inland Flood Defence Works (MAFF, EN, NRA 1992)
- 1.6 Conservation Operational Advice (COA) provided can be grouped into (say) three categories:
  - (i) Specific projects
  - (ii) FD maintenance activities and estates management
  - (iii) Non-specific day-to-day advice and enquiries
- 1.7 COA under these categories is defined as including the following:
  - (i) Projects - providing internal advice; providing regulation; ensuring quality of



work done; producing specification, supervising, assessing quality and interpreting advisory work carried out by external providers; contributing to Catchment Management Plans.

- (ii) Maintenance etc - advising on work schedules and standards, good environmental practice and providing training, Quality Assurance and Post Project Appraisal.
- (iii) Non-specific day-to-day demand-led, ad hoc enquiries from NRA staff or NRA consultants. These enquiries could relate to interpretation and application of legislation/policy (eg: "how does European Habitats Directive affect water resources activity") or revolve around day to day work-related problems, (e.g. reed warblers have been found nesting earlier than usual in vegetation due to be dredged out and with the digger already on site). Conservation staff are consulted as to the best course of action.

## **2. DELIVERY OF THE CURRENT SERVICE**

- 2.1 **Overview:** COA is characterised by the diversity of the work involved and the many synergies between both the different specialist environmental staff and the functional staff with whom they work. What is reported below comes from analysing a large number of (generally consistent) questionnaire returns from all Regions.
- 2.2 The manpower utilised is equivalent to some 31 FTE's nationally - the breakdown between regions is shown in Table 1. Most staff do not work on COA alone but also undertake at least some of the other three tasks being reviewed in the Rec & Con Market Testing Project as well as advising on planning issues and other external initiatives.
- 2.3 Approximately 60% of the COA is provided by external consultants who are generally briefed and monitored by the in-house specialists concerned. Research indicates that COA is provided for approximately 500 schemes p.a. of a value over £50K, of which 250 exceed £250K. In addition many schemes (probably thousands) with a value less than £50K are worked on.
- 2.4 There is a general sense that the amount of work undertaken by in-house conservation staff reflects staff numbers and availability rather than the amount of work required, as resources tend to be limited.
- 2.5 The elements of the current service for projects, FD maintenance and day-to-day advice and enquiries are discussed below under the following groupings:

Technical (and legislative) Advice  
External liaison  
Quality Assurance

Training

## Use of Consultants

### Technical Advice

- 2.6 This includes interpretation and application of specific and general legislation to NRA activities, to ensure compliance (regulatory role) and to identify and interpret possible environmental impacts and to recommend solutions, mitigation measures and potential environmental enhancements through NRA operational activities.
- 2.7 This service is either provided as part of a structured, semi-formal process eg project management procedures, service level agreements, the drawing-up of annual maintenance schedules, Catchment Management Plans; or in an ad hoc informal manner preempting the above process e.g. if a project is proposed within a sensitive area such as a SSSI, early liaison may bring to light certain specific considerations which need to be explored before planning and design goes ahead; or on a day-to-day basis e.g. in response to some emergency works.
- 2.8 In providing advice, Regions make use of various internal policy and external legislative documentation, or best practice guidelines, and use inter-Regional experiences and "local patch" knowledge. Indications are that reliance on such sources is extremely variable.

### External Liaison

- 2.9 The NRA has a statutory duty to consult with English Nature, the Countryside Council for Wales, National Parks Authorities and the Broads Authority regarding sites of special interest in relation to NRA activities. Local authorities, wildlife trusts etc., are consulted with respect to other areas of conservation interest.
- 2.10 Conservation staff provide an important service to other NRA functions by acting as liaison points with outside bodies and agencies dealing with environmental issues or concerns. This takes the form of:
  - (i) collating environmental information to enable the impact of proposed works to be assessed on an individual site basis and to form a strategic overview.
  - (ii) liaising with environmental organisations or agencies on behalf of "other" NRA functions to provide specialist expertise to a project from the earliest stage. This facilitates good communication and enables information to be interpreted and converted into non-technical jargon for operational departments.
  - (iii) negotiating with external bodies and environmental organisations/agencies on behalf of operational departments, in order to facilitate solutions to external objections. This requires a thorough understanding of operational requirements, as well as of the NRA's conservation duty, and of the environmental concerns of the external agency/body.

### Quality Assurance

- 2.11 QA should be an essential part of the NRA's duties to ensure standards are maintained. Within the COA activity, this involves:
- a) screening of operational activities to ensure they have a minimal negative effect on the environment
  - b) monitoring whether mitigation measures or enhancements incorporated in the operational activities as a result of a), are carried out and achieve their objectives.
  - c) assessing the implementation of a & b, either through in-house staff or external consultants (Post Project Appraisal)
  - d) assessing the technical capability of external consultants
- 2.12 Current OPM's expect Post Project Appraisal to be carried out on 5% of all maintenance works carried out in the Region and on 2 major FD projects per region per year.
- 2.13 A widespread perception amongst conservation and flood defence staff is that insufficient QA is presently carried out and this has been reflected in the recommendations of this report.

### Training

- 2.14 The implementation of COA for maintenance work relies on implementation of the advice by operational staff, sometimes our own workforce, sometimes not; training is frequently provided to facilitate this. It comprises creating general awareness through day-to-day site meetings, discussions, informal liaison, and more formal training where conservation staff provide specific training days on the application of environmentally sensitive practices and show examples of best working practice.
- 2.15 Each Region provides this service according to its own specific format and requirements. Formal training is usually carried out on an Area basis.

### Use of Consultants

- 2.16 Consultants are used widely within Regions to provide COA. Although Conservation staff have a broad ecological knowledge, each officer tends to have a particular area of expertise. Sometimes the necessary manpower, or skills, are not available in-house and therefore consultants are used respectively either to provide that additional resource, or to provide those needed specialist skills (such as geomorphology, archaeology, landscape design, species-specific expertise).

- 2.17 Some Regions also employ consultants for their general knowledge or for quality control on maintenance works in the form of audit surveys. However, a concern is that most consultants are not multi-functional in terms of appreciating various internal NRA functional relationships and synergies or of understanding the inter-action of water related issues.
- 2.18 Conservation staff are involved in dealing with consultants in:-
- selection or suggestion of suitable consultants
  - preparation and design of briefs, or feedback into specifications, for them.
  - management - either day-to-day management of a whole project or management of the conservation element of a project.
  - Quality Assurance (QA) for conservation elements of projects
- 2.19 The extent of involvement with consultants varies between Regions. Conservation staff in general have expressed concern over the time needed to manage consultants and that due to the lack of water-related experience and familiarity with in-house synergies, such consultants tend to rely on NRA conservation staff to support them on the technical issues. Obviously the extent of such client commitment will depend partly on the nature of the work contracted out.

#### Key Features of Current Delivery Arrangements

- 2.20 A number of significant features have emerged from our questionnaires and subsequent discussions. They include:
- The provision of COA is characterised by differing workloads and different types of work between Regions. The number and value of schemes varies widely between Regions and this is reflected in variation in resources used and their professional background (particularly for capital).
  - Both conservation staff and operational managers whom they advise perceive COA as being provided successfully and on a generally well-balanced basis.
  - However they also perceive that there is insufficient in-house resource to deal with the workload and this is reflected in concern by a significant minority of New Works managers/staff that responses are on some occasions superficial and/or late.
  - While there are a number of documents guiding staff the quality of work required is not easily specified nor is it being consistently interpreted between Areas and Regions, or Nationally.
  - Smaller projects tend to suffer from lower priority and lack of available resource, giving poor quality output in some examples.
  - Post project appraisal and quality assurance need to be improved. Currently

standard OPM's require that 5% of flood defence revenue schemes and 2 capital flood defence projects should be audited each year. This represents a very small proportion of the work carried out. PPA and QA need to be extended to non-FD areas, and needs to be more demanding. Enhanced OPMs and better exchange of knowledge on good practice could provide an adequate baseline needed for proper PPA/QA.

- COA covers many different aspects of conservation eg nature, landscape, heritage, archaeology etc. It is difficult to buy in expertise which covers this range of knowledge as one package, and it would be inefficient to buy in from different specialists.
- Some staff are concerned that they are being pushed into areas of work which are beyond their core skills eg tendering, procurement and management of consultants. This raises questions of training needs, or of roles of engineers, landscape architects, and ecologists.

### **3. PROFILE OF CURRENT COSTS**

3.1 Operational departments of the NRA may obtain conservation advice either from the Conservation department or directly from consultants. The advice requested from the Conservation staff may itself be provided by the in-house staff or by consultants under their guidance.

3.2 In 1994/95 the provision and management of COA by Conservation staff required manpower equivalent to about 31 full time staff. These staff are mainly Area based and combine the activity with other conservation duties, and sometimes with recreation or other activities too.

3.3 The costs of the service provided through Conservation were:-

	<u>£'000</u>
Staff	681
Consultants	340
Materials and Services	48
Overheads	<u>257</u>
TOTAL	<u>1326</u>

3.4 Conservation advice purchased directly from outside suppliers by operational functions, principally Flood Defence, is usually part of a consulting engineer's contract. This makes it difficult to isolate but the best estimate of costs is £942K.

3.5 Thus the total expenditure on operational advice of £2268K includes £1282K (58%) which has been externally purchased.

#### **4. PROFILE OF SERVICE REQUIRED**

- 4.1 This section gives an account of the services required by the recipients of COA. The aim is to establish the basis on which advice is needed and the characteristics required for providers of that advice. Views have been sought from a range of NRA project managers.

##### **Statutory Duties**

- 4.2 Conservation Advice on NRA operational activities must seek to ensure that the Authority complies with relevant legislation. Operations must take full account of potential impacts on conservation interests. A wide range of current legislation provides protection for species, habitats, physical and man-made features; examples include the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Badgers Act 1991,... etc. Although the legislation is not directed solely at NRA we are obliged to ensure compliance.
- 4.3 This general requirement is very significantly extended by the duty to "further" conservation, as required by the Water Resources and Land Drainage Acts, 1991. These statutes require the NRA to identify and follow through all available opportunities to further conservation interests whilst carrying out normal operational and regulatory activities.
- 4.4 The government (DoE) has issued guidance on the interpretation and application of the legislation through the publication of a Code of Practice. This Code is given authority by Section 18 of the Water Resources Act 1991 but non-compliance is not an offence. In practice, the Code gives only general guidance and this has resulted in different levels of interpretation.

##### **Policy**

- 4.5 To assist Regions in ensuring consistent interpretation and application of the statutory requirements the NRA has issued internal policy guidance. PIN CE/LL/001 relates to the duty to "further" conservation and clarifies that this duty applies to all functions of the NRA.
- 4.6 Further, more clearly stated requirements are set out in the NRA national Conservation Strategy. This states that the NRA will:
- provide advice and recommendations to minimise adverse impacts of operations and to incorporate enhancements;
  - evaluate impacts on conservation status and identify appropriate procedures to sustain and further conservation;
  - ensure that designs and materials are "appropriate to the site";
  - produce best-practice guidance;
  - undertake Environmental Assessment of all capital works;
  - carry out audits/PPAs to assess the effectiveness of conservation measures.

##### **Policy into Practice**

- 4.7 The following paragraphs use responses to a national questionnaire to outline the perceived needs of client operational staff, usually at an Area level, for COA, and provide an indication of the range and level of services required. (These "needs" may not or may not truly reflect the corporate requirements of the NRA since some

operational managers will have their own interpretation of the right balance between their "main functional" and the conservation interests.) Needs are presented under essentially the same headings as in Section 2 above.

#### Technical Advice

- 4.8 The provision of technical conservation advice is essential to ensure compliance with a wide range of both specific and general legislation. Client project or functional managers are aware of the advisory service they require, although inconsistencies arise regarding whether conservation staff should act in an advisory or regulatory capacity. A partnership approach is preferred by the "client" whereby options for practical solutions are generated but these solutions are not dictated. Involvement of the same conservation advisors throughout the duration of a project, from inception to PPA, is considered essential.
- 4.9 In addition to physical projects, NRA functional managers and others need COA in producing balanced Catchment Management Plans; in assisting arrangements to govern maintenance activities; in providing day-to-day general advice on issues that arise; and sometimes in looking ahead for issues, by providing prior survey data against which proposals can be considered.
- 4.10 The advice provided must seek to identify and interpret environmental impacts and recommend solutions, mitigation measures and potential enhancements. This will require close liaison between the range of functions representing environmental concerns, eg fisheries, biology, recreation. In some circumstances detailed technical advice may need to be sought from outside NRA.
- 4.11 Regardless of the source, all COA must be well-balanced and comprehensive and provided within appropriate timescales, and must achieve consistent standards, if it is to ensure that the corporate aims of the NRA are met. It is not sufficiently clear what these standards are.

#### External liaison

- 4.12 The Conservation-related activities of NRA generate considerable interest outside the organisation and it is essential that COA and its influence maintains our technical credibility. Conservation staff should provide a key interface with external bodies and should facilitate liaison and act as a filter for operational departments. The generation of feedback on NRA work programmes and the capability to negotiate solutions to external objections is an important role needed by the client functions.

#### Quality Assurance

- 4.13 Although not always referred to by clients in their responses, in order to achieve maximum benefits from COA it is regarded as essential that operational "schemes" are monitored, perhaps as part of a formal PPA, to assess the uptake of advice and the conservation benefits which result. This role may also be extended to providing assurance that work carried out by consultants meets agreed quality criteria.

#### Training

- 4.14 The implementation of COA often relies on application of the advice by operational staff. This involvement needs to be facilitated through raising and maintaining general awareness of conservation requirements. Key elements which operational managers seek are the provision of appropriate training and of "good practice"

guidance. (A standard level of provision for such guidance is not currently evident.)

#### Consultants

- 4.15 It is not always possible to provide COA in-house, particularly when detailed time-consuming surveys and assessments or specialist advice are needed. When consultants are engaged to deal with the conservation aspects of a (eg capital) project it is considered essential that NRA conservation staff assist with the preparation of briefs and advise on the "suitability" of consultants. Again, clients require that Conservation specialists' participation in a project will involve the management, or assistance with management, of consultants engaged by operational departments and the interpretation and review of any subsequent reports or recommendations.

#### Environmental Assessment (EA)

- 4.16 Environmental Assessment, EA, is the multifunctional process adopted by NRA as well as elsewhere, to ensure that proper consultation and "sign-off" has occurred on the environmental aspects of NRA schemes.
- 4.17 In addition to routine environmental appraisals which form the core "output" of COA, a significant input of conservation advice to formal EA is essential. In 3 Regions the preparation of such EA's is co-ordinated by a Regional EA team; elsewhere a greater level of involvement by Conservation staff is necessary. The requirements of project managers are initially to obtain assistance with scoping and determining the level of EA and then to involve conservation specialists in the EA process as part of their project team.

#### Service Provider Attributes required

- 4.18 To achieve the effective provision of the services required, as viewed by NRA project managers, requires certain attributes in the providers of COA:-
- (i) It is essential that providers of COA have a sound working knowledge and understanding of all relevant legislation, NRA policies and operational functions.
  - (ii) The ability to determine the level of environmental appraisal required needs to be combined with the skills necessary to identify and interpret impacts. Recommended solutions need to be based on a sound understanding of the environmental issues involved in order to arrive at practical solutions. The essential synergies between the different elements of the water environment necessitate having a comprehensive range of expertise and sound professional judgement. We have to recognise that the water environment is a specialist focus, whose integration and synergies are often not understood fully by general conservationists; judgement needs to be based on a knowledge and understanding of the water environment as a whole, its interactions, and NRA functional policies. If survey or advisory work is contracted out, clients must have the necessary skills and experience to effectively manage consultants or contractors.
  - (iii) Service providers of COA will inevitably be involved in "high public profile" activities. They must therefore be able to communicate issues effectively and must be seen to be experts both within and outside the NRA.

#### 4.19 Requirements of the Environmental Agency



The implications of the Environmental Agency's proposed duties to "have regard to conservation" in the functions and activities that will be new to NRA Conservation staff are far from clear. The requirements of the Agency in terms of Conservation Operational Advice cannot therefore be determined, though it seems likely there will be an increase in workload, although the water-related advice may not change, the extent of increased support for pollution control may do.

## **5. PRACTICE ELSEWHERE**

5.1 This section gives an account of practice elsewhere and the external provider market that exists for conservation operational advice.

5.2 The aim is to establish whether a market exists, its size and geographical traits and how other companies acquire or provide the above services. The work has been progressed by considering two areas.

- (i) Other companies who have environmental responsibilities similar to those of the NRA.
- (ii) A selection of conservation consultancies, to establish which services they provide.

These are explored below.

### **Organisations with similar responsibilities**

5.3 A total of 10 companies were interviewed to determine differences and "best" practices. They are summarised in appendix 1. The results highlighted the following:

- The main reasons for conservation activities were primarily to meet statutory responsibilities. The majority of companies had their own in-house team; the larger teams comprise of specialists. All in-house teams deal with the day to day issues, enquiries, etc and buy in additional resources as required.
- Others have the minimum resource necessary to act as an "intelligent client" and to manage the contracts effectively. In cases where there is a complete lack of in-house specialists, term consultants may be appointed and have the responsibility of providing professional advice on a short notice "call off" basis.
- It is perceived that consultancies are often costly, lack familiarity with specific issues and do not have a relevant multi-functional understanding. In some cases specific training has been introduced to help. Also tight specifications are required.
- Of the companies questioned most felt that it was appropriate to have an in-house approved list of consultancies, which is reviewed on a regular basis. Also they support having in-house teams to enhance their public profile for environmental and conservation work.

### **Conservation Consultancies**

- 5.4 A total of 14 Conservation Consultancies were selected at random and contacted to ask them questions about size of company, geographical coverage and the services they offer, relevant to NRA/Agency requirements. Results are summarised in appendix 2.
- 5.5 Out of the companies contacted 6 had less than 20 staff and only 4 had more than 50. The larger consultancies offered the widest range of services, generally from their own in-house resources; however depending on the type of job requirements they would possibly still need to sub-contract for at least one of the specialist areas.

### **Findings**

- 5.6 An external market exists for providing conservation operational advice but there are limitations in terms of geography and ability to handle those multi-functional tasks which require thorough understanding of the water environment.
- 5.7 Further market research would be necessary to determine the full extent of services. Detailed specifications would be needed to obtain meaningful cost information.
- 5.8 Discussions with other companies, who are users of similar services, conclude that generally in-house departments are necessary to deal with day to day guidance, to respond to queries, to act as "intelligent client" for managing contracts, and often to carry out significant amounts of casework (where resourced to do so).
- 5.9 The in-house departments tend to use external providers to cope with extra workloads and to provide specialist advice.

## **6. OPTIONS FOR DELIVERY**

- 6.1 There are 4 elements of service for which internal COA is sought namely
- (a) for day-to-day enquiries etc
  - (b) for FD maintenance
  - (c) for NRA projects
  - (d) for NRA estate management
- 6.2 The practical options vary between these elements; for the very small tasks and for advice whose efficient and effective provision depends heavily on consolidated general knowledge of the catchments and their history and characteristics, contracting out has critical disadvantages.
- 6.3 The day-to-day enquiries which need conservation advice generally require someone with the breadth of knowledge about both NRA policy and the relevant catchment, to provide immediate answers; and those answers need credibility. There are a large number of such queries, and a bought-in service would not be able to deal authoritatively with the whole range of queries, without a long learning period. An option to externalise does not seem realistic.
- 6.4 Similarly, although slightly more controversially, routine Flood Defence maintenance work could only be put outside with difficulty and with risk of failure. Such work is intricately involved with our rivers and river corridors, is repeated regularly, and continuity and mutual understanding between advisers and the operators seem essential to success. Building good relationships and sharing the understanding and

experience of the conservation elements of maintenance work with management and operators is important to long-term efficiency, which should see the need for involvement of conservation advisers reduce. Again, the knowledge and relationship of trust mitigate against contracting this advisory role out, except in large one-off cases, which may be considered as projects- see paragraph 6.6 below.

6.5 Day-to-day advice, and support for routine Flood Defence maintenance work, are thus seen as elements which are generally small or limited in size, which need accumulated catchment experience, which would be expensive to set up and supervise, and for which there would generally be no adequate breadth of expertise to choose from in the market. External options have not been considered further.

6.6 When it comes to specific projects, the situation appears different. Specific projects can more easily carry the overhead of specifying and supervising the conservation advice work needed, and there is not always the same breadth of knowledge needed. Consequently it is felt that there are significantly different practical options to consider; three scenarios were adopted, namely:-

- 1 All project-focused COA contracted out
- 2 "Mixed economy" (as now) - some project COA provided by internal staff, some contracted out
- 3 (Nearly) all project COA provided in-house,

and these are considered in the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis in Figure 1, and in section 7.

6.7 Estate management can be a significant activity, for land in NRA ownership, and such land offers the opportunity of providing an NRA environmental "showcase". Certainly this can need conservation advice, but the limited confines suggest that advice on estate management could, like projects, be approached at least in some cases by contracting out. The views expressed about projects therefore apply.

6.8 The options and their viability clearly depend in part on the availability of a (current or potential) market. Against the "Service Required" list of attributes, there are indications of serious shortcomings in the current market. These have been reflected in the SWOT analysis.

**FIGURE 1 SWOT ANALYSIS FOR PROJECTS**

<p>Delivering COA on projects:</p> <p><b>OPTION</b></p>	<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p>	<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p>
<p>1. <u>External</u> Regional person provides Project Managers with lists of acceptable outsiders; all COA externalised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clarity of role.</li> <li>● Forces definition of service required.</li> <li>● Flexible activity/resource levels.</li> <li>● Variety/diversity can bring fresh ideas.</li> <li>● Forces project client to take up Conservation responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Loss of synergy, with other functions and conservation activities.</li> <li>● Specification of end points difficult leading to problems with quality and flexibility.</li> <li>● Loss of in-house experience.</li> <li>● Very small market in general water conservation.</li> <li>● Reliant on outside judgement for core duty.</li> <li>● Loss of depth of understanding of water matters.</li> <li>● Variety/diversity brings inconsistency Regionally and Nationally.</li> <li>● Loss of continuity through project management process.</li> <li>● Increased transaction time and costs due to inflexibility and "inevitable changes".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● VFM improvements if market functions well.</li> <li>● New ideas; no stagnation(?)</li> <li>● Provides service emphasis not regulation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Availability of multi-skilled contractors?</li> <li>● Risk on propriety, quality, VFM.</li> <li>● Loss of outside credibility.</li> <li>● Too compliant to "client"; no regulation.</li> <li>● Locked into external specialists - risk to price.</li> <li>● Ability to respond to emergency needs.</li> </ul>

Delivering COA on projects: <b>OPTION</b>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<p>2. <u>Half-way</u>: experts provide specifications, supervision, QA for outside provision, and provide some COA internally.</p> <p>(NB. Regions currently vary around this position)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build experience base.</li> <li>• Can select most suitable projects for external provision.</li> <li>• Flexible activity levels.</li> <li>• Keep expert skill for core judgements.</li> <li>• Other organisations more willing to share with NRA staff.</li> <li>• Provides flexibility of response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued lack of clarity over service quality required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can test market for quality, availability.</li> <li>• Share experiences of specs, contractors, etc.</li> <li>• Educate/train project managers.</li> <li>• Gain experience of specification &amp; supervision of contractors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VFM of in-house roles still ill-defined.</li> <li>• Risk on quality of external provision.</li> <li>• Propriety dependent on nature of project put outside.</li> </ul>
<p>3. <u>Internal</u>: 90% (say) of COA provided by internal experts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good base of water environment experience.</li> <li>• Staff committed to environment to "quality".</li> <li>• Good development of staff because of range of activity.</li> <li>• Conservation expertise likely to spread into general management.</li> <li>• Practical pragmatic decisions from multi-functional knowledge.</li> <li>• Other organisations more willing to share.</li> <li>• Ensures continuity of knowledge and "ownership" throughout project lifetime.</li> <li>• Provides flexibility of response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor resource flexibility to cope with changing workload.</li> <li>• Some wastage of time likely.</li> <li>• No direct stimulus for VFM.</li> <li>• Encourages lack of clear definition of customer need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased synergy and involvement.</li> <li>• Share experience across Regions.</li> <li>• Develop awareness of national standards.</li> <li>• Co-ordinate experimentation with methods.</li> <li>• Establish NRA conservation as international focus of expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of outside stimulus.</li> <li>• Could become largely regulatory?</li> <li>• May not keep up with some current knowledge and best practice.</li> </ul>

## **7. PREFERRED DELIVERY OPTIONS**

7.1 A great deal of rather diverse and largely reactive activity goes into provision of Conservation Advice for operational activities. Much of this advice requires balanced judgement which recognises other functional needs and practicalities while actively promoting our wide-ranging conservation responsibilities. This advice is of key importance to the NRA, both in a regulatory or "quality-assurance" role, and in providing much needed support for operational or project managers.

7.2 Project Managers and other functional staff wish to have available COA for

- planning, design, negotiation and implementation of projects (including CMPs)
- training and planning for (and monitoring of) their routine operational work as implies FD only
- ongoing and day-to-day guidance and responses to queries

They expect to be advised by people who understand the water environment and their functions, and who will be able to provide practical guidance. We need well-informed water-environment generalists, able to judge from an overall view what is appropriate and achievable in a given situation. The advisers need to understand the needs of other functions providing specialist advice, such as fisheries and recreation, and effectiveness is increased if they have accumulated experience of flood defence activities, water resources etc.

7.3 We have used a "SWOT" analysis to illustrate some of the possible characteristics of the three broad options being examined. This has contributed to conclusions which follow.

7.4 The NRA's practical application of conservation values is critical to the organisation's credibility, and the range and number of advice issues requires that a source of that core advice and judgement is always available. We conclude that full "externalisation" of conservation advice is inappropriate.

7.5 On the other hand, if we take the opportunity to identify and use the abilities which outside people are best equipped to provide, there can be benefits of flexibility and adaptability, as well as a wider range of expertise.

7.6 Our key overall conclusion is that a "mixed economy" (which we have at present) suits the NRA's needs well.

7.7 In drawing this broad conclusion, we have also had to bear in mind:

- (i) the scale of activity in-house on COA is around 30 FTEs, with provision mainly from staff in the 26 Areas. Even packaged with other synergistic activities requiring similar skills, this is not a large in-house resource at each location.
- (ii) a large volume of COA work is contracted out - around 60% in cost terms (although, of course, much of this has to be overseen by in-house staff). This tends to be on identifiable projects where it is "worth" the client effort in specifying and managing a contract. Specifying and overseeing contracts to provide conservation "advice" is time-consuming, and there is clearly a size

of contract below which it becomes time-inefficient to put out.

Despite our use of consultants for 60% of the COA work, there appear to be very few good environmental consultants who have a thorough understanding of the whole water environment and all NRA functions. Specialist advice i.e. ecological survey, landscape assessment is generally widely available but where multi-disciplinary water-environmental advice is required, it is very difficult to buy in. This is a general view, from clients and conservation people and is significant as Clients need good overall advice.

Conclusions are that an "expert-client" role for providing COA is essential, and that it will tend to be specialist services that may need buying in.

- (iii) "Soft" skills relating to effective liaison with outside and internal people, NRA working knowledge, political sensitivity etc. are difficult to buy in: this view of clients is significant. It illustrates the danger of going "external" too far, and also gives guidance for which COA work should or shouldn't be contracted out, in a mixed economy.

7.8 The conclusion in 7.6 does not imply that the NRA should be satisfied that Value for Money is being achieved consistently, in the total provision of COA e.g. in-house advice on the brought in services. Instead, there are a number of challenges which need to be taken up to improve and demonstrate VFM. These are set out in the following 7.9 to 7.13.

7.9 One strong message from liaison with Regions was that staff are very busy reacting to a wide range of demands for their time and expertise. In some locations work is contracted out or fails to be done simply because there is insufficient in-house resource to deal with the workload.

This raises various questions such as - should more (selected) work be put out to consultants or contractors? Is the quality of some work, "too high"? Are realistic targets and time-tables being set by all concerned? Should work be re-prioritised to ensure basic service wherever needed? Can guidance documents and training allow non-conservation staff to do more themselves?

Although it will not solve problems in itself, a necessary first step seems to be to attempt to establish, on some consistent terms, the baseload of "intelligent client" COA work which needs to be done in each Region or Area. There are obvious difficulties with this, particularly the lack of any coherent time-recording system. It is not possible at present to see any relationship between in-house resources, and the workloads; and synergies between COA and other activities make this more confusing. However nationally-co-ordinated examination of this baseload can offer a first step towards managing the work.

7.10 There appears to be very limited effort being put into Post Project Appraisal for conservation elements of schemes. This issue (including ensuring Conservation elements get included in the 2 FD scheme PPAs) and that of project QA need serious national-group consideration. They are often the first things to suffer from heavy pressures, so the overall monitoring and learning process is undermined.

Although fears will be expressed about the resources needed for PPA, it is an essential part of the "feedback loop". As long as it is approached with commonsense,

seeking only appropriate levels of detail and making good use of a sample of the activities, it can play an important part in improving the focus of COA provision.

- 7.11 The quality and consistency of NRA work in terms of fulfilment of our conservation responsibilities is a key element in maintaining credibility and influence. It is therefore essential to ensure that we uphold quality and standards in our COA. It is difficult to define the adequacy of COA, and there appear to be no real measures or standards for quality required. This makes real comparisons impractical.

Having said that, there is evidence of considerable, (if unsurprising), diversity of practice and standards, and of method of delivery. This may or may not reflect geographical or public-expectation differences; certainly it appears to partly reflect historical practices or attitudes, and resources available. Not all Regions have standard processes to ensure satisfactory COA is provided.

A first step to improve this situation would be by sharing available "sign-off" systems, as provided in some Regions (eg Thames) for Environmental Assessment procedures; this should include capital projects and maintenance activities. The latter are covered by Conservation Guidelines for Flood Defence being developed in the Thames Region for the national group; these need sign-off, implementation, and follow-up training; their implementation could reduce the specialist COA input needed.

Better targeted (conservation) standards for measuring the quality of COA are needed to assess effectiveness in practice of the advice : this challenge is not easy to meet. One constructive step would be a systematic approach to ensuring exchange of information about different Regional practices - assisting towards identifying good practice. A first step, suggested here, is a seminar/training day for all conservation staff and some "clients".

- 7.12 Cost data for using consultants or in-house staff to provide COA are not adequate to permit any general conclusions about their relative cost effectiveness. However there is a great deal of experience of contracting elements of COA work out, and this needs to be shared with a view to rationalisation. In particular information about the availability of consultants with different skills needs to be shared explicitly (maybe leading to some sort of register...) and information about costs of consultants and costs of client role in using them, need to be explored. The result could be better targeted use of consultants, both for effectiveness and cost-effectiveness.
- 7.13 Some Conservation staff are concerned about managing environmental consultants and contractors : this can be tackled by offering training. In the longer term, it may become a skill that we should consider when we recruit; landscape architects, for example, are trained to play this role.
- 7.14 Waste Regulation Authorities and HMIP appear currently to make little direct call on conservation advice. This activity is therefore likely to increase with Envage, with possible needs to provide Conservation advice for other sites, away from water (although this may tend to be driven by outside, not Environment Agency, initiatives). Conservation managers need to address this question urgently, with help from legal colleagues, in order to plan soon for the new responsibilities from April onwards.
- 7.15 In the longer term, when the Environment Agency has "settled in" and other activities arising from this study and report have made progress, and Activity Review should



be carried out for the (whole) Conservation function, to establish priorities based on need and effectiveness for different activities, practices and standards. This would be very difficult with present lack of data and standards.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 An overall basis for these recommendations is that the provision of Conservation Operational Advice, and of other conservation services, is an activity carried out by

- very dedicated staff
- very busy and pressurised staff
- staff in tiny groups, in danger of operating in isolation from each other

8.2 A consequence of these factors, and of the fact that it is difficult to "measure" the environment, is that there appears to be a need for considerably more stock-taking and pooling of ideas at a strategic level, to ensure we (and the community) are getting consistently good VFM for our work.

8.3 Our main recommendations should, we suggest, be for the Head of FRCN to deal with. They are:

- i) At least for the time being, the existing general balance between in-house provision, and use of outside sources, should continue. The "mixed economy" approach to COA is an effective one. However the "base load" of necessary in-house work needs to be clarified, Region by Region, (as were the "Noble numbers"?). This will need some national guidance, whose formulation itself could throw valuable light on practices, values, inconsistencies of, and genuine differences between, Regions.
- ii) There is confusion about the likely impact on conservation workload, of the new duties in the Environment Agency. This issue needs clarification as soon as possible, so that Regions and Areas can plan how to prepare for and take on this additional workload, with Legal [by November 95].
- iii) While there are some "quantity" OPMs for COA, there is limited guidance on the quality of advice which is appropriate.
  - a) There is very little formal post-project appraisal of advice given, to examine its implementation, and its effectiveness or otherwise for conservation. The "function" needs to address these issues, by ensuring a significant level of PPA for a variety of conservation work, and by planning how lessons can be learned and shared. This will involve some resource (maybe bought in?); but provided it addresses only necessary levels of detail, and is on a sample basis, it should be valuable. [This to be addressed and commenced by March 1996.]
  - b) The Conservation function needs to consider a training day or equivalent approach at which current guidelines, Codes of Practice and sources of expertise are drawn together and discussed, to establish consistent understanding and to improve "networking", [by March 96]. The presence of COA "clients", eg from Flood Defence, would be useful.

- c) Using the first fruits of this PPA programme around March 97, the function should establish guidelines on quality standards and indicators for Regional adoption. Project, April - July 1997; [agreement by September 97].
- iv) At present, use of Consultants appears inconsistent and ad hoc. Use of Consultants should be reviewed across the Regions to establish competences, availability, and costs. Consideration may be given to agreeing "approved lists" to accord with nationally consistent criteria. The client cost of appointing and overseeing environmental consultants will often be substantial and should be allowed for in cost comparisons made. The aim should be to help select the most appropriate tasks for, and levels of, externalised work, [by June 96].
- v) There is a need for nationally co-ordinated work to carry out an activity analysis of (probably, all) conservation work and its effectiveness, in the context of the Environment Agency's duties, and to produce guidance on prioritisation of activities, [during 1997/98].

ORGANISATIONS NEEDING CONSERVATION ADVICE

APPENDIX 1

Company	Size of Company	Conservation Group	Geographical Coverage	Procurement	Why Structured This Way
British Waterways	?	6-7 Conservation advice. 15? Landscape/architects	?	Some survey work in-house Large projects buy-in specific advice Specialists act as intelligent client Small amounts of casework in-house Environmental Code of Practice	- No forced Market Testing - External Providers give flexibility - Buy in "rare" specialists
Countryside Council for Wales	280 (£16.6m budget)	41 Habitat/species specialist, including 1 Vertebrate ecologist 1 Freshwater ecologist	Wales	Core experts R&D Monitoring all contracted out casework.	- Market Testing - Head count limits - Welsh Office/Treasury pressure - Historic
English Nature	650	? (250 Science graduates)	Head Office 21 Local Area Teams	60-70% research & monitoring contracted out. 20-25% casework contracted out. I.C. in-house.	- Market Testing/In-house efficiency strategy. - Landowner focus - Move away from functional chimney structure
Welsh Office Highways	£18m turnover)	(7-8) 1-2 (non-engineers for environmental work) L.A. No ecologist	Wales	Consultations prepare design & briefs. No intelligent client.	- Welsh Office Policy - Never had in-house expertise
North East Water Plc	?	1.5 non specialists		General advice from "term consultants". Specialist/project based advice brought-in.	- Inherited system involves minimal new resources.
Forestry Authority	?	10 Landscape Architects			
Berkshire County Council	300	?	Berkshire Administrative Boundaries		- CCT - Political pressures.
			Birmingham		
Countryside Commission (still awaiting information)	300	110 conservation staff 68 Countryside Stewardship	HO - Cheltenham 8 regional offices	survey work contracted out	- Market testing
Thames Water (still awaiting information)			Thames Catchment Area		

**COMPANIES OFFERING CONSERVATION (OR ENVIRONMENTAL) ADVICE**

**APPENDIX 2**

Company	Geographical Coverage	Size/Staff deployment	Work Undertaken	Comments
Binnie and Partners	International	10-15 staff + specialists	Mainly sub-contract work. landscaping/environmental statement work in-house.	
Babbie Environmental Sciences	HO - Scotland UK	100 staff for environmental work 10-15 per specialise	Mainly in-house but sub-contract as necessary.  No landscaping services other than assessment.	Core groups in Glasgow, Exeter and Reading.
Acer Environmental	UK and Ireland	150 staff	In-house service. Only archaeology sub-contracted.	Approx. 14 projects in last 2 years on river/wetland/coastal areas.
Sir William Halcrow and Partners	UK	80-100 staff in both environmental and coastal depts	Usually provide expertise in-house.	
Johnson Poole and Bloomer	HO - Storrbridge Glasgow, Cardiff	6 staff	Provide landscaping and archaeology but mainly sub-contract	
Entec Europe	National/International	8-10 Ecologists 20-25 landscaping/planning 1 Archaeologist	Ecology /landscaping only sub-contracted for large projects.  Archaeology - sub-contracted. Geomorphology - not provided.	
Avis Environmental	UK NE Scotland Highlands	18 staff	Ecology, landscaping and archaeology - in-house/some sub-contracting. Geomorphology - by Aberdeen University.	Company owned by Aberdeen University.  Have done lots of work for local Authorities.

Company	Geographical Coverage	Size/Staff deployment	Work Undertaken	Comments
Aspinwall and Co	HO - Shrewsbury UK	8 Ecologists/landscaping specialists 6 Geomorphologists	Ecology, landscaping and geomorphology in-house/sub-contract sometimes.  Archaeology not provided.	Operate central teams and have some dispersed in regional offices.
MJ Carter Associates	HO Warwickshire UK	4 Ecologists/landscaping specialist	mainly sub-contract.  Geomorphology not provided.	Small outfit - only has 1 office.
Cranfield Environmental	UK	4 staff	Ecology - in-house. Landscaping, archaeology and geomorphology not provided.	Small outfit.
Environmental Consultancy	International	2 staff	Ecology, geomorphology - in-house. Landscaping, archaeology not provided.	Only work for Oil Companies:
L G Mouchel and Partners	7/8 UK offices	20-25 Landscape/Ecology specialists	Ecology/landscaping - in-house no sub-contracting. Archaeology/geomorphology in-house/sub contracting.	30/40 projects in last 2 years on river/wetland/coastal areas (in excess of £1m).
Clayton Environmental Consultants	UK	1 Consultant	Ecology in-house/sub contracting.  Landscaping, archaeology and geomorphology not provided.	No environmental statements work.
Environmental Resources Management	6 UK offices	12 Ecologists 3 Landscape specialists 10 Geomorphology 35 staff for Environmental Statements	Ecology/landscaping/geomorphology in-house.  Archaeology sub-contracted.	

**ACTIVITY : CONSERVATION COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS**

**1. PROFILE OF THE CURRENT SERVICE**

**POLICY BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The promotion of conservation is a statutory duty of the NRA (S2.2 of the Water Resources Act 1991; one method by which the organisation meets this duty is to collaborate with others in promoting schemes. The activity definition accepted for this project is "the promotion of conservation [by resources from the conservation budget] through collaborative projects with external organisations, bodies or individuals.
- 1.2 The Government has provided guidance through a Code of Practice on how the NRA should meet this duty, and an annual report on how this is fulfilled is submitted to the Department of Environment. Relevant data collected for this report for 1994/95 are given in tables 1 and 2.
- 1.3 The NRA's Conservation Strategy states that it will "continue to work closely with others, to help protect sites of the highest conservation interest. More importantly, the NRA will, in partnership with others, promote and be instrumental in the rehabilitation of degraded rivers and wetlands". One of the three strategic objectives underpinning the strategy is to promote conservation to enhance the quality of the aquatic and related environment for the benefit of wildlife and people.
- 1.4 The strategy provides high-level, general, guidance on the nature of projects on which the NRA will collaborate with others, to promote conservation. It identifies three main categories of project:
  - \* promotion of conservation internally and through external publications.
  - \* measures to protect rare species associated with the water and related environments.
  - \* projects which assist with the management of 'nuisance' plant and animal species associated with the water environment.
- 1.5 Collaboration with others is also seen in the Strategy as important in relation to river rehabilitation projects, particularly those which:
  - \* aid the recovery of species which have declined as the result of past environmentally insensitive practices.

- \* enhance the amenity of the water environment.

Emphasis will be on action which makes a real improvement on the ground.

- 1.6 Other than this high-level guidance, there are no nationally approved policies or procedures for the selection or prioritisation of projects for collaborative assistance. Some Regions (eg Severn-Trent, Thames, Welsh) have developed criteria to help screen potential collaborative opportunities and identify those that are most appropriate to the NRA, and the CMP process can help in the prioritisation process.
- 1.7 There is no specific guidance on the financial procedures Regions should adopt when collaborative opportunities arise, with the result that some problems have been encountered when the requirements of the Financial Memorandum and Scheme of Delegation are applied, particularly when collaboration largely involves the direct provision (or receipt) of financial support.

#### NATURE OF WORK UNDERTAKEN

- 1.8 Table 1 shows that NRA input to a project can take the form of staff time (to provide technical advice and project management), provision of materials, or other help in kind, or direct financial support. Of the 179 projects undertaken, in 94/95 table 1 indicates that 61% involved 3, or less man days of NRA staff time. 27% involved 4-10 man days, and 11% over 10 days, though these larger projects accounted for 46% of the total staff time (4FTE) spent on this activity.
- 1.9 Material input and help in kind (eg provision of fencing materials, use of a JCB or similar for ground works or provision of trees for planting) was provided on 20% of projects, to a total value of £300k. Unless opportunistic windfall funding becomes available Regions rarely have budgets that enable larger projects to be supported, and resulting opportunities are therefore lost.
- 1.10 Regionally, the overall level of activity varies between 10 projects (NW Region) and 36 (Severn-Trent). Total staff input is more variable (82-208 days), suggesting that Regions' involvement in collaborative projects may be limited more by the availability of staff resources than by lack of suitable projects.
- 1.11 Table 2 provides a breakdown of the 179 projects undertaken in 1994/95 according to project type and collaborative partner. Almost 75% involved habitat enhancement works while 15% were directed towards individual species (eg otters barn owls ), and 16% included an educational or interpretation element. Major collaborative partners were voluntary conservation organisations (Wildlife Trusts, Otter Groups, FWAG etc) and local authorities or town/community councils. While the majority of projects involved 1 partner, 20% involved 2 partners declining to 4% which involved more than 5 partners.
- 1.12 Much of the work is re-active responding to proposals put forward by others. Staff have to have the technical competence and freedom to work in a flexible manner, to



ensure maximum benefit for the NRA can be realised from unforeseen opportunities, as they arise. Many proposals are in response to local needs, which staff must have the local knowledge to respond to.

## BENEFITS TO THE NRA

- 1.13 The benefits to the NRA of conservation collaborative projects arise both from the process of collaboration, and the nature of the projects undertaken.
- 1.14 By collaborating with others, the NRA is able to present a positive, pro-active face to its collaborative partners and the general public. This is particularly significant when the large number of relatively small projects, spread all over the country, is considered. Collaborative projects offer good opportunities for positive PR in that the theme of organisations working together to achieve a common goal will normally result in a good news story. Such news items can have an impact at a local, regional and often national level. Whilst it has not been possible to quantify the PR benefits of collaborative projects, there are a number of examples where, for a relatively small financial input the NRA has received significant PR exposure, including TV coverage which would have incurred substantial costs if similar advertisement time/space had been purchased.
- 1.15 It is also very significant that, in the eyes of many external organisations, a project is given enhanced status through the NRA's involvement - in effect, it has the NRA's stamp of approval. In some cases this enables the NRA to 'buy in' to a project at a minimal cost, yet receive the same PR and exposure as the major financial contributors. An additional benefit is the goodwill generated between organisations with whom the NRA has collaborated. They are more likely to support the NRA if and when required and work with it on future projects.
- 1.16 More important however, are the environmental benefits that projects achieve. Collaboration may be the only mechanism available for the NRA to achieve certain key actions and objectives (for example those identified in CMP's) if it has inadequate financial resources itself, it also enables more effective use to be made of limited resources. Table 1 suggests an average gearing of at least 50% (ie the total value of collaborative projects was more than double the cost to the NRA). Discussions with the NRA's advisor on environmental economics suggest that there is currently no established methodology to evaluate or rank conservation projects using a cost/benefit approach. Thus it cannot be stated in absolute terms that collaborative projects achieve value for money for the NRA, though, assuming they achieve their environmental objectives, such projects;
  - i) bring about significant environmental benefits.
  - ii) achieve those benefits at less cost than if the NRA was to undertake them on its own
- 1.17 Finally, there are organisational benefits to the NRA in undertaking collaborative projects. Skills, knowledge and techniques gained by NRA staff through their



involvement in collaborative projects can be used elsewhere in the organisation, but particularly for similar conservation activities that may not involve collaborative partners (eg habitat enhancement works undertaken directly by the NRA, production of NRA interpretive material, project management skills and PR skills).

## **2. PROFILE OF CURRENT COSTS**

- 2.1 Tables 1 and 2 provide information on the current costs of collaborative projects. Nationally the conservation function has a total of 62 FTE's, and total operating cost of £5.3 million. Of this an estimated 6.4 FTE's are involved on collaborative projects, with associated costs of about £190k, and the cost of material and financial contributions about £1.8m. In effect, with just a 10% staff cost input, the NRA helped to implement completion of projects worth £3.9 million, which when compared to the functions total operating cost of £5.3 million is a significant environmental and value-for-money input.

## **3. SERVICE REQUIRED**

- 3.1 As discussed in 1.1 above, though there is high level guidance provided in the Conservation Strategy, which demonstrates the NRA's commitment to using collaborative projects as a means of helping to fulfil it's statutory duties, there is little clear guidance on the service required. This has resulted, to a greater or lesser extent, in the Regions developing their own approach to collaborative projects, for example Severn-Trent, Thames and Welsh Regions have each independently provided guidance notes.
- 3.2 To ensure that the NRA realises value for money from collaborative projects, it must have a service which achieves the following;
- effective targeting, to support projects that address the NRA's priorities, in terms of environmental needs. (a project should not be supported just because it brings about environmental improvements, if it diverts resources from a higher priority environmental issue). Possible approaches include use of CMP actions or targeting specific themes (e.g. wetland enhancements, otter habitat, etc).
  - efficient selection and approval of projects, including safeguards to minimise risks to the NRA's input if a project should fail.
  - maximising PR and other 'spin-off' benefits to the NRA, including recognising local community interests.
  - scope for the NRA to support large projects (eg by use of Millennium Funding) as well as small, local projects which are regularly undertaken. However, Millennium Funding for example, always requires 50% funding to be made available by the applicant. If this happens for large scale projects, it could have significant impact on the funding of smaller projects.

----- minimisation of the NRA's inputs (financial, technical and material) whilst still enabling the project to go ahead, and NRA objectives to be met. -----

- 3.3 To action the above prior to project selection the NRA requires prioritisation and selection criteria, and cost/benefit analysis. After a project has been completed, PPA is required.

#### **REQUIREMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

- 3.4 The implications of the Environment Agency's proposed duties to 'have regard to conservation' in the functions and activities that will be new to NRA Conservation staff are far from clear. The requirements of the Agency in terms of promotion of conservation through collaborative projects cannot, therefore, be determined, though it seems likely that they will represent an expansion (at least in the range of projects on which collaboration is appropriate of the NRA's requirements). This issue needs clarifying early in the life of the Environment Agency.

- 3.5 The service must also be designed to enable it to effectively tap into new sources of collaborative funding (eg lottery funds, EC funds) that are increasingly available. It may do this either as a lead organisation or in support of a lead partner.

#### **4. PRACTICE ELSEWHERE**

- 4.1 By the very fact that the NRA is able to enter into collaborative projects with other organisations, it is obvious that other agencies for various reasons also seek collaboration in undertaking projects.

- 4.2 Examination of projects in which the NRA is a collaborative partner suggests that other agencies collaborate in one of three general roles:

- i) as a recipient of collaborative resources, to enable a particular project they wish/plan to undertake to proceed, (eg voluntary conservation groups, community groups). Without collaboration, they are unlikely to have the resources or technical input necessary for the project to be successfully completed.
- ii) as a 'donor' organisation, providing technical and/or financial resources to promote projects that fulfil general policy criteria and further the aims of the organisation in general terms. (eg other statutory organisations, local authorities etc)
- iii) as customers seeking a specific product (survey information, specific habitat improvements) who are prepared to share the costs and benefits with the NRA.

- 4.3 The NRA itself may fall into any one of the above classes, according to the nature of the project under consideration.

4.4 A number of organisations, who have similar environmental responsibilities as the NRA, were contacted. Our aim was to get some understanding of how others approach the development of collaboration schemes and establish what selection criteria they have. The results revealed that their involvement in such schemes was mainly confined to the provision of funds eg. grants, rather than the more "hands on" approach often adopted by the NRA. As far as the selection criteria is concerned; those who operate a grant system had some Prioritisation Criteria, but this varies from scheme to scheme, depending on the type. Other organisations eg. English Nature, who approach collaboration in a similar way as the NRA, are themselves in the process of reviewing their policy on such issues and could not offer advice on how best to approach collaboration.

4.5 It is external practice in providing collaborative support, rather than receiving it that is relevant here. Two main approaches seem to be adopted;

- i) To have a formal grant system. Grant systems generally rely on selection criteria which, must be met, for grants to be provided. They are widely used by countryside agencies where a large number of relatively small grants are being made, in order to achieve general policy aims (eg increase tree-planting, introduce environmentally sensitive land management practices). As the size of the grant increases, there is a general tendency for the screening of applications to increase, and grants to be awarded on individual merit.

In grant-aiding a project, the donor organisation has relatively little control over the detail of the project, providing it meets agreed criteria. Grants are generally paid before work commences.

The NRA's Financial Memorandum effectively precludes it from offering grants.

- ii) To have a specific budget of staff time and/or finance for, as yet, unidentified projects. These resources are available on a discretionary basis to assist with projects that meet general or specific criteria. Financial control is generally by way of a purchase order system, with final payment made at the end of the project, on receipt of an invoice. Payment is thus undertaken after the work is completed, giving the donor organisation control over the detail of a project.

This approach offers greater flexibility as, if necessary, an individual specification can be agreed for each project, but may involve more staff/time in processing each application.

There is also greater financial security with this approach and qualifying criteria can be much broader. It is generally adopted by local authorities and statutory organisations when dealing with site-specific environmental projects, and is the approach adopted by the NRA.

## **5. SERVICE OPTIONS**

5.1 Five possible options for the future operation of collaborative projects to promote conservation have been identified;

- i) Continue as present, with only high level guidance.
- ii) Continue as present, but work to:-
  - improve targeting of collaborative effort (eg by use of CMP actions or setting strategic targets)
  - adopt of a simple but robust framework for handling opportunities for collaboration
  - develop a programme of post-project appraisal to build on strength and reduce weaknesses in the system
- iii) As ii) above, but place administration of the system with an external contractor, operating at a local level, to a fixed budget. Technical advice to be provided by NRA staff, on request of contractor.
- iv) As iii) above, but technical advice also provided by contractor.
- v) As iv) above, but with one national contractor.

Option i) the 'do nothing' option does not meet the service required as identified in 3.1 above, so is not considered further.

5.2 The common theme to all collaborative projects is that, providing the projects are justified on technical and priority criteria, each collaborative partner considers it gets value for money as it is achieving the desired output at a lower cost than if it had to undertake the whole project on its own. The scope for improvement is therefore limited to better the targeting, improving the efficiency with which the service is delivered and maximising the benefits which result.

## **6. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

6.1 Table 6.0 summarises a "SWOT" analysis for options (ii) to (v). From that analysis, and in the context of very small amounts of staff time being used at any one site, the best option for the NRA to pursue in the run-up to Envage, and until the impact of Envage on this activity has been clarified, is to retain provision in-house, but to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

The reasons for selection of this option are:-

- It retains greatest flexibility in the run up to Envage and adoption of new duties.

- Expertise is retained in-house and synergies maintained.
- NRA contact with customers is maintained.
- PR benefits are maximised.

6.2 However to demonstrate consistent VFM we believe that targeting and screening criteria need to be developed on a national basis.

## **7. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY**

7.1 In order to achieve the service that NRA policy requires, a nationally consistent approach to collaborative projects is needed, which ensures efficient selection and approval of projects but retains the flexibility to address local priorities. The following actions are suggested.

- Robust selection criteria are developed to identify projects suitable for consideration for collaboration (eg projects must address NRA statutory duties, must contribute to meeting Conservation Strategy objectives, must have no unjustified element of private gain)
- A multi-facetted approach to prioritising and targeting collaborative efforts should be adopted to assist project selection. For example, proposed projects might be judged in terms of how they contribute against a number of valued criteria, such as whether they address CMP actions or other NRA policy requirements, they safeguard regionally rare/threatened habitats and species, what "multiplier" on the NRA contributions would be achieved, there is local interest, opportunity for PR etc. If an acceptable approach can be developed, cost-benefit analysis should also be used to assist project selection.
- an agreed approach to simple post-project appraisal should be developed, to ensure VFM and to feed back into the prioritisation process.
- Need for site visits and inspections by NRA staff is reduced through pooling and extending range of publicly available technical guidance
- Good practice guidelines are produced to maximise environmental benefits, and PR on any collaborative scheme (Press release for every project, NRA logo on all associated interpretative material, etc)

and perhaps

- Production of a leaflet for the public and interested groups clarifying the basis on which the NRA will of the NRA's support projects, the terms under which it is willing to collaborate and the nature of projects it may support

- 7.2 Overall, it is regarded as important not to impose a heavy bureaucratic process on what is a very productive, while limited, activity. The above proposals would assist coherence of the activity so long as they are easy to apply and used for guidance rather than as rules.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The following is a summary of recommendations for the arrangement/delivery of Collaborative Conservation Projects. We suggest they are all for the Head of FRCN to take forward:-

- i) The arrangement of Conservation Collaborative projects should remain in-house as an essentially locally-driven system.
- ii) Consideration should be given to the quantification of benefits ensuing from various kinds of collaborative project. This could contribute to forming a view about justifiable overall level of spend [response/proposal by March 96].
- iii) Efforts should be made to develop and agree a multi-attribute scoring process, which include cost-benefit analysis, as a guide for prioritising between projects of different types or of different magnitudes, within Regions [process, or status report, by Feb 96].
- iv) These, together with the process developed by the function group in FRCN (95)7, should be used to assist in the distribution of "collaborative" money nationally. Scope for large projects, or large commitments associated with "Lottery Money" bids, should be considered (but may be difficult).
- v) An agreed approach to post-project appraisal should be developed, agreed, and followed for Conservation collaborative projects, to be signed off locally with lessons shared nationally [process agreed and implemented by 31 March 96].
- vi) Consideration should be given to producing (with PR colleagues) brief "good practice" guidelines for maximising the PR benefits to the NRA from all collaborative projects [by March 96].
- vii) Clarification should be offered to the Regions on whether the Environment Act 1995 imposes any change to the existing status or future scale (for the Environment Agency) of collaborative Conservation projects [by January 1996].

## 6.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

## SWOT ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

OPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Concentrate on efficiency and effectiveness of current in-house service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Expert knowledge and synergies retained in-house</li> <li>* Criteria can be more flexible, but accountability retained</li> <li>* NRA is directly involved and PR benefits can be maximised</li> <li>* NRA contact with customers maximised at a local level</li> <li>* More flexible to meet changes in budget</li> <li>* utilizes existing wide geographic spread of expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Cannot easily accommodate very large/national projects</li> <li>* Technical staff involved in screening/admin when skills may be better deployed elsewhere</li> <li>* Choice of scheme/degree of involvement may be influenced by staff interests than by NRA priorities</li> <li>* Dependent on agreed selection criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Develop closer links with local communities/ interest groups</li> <li>* NRA staff more likely to become aware of appropriate schemes</li> <li>* Efficiency savings can be used for further environmental improvements/release of staff for work on other issues</li> <li>* Develop nationally consistent robust selection criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Manpower ceilings may constrain staff involvement even if finance available</li> <li>* GIA reduction may result in fewer projects, not greater efficiency</li> <li>* NRA may not be able to meet demand for improved service</li> <li>* FM/SoD may preclude most efficient practices</li> </ul>
Local based administration under contract, to fixed budget, technical advice in-house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Non-technical NRA input minimised</li> <li>* Schemes will be more fully assessed by objective criteria</li> <li>* Expert knowledge and synergies retained in-house</li> <li>* Competition will generate efficiency savings</li> <li>* Contact with customers at a local level retained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Cannot easily accommodate very large/national projects</li> <li>* Selection criteria must be very robust and unequivocal to retain accountability</li> <li>* Separation of financial and technical input may introduce inefficiencies</li> <li>* Non-technical staff may not have the same commitment/interest in projects - less will to make them succeed</li> <li>* Customers may feel they are not getting "NRA stamp of approval"</li> <li>* Dependent on quality of selection criteria and contract specifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Contractor need not be constrained by FM or SoD</li> <li>* Efficiency savings may stem from systems not available to NRA</li> <li>* Efficiency savings can be used for further environmental improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* PR opportunities less likely to be exploited</li> <li>* May be less efficient if customers still use NRA as first point of contact.</li> </ul>

OPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Local based contractor for admin and technical advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Maximised savings in NRA staff time</li> <li>* Competition will generate efficiency savings</li> <li>* Local knowledge/input available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Cannot easily accommodate large/national projects</li> <li>* Loss of in-house expertise, knowledge and synergies</li> <li>* Difficult to safeguard quality of technical advice through contract specification</li> <li>* Increased need for PPA</li> <li>* Dependent on contractor with detailed knowledge of NRA</li> </ul>	AS ABOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increased PPA/requirement may negate efficiency savings</li> <li>* Loss of identity with NRA</li> <li>* Mix of technical/admin skills may be hard to find in one contractor and at local level</li> </ul>
National based contractor for admin and technical advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Contract management requirements minimised</li> <li>* Can address national priorities</li> <li>* Can address major and national schemes</li> <li>* Clear national focus for collaborative projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Small, local schemes may get overlooked</li> <li>* Loss of NRA contact with customers</li> <li>* Loss of local knowledge/input</li> <li>* Difficulty to safeguard quality of technical advice through contract specification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Efficiencies of scale may be realised</li> <li>* Uniform national application of screening criteria</li> <li>* Larger contract may attract more competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increased travel costs to provide geographic spread of advice may negate efficiency savings</li> <li>* Increased PPA requirement may negate efficiency savings</li> <li>* Loss of identity with NRA</li> </ul>



Table 1

# **CONSERVATION COLLABORATIVE SCHEMES - 1994/95**

## **ANALYSIS OF NRA INPUTS AND TOTAL PROJECT COSTS**

REGION	NO OF PROJECTS INVOLVING			TOTAL NO. OF PROJECTS	TOTAL NO. OF STAFF DAYS	MATERIALS £K	MONEY			TOTAL PROJECT COSTS £k +	COMMENTS
	0-3 DAYS	>3010 DAYS	10 STAFF DAYS				£1-£10	>£10- £100	>£100		
ANGLIAN	5	2	4PROJECT 5 80 DAYS	11	96	50.5	37.9 (10)	-	-	109.3 (11)	2 C&R projects on Recreation proforma, not on Conservation 1 = Materials and staff time only. NB. Figures are obtained from 94/95 for 2 areas and from 93/94 for 1 area and amalgamated, assuming this to be an average year.
NORTHUMBRIA & YORKSHIRE	8	6	02 PROJECTS 32 DAYS	16	90	48.5 (3)	52 (8)	63.6 (4)	-	336.5 (14)	1 = Materials & staff time only 1 = Staff Time Only
NORTH WEST	7	1	2 PROJECTS 67 DAYS	10	81.5	-	54.9 (7)	14.5 (2)	341.5 (2)	477(10)	
SEVERN TRENT	16	15	5 PROJ 76 DAYS	36	207.5	133.4 (10)	111.4 (32)	62.5 (3)	-	558.3 (36)	TPC's exclude land costs. 1 = Materials and staff time only
SOUTHERN	26	6	0	32	77.25	-	64.8	15 (1)	-	372.4 (32)	1 = Staff time only (10 days)
SOUTH WESTERN	9	4	3 PROJ 62 DAYS	16	103	0.1 (1)	57.8 (11)	119 (5)	-	101.3 (7)	Unknown TPC's include large projects such as Somerset levels & moors and 6 projects which are both C&R for which NRA input totals £63.8K.
THAMES	16	9	2 PROJ 35 DAYS	27	105.2	4.5 (3)	80.7 (17)	251 (10)	-	783.1 (27)	
WELSH	23	6	2 PROJ 55 DAYS	31	131	62.8 (14)	31 (17)	135 (3)	-	1211.2 (31)	1 = Anglesey Wetlands Strategy (TPC = £500K 1993/94 - 94/95) 1 = C & R TPC £7.6K
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>20 PROJ 407 DAYS</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>891.45</b>	<b>299.8 (35)</b>	<b>490.5 (132)</b>	<b>660.6 (27)</b>	<b>341.5 (2)</b>	<b>3949.1 (168)</b>	

**Notes:**

Figures are rounded up to the nearest £100 and are approximate.

\* - Includes nil returns for staff time. For projects costing the NRA <£1000, 0.5 staff days time have been added to the total, and for projects costing £1000+, 1 day of NRA staff time has been added

() - Figure in brackets is the number of projects contributing to the cost in that box.

+ Total project cost - estimate of total cost of project if inputs by all partners are given a cash value

Table 2

**CONSERVATION COLLABORATIVE SCHEMES - 1994-95****ANALYSIS OF PROJECT TYPE AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS**

REGION	PROJECT TYPE							COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS								
	River/ Riparian	Wetlands	Pond/ Lake	Coastal	General Improvement	Educational/ Interpretative	Species Specific	Local Authorities	EN/ CC	Countryside Commision	RSPB	National Trust	Commercial Bodies	Land- owners	Vol. Bodies	Others
Anglian (11)	8	3	1						1	2		1	2	3	3	6
Northumbria & Yorkshire (16)	1			1	4	2	9	5	1					1	6	3
North West (10)	1		1		7		1	4							1	8
Severn Trent (36)	9	12	5		5	6	2	12	6	2	2		5	2	16	6
Southern (32)	4	6	3	3	4	7	4	15	8			1		2	19	6
South Western (16)	7	7		2	1	4		6	2	2	4	1	1	1	9	5
Thames (27)	6	6	5			5	5	10	2	2	3	1	5	2	6	4
Welsh (31)	3	11	5	1	2	2	5	4	7		9		1	6	13	7
Total (179)	39 22%	45 25%	20 11%	7 4%	23 13%	28 16%	26 15%	56 31%	27 15%	8 4%	18 10%	4 2%	14 8%	17 9%	73 41%	45 25%

Note Totals may exceed 100% as a project may span more than one project type, and involve more than one collaborative partner.

**Recreation & Conservation Market Testing:**

**ACTIVITY : RECREATION COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS**

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The basis for activity is in the Water Resources Act 1991 Part 1 Section 2.2'..... it shall be the duty of the Authority, to such extent as it considers desirable, generally to promote the use of waters and associated land for recreational purposes.'
- 1.2 Thus the NRA has a general duty to promote the amenity and recreational potential of inland and coastal waters and associated land. In many regions the location, quantity and suitability of NRA landholdings to support recreational activity is limited. Therefore, in order to achieve the NRA's duty collaboration is a cost effective and environmentally sustainable way of providing and promoting recreational activities and facilities. Frequently, projects are actually carried out by our collaborating partners and the role of the Authority is one of advisor and financial partner; in some cases the NRA may be the principal and executing organisation.

**2. PROFILE OF THE CURRENT SERVICE**

- 2.1 The criteria for selection of collaborative projects vary considerably from Region to Region but all include the basic principle that schemes must have a strong water or wetland element and a robust justification for support. The range of projects and partners considered suitable for NRA collaboration is extremely wide and reflects the nature of the different activities and the broad principles contained in the NRA National Recreation Strategy.
- 2.2 Collaborative projects often secure significant improvements to the environment. Partners, such as local authorities and other riparian land owners that undertake restoration, development or improvement schemes, often have several aims for any one project. These may be improvements in wildlife habitat, amenity and landscape as well as recreation facilities. Frequently amenity or recreation are considered key elements of such projects, with the potential for improving the quality of life for many people. This accent towards benefiting people is the essential difference between Recreation and purely Conservation projects.
- 2.3 Collaboration occurs in the provision of both formal water sports and the more informal waterside activities. There is no definitive list of subjects suitable for collaboration but collaborative projects have to date encompassed all outdoor watersports from canoeing, jetskiing and fishing to activities such as walking, birdwatching and picnicking where although not directly involving water, it forms a key feature of the attraction. Types of project are also varied and may include not

only the provision of instream and waterside facilities and securing access but also undertaking strategic recreation studies, promoting codes of conduct, hosting water users fora, publishing promotion literature, supporting project officers, commissioning ecological impact studies, providing safety equipment, and developing interpretation, education and other information packages. Many examples of collaborative projects are documented in the national C & R Annual Report.

#### **2.4 Synergies related to recreation collaborative projects**

- The considerable value-added effect of partnership funding means the resultant product can achieve considerably more than the sum of the individual contributions. This is the essence of synergy in this context whereby the expertise, corporate strengths, direct lines of communication, networking etc. of the collaborating organisations offer more efficient and effective project delivery. The NRA is an acknowledged partner in several large, high profile projects.
- Synergies exist between Recreation and the other functions within the NRA particularly with respect to Consenting, Flood Defence and Conservation and these offer considerable advantages in collaborative projects. Indeed the Recreation and Conservation or Navigation officer is frequently the same person. This synergy may translate as anything from informal advice or incorporation of recreation provision in forthcoming NRA capital schemes to the use of expertise or data gathered by other functions. A example of this synergetic effect in collaborative projects may be to develop canoe launch facilities with a local club on local authority owned land located alongside a river. There are many positive advantages in being aware of the engineering constraints and land drainage consent advice and formal procedures at an early stage in the design of the project as well as the more obvious efficiency of using man power and machinery in concert with for example a flood defence scheme. However, where multi-functional staff (i.e. conservation plus recreation, fisheries plus recreation etc) have high workloads, it may be that recreation is subjugated to the detriment of that function.
- The NRA is considered to be a fair arbiter between competing parties over use of water space that is considered to be a finite and increasingly scarce resource. This is very useful in resolving issues arising from conflicting interests expressed by different groups using the river or riverside and can make the difference between project success or failure where different recreational interests are represented. CMPs are beginning to contribute to this overview.

### **3. PROFILE OF CURRENT COSTS**

- 3.1 Across all Regions, a total of 94 recreation collaborative projects was recorded in the financial year 1994/95. (see attached spread sheet Appendix 1). The level of activity varied considerably between regions from 3 projects (Anglian) to 22 projects (South

Western) with the average being 12 projects/region. The financial input also varied considerably with total Regional expenditure on collaborative projects-ranging from £6k (Welsh) to £142k (Severn-Trent). Individual projects ranged from £0.3k to £55k with most falling within the order of £1k to £10k. Staff involvement showed a similar wide variation where records reveal a Regional total for all projects ranging between 11 man days (Southern) and 160 man days (Severn-Trent). Across all regions, staff time for each project averaged 6 man days and total NRA input to recreation collaborative projects is managed by a total of 5 FTE's including non-direct staff.

- 3.2 The total cost of the projects in which the NRA collaborated was estimated to be £3.2 million of which the NRA contribution (financial, staff and materials) was £768k. This indicates an average NRA input of around 25% of the total cost and represents 37% of the total Recreation function budget.
- 3.3 In most regions, the principal factor which has limited the number and scale of projects adopted is finance. There is a latent demand for assistance from many different quarters for water related recreation projects and this is frequently highlighted when undertaking the consultation phase of Catchment Management Plans.

#### **4. SERVICE REQUIRED**

- 4.1 A collaborative project is defined in the latest OPM description as... "A collaborative project may be an NRA project with external input or an external project with NRA input where each member of the partnership is essential to the success of that project!" Previously and including the year of data collection (94/95), a collaborative project was defined as - 'An NRA project which has an input of financial and/or resources from an external organisation which exceeds 10% of the total cost of that project in that year; or an external project to which the NRA contributes finance and/or resources in excess of 10% of the total cost of that project in that year.'
- 4.2 Recreation collaborative projects offer considerable resource advantages to the NRA when endeavouring to carry out its promotion duties. This is important because when compared to other NRA functions and other organisations with similar recreation objectives, e.g. water plc's, the NRA recreation function budget is relatively modest. However, the Authority has an important role to play not only in pioneering it's own projects but also frequently in the influence over and support of others who are taking the lead. This role is important where a balance of water recreation needs and provision is required against other demands on water resources particularly nature conservation.
- 4.3 Many NRA regions have few landholdings suitable for recreation projects therefore collaboration with other organisations and individuals then becomes the principal way of complying with our duty under the Water Resources Act.

The legislation, as indicated in section 1, gives the NRA considerable discretion as to the extent to which we promote recreation. In practice, this commitment of

finance to recreational work becomes a limiting factor. This makes NRA interpretation and prioritisation for collaboration all the more important.

4.4 The NRA's Recreation Strategy, published in 1993, gives scant but positive guidance on how the NRA would wish to consider collaborative projects. It includes references to:

- working closely with other organisations to pool resources and data to advance [expertise about supply of and demand for water-related recreation]
- liaising with [certain] organisations to obtain information about the recreational potential of a catchment
- welcoming collaborative exercises with both the public and private sectors, to achieve best recreational use of a particular site
- seeking opportunities wherever possible to promote recreation in partnership with other organisations
- "supporting" aesthetic improvements to riverside areas

and acknowledges that "future developments will put increasing pressure on local authorities, commercial operators, water companies, landowners and other relevant agencies such as the NRA, to provide more publicly available, cheaper facilities for casual users."

4.5 The NRA, as a result of project partnership, is seen as a positive force for water sport and informal water-related recreation by government, user groups and other agencies. This advocacy raises the profile, public perception and status of the Authority in an area of activity which is seen to contribute to the quality of life of people and communities as well as the well-being of the nation as a whole. Such projects easily attract media attention and can be used to enhance public perception of the Authority. NRA public relations officers rate these projects highly and it could be argued that such schemes provide greater 'added PR value' for each pound spent than some of the work undertaken by other functions. At an operational level, collaborative projects may offer the only practical solution to recreational issues and conflicts raised in Catchment Management Plans.

4.6 The Project Team sees Recreation Collaborative Projects as needing:-

- To fully comply with the recreation duties contained in the Water Resources Act 1991.
- To achieve the standards and aims contained in the NRA Recreation Strategy.

with an indicative aim to collaborate on 50% of all recreation projects undertaken by the NRA.

Partners involved will be many, but are likely to include :

- Local Authorities
- Countryside Commission
- Regional Sports Councils
- Riparian Owners
- Navigation Authorities
- Governing Bodies of Sports
- Clubs and Associations
- General Public
- National Parks
- Forestry Commission
- Water Companies
- Tidy Britain Group

Key results should include

- The provision of water related recreation facilities achieved in a cost effective manner.
- The effective promotion of water recreation and amenity related to water.
- Promotion of the NRA through effective publicity of recreation collaborative projects.
- The collection of recreation data to provide the NRA and its partners with information concerning current levels of provision and future trends
- Education of the public on recreation in water environments

but there is currently no agreed way to prioritising among these criteria. This issue is addressed in section 7 below.

- 4.7 The NRA could support large projects (eg by use of Millennium Funding) as well as small, local projects which are regularly undertaken. However, Millennium funding for example, always requires 50% funding to be made available by the applicant. If this happens for large scale projects, it could have significant impact on the funding of small projects.

#### 4.8 Requirement of the Environment Agency

The implications of the Environment Agency's proposed duties to "have regard to recreation" in the functions and activities that will be new to NRA Recreation staff are far from clear. The requirements of the Agency in terms of promotion of recreation through collaborative projects cannot, therefore, be determined, though it seems likely that they will represent an expansion (at least in the range of projects on which collaboration is appropriate of the NRA's requirements). This issue needs clarifying early in the life of the Environment Agency.

The service must also be designed to enable it to effectively tap into new sources of collaborative funding (eg lottery funds, EC funds) that are increasingly available. It may do this either as a lead organisation or in support of a lead partner.

## **5. PRACTICE ELSEWHERE**

- 5.1 There are no known directly comparable practices in the recreation field to the use of funds for project sponsorship involving close co-operation with the other partners. The nearest comparison which may be made is with the two principal government agencies associated with sport and outdoor recreation - the Sports Council and the Countryside Commission. These Agencies set policies and establish priorities through the setting of criteria which in turn directs the granting of funds to preferred subject areas. The Agencies involvement in such projects is strictly confined to the provision of funds rather than the more 'hands on' approach often adopted in the case of NRA collaborative projects. In such cases NRA officers are part of the decision making team, offering expertise, local knowledge and networking skills as well as providing partnership funding. (In the future there may be more opportunity for the NRA to operate as a partner in projects, where financial input is made by the National Lottery.)
- 5.2 Although the duties contained in the Water Resources Act 1991 apply equally to the Water Plcs as well as the NRA, the nature of the businesses and the difference in the types of managed assets means in practice a very dissimilar emphasis over the use of resources. It is evident from annual reports and personal contact that the Water Plcs direct much of their effort towards capitalising on the high public relations value of major water recreation sites centred on supply reservoirs. An example is Carsington Reservoir which was opened to the public in 1992 and is owned and operated by Severn-Trent Water plc. This major capital investment has committed resources from the company of several million pounds on this one site alone to develop the recreational and public relations potential of the site. It is now fully operational with visitors numbers of 750,000 a year and therefore requires considerable revenue resources in order to maintain services. This contrasts with the relatively modest NRA budget for recreation of £2.2 million spread across the eight regions, and with the very limited NRA site ownership.
- 5.3 Other players include the local authorities. Councils have experienced many changes over the past few years including Compulsory, Competitive Tendering, (CCT) rate capping and tax reforms and these have tended to focus attention of departments on contract management and partnerships with the commercial sector. Their role is increasingly seen as an enabler but to some extent the traditions of public ownership of major recreation facilities remain. Some local councils offer small grants directly to local sports and leisure groups and councils are frequently NRA partners in riverside projects.
- 5.4 Overall, there is no sense of outside practice from which the NRA can usefully learn in addressing how it approaches collaboration.



## **6. OPTIONS**

6.1 We have identified five possible options for approach to collaborative schemes for recreation. They are:

- i) Transfer funds to Sports Council and/or Countryside Commission, to administer
- ii) Administer all collaborative funds centrally (ie nationally)
- iii) Cease collaboration
- iv) Collaborate, without advice or involvement
- v) Retain existing arrangements, but improve effectiveness.

A "SWOT Analysis" has been carried out, and is presented in Table 1.

## **7. OPTIONS EVALUATION AND COMPARISON**

7.1 The level of NRA financial commitment to collaborative projects is, in part, subject to the allocation of GIA to the function combined with any recreational income and the sub-division of this between site based capital schemes, operating/revenue costs and stand alone/collaborative projects. The duty under the Act states that there should be access to appropriate NRA owned sites and a duty of care to visitors. In some Regions, this and other revenue costs have first call on the recreation budget. Any remainder is used in a way that is subject to the discretion of individual regions and areas, i.e. this may be used for collaborative projects, stand alone recreation promotion or survey work, but for example in Thames Region, other function-led revenue costs are recharged and therefore Thames are able to spend more of their budget on recreation-led activities i.e. collaboration etc.

7.2 FOUR QUESTIONS THEN ARISE, two concerned with the service required, and two to do with how it is effectively and efficiently delivered.

- A) Is collaboration with other organisations amongst the best ways of discharging the NRA's duty to promote recreation?
- B) Is the present national level of GIA allocation used effectively to undertake recreation collaborative projects and is there an equitable division of Recreation GIA between regions?.
- C) Could delivery of the service be more effectively carried out by someone outside the NRA and if so whom ?
- D) If the service is retained in-house how could it be improved ?

These are addressed in turn below.

### **7.3 A) POLICY TOWARDS COLLABORATION**

**7.3.1** It is the Government's view that collaboration between government, local authority, commerce and the voluntary sector is more likely to deliver the best value money for public sector investment. Use of some GIA in this way therefore appears to sit very well with Government policy. Furthermore, collaborative projects offer the following advantages when considering options for that element of the recreation budget where there is some degree of discretion. :-

- Collaborative projects make efficient use of limited funds in respect to duties contained in the Act and National Strategy by sharing the financial burden and project commitment with others.
- They enhance value-for-money and increase the number of projects that can be undertaken. Typically there is a four fold increase in project value compared with NRA financial contribution as a result of collaboration. We conclude that, to the extent that they contribute to NRA aims, they represent a desirable approach.

### **7.4 B) LEVEL AND TARGETING OF RESOURCES**

**7.4.1** Essentially recreation collaborative projects are high leverage tasks which offer excellent value for money. Providing a sound business case can be made, consideration should be given to the level of budget awarded to the function for this purpose as this would undoubtedly increase opportunities for the Authority.

**7.4.2** The distribution of Recreation and Conservation GIA to the regions was the subject of a recent paper [FRCN(95)7] to the national FRCN Function Committee (attached as appendix 3). Recommendations were made that following some modification to accommodate Thames Region recreation responsibilities and inclusion of comments from area FRCN managers, draft proposals would be submitted to C&R technical groups in May and the FRCN committee in September.

**7.4.3** The paper offers a process for managers to meet, discuss and decide on schemes, but it does not really address the principles upon which proposals or decisions should be based. These might be built on one of the Regions' current sets of criteria, such as those at appendix 2.

**7.4.4** In order to establish sound justification for bids, a method of valuing benefits arising from projects would be advantageous. This would best aimed at strategic level although considerable work will need to be done to secure a robust method of analysing and quantifying the benefits of recreation schemes such that comparison may be made against costs. Models with respect to actual and perceived benefit in respect of recreation projects are still in their infancy with no clear-cut 'off the shelf' formula available which offers advantage over other competing rating mechanisms. One caution is that gathering of data for economic appraisal may prove prohibitively

- expensive compared with modest NRA expenditure on the majority of collaborative projects. However, it may be that a cost effective method of estimating benefits by extrapolating results from other fully surveyed schemes may be available in the short term. This could be used to assist in the process of project prioritisation, and more generally to support the justification of continued GIA awards to the recreation function in relation to 'public good'.

7.4.5 For the purposes of admitting proposed schemes as admissible "bids", and of prioritising between bids for the larger, more plannable proposed schemes, it may be helpful to use a "multi-attribute" scoring system. A set of desirable attributes for schemes competing for NRA recreational resources will need to be identified - by the recreation managers nationally - and they would become a checklist against which proposals would be subjectively scored. Examples of possible attributes, purely for illustration purposes, might be

- number of people estimated to benefit
- ratio of outside against NRA resources
- NRA costs per person benefitting
- scarcity of facility within reasonable distance or within catchment etc.
- likelihood of failure if NRA does not collaborate
- extent of likely p.r. and media benefits

7.4.6 Such a list of desirable attributes, with appropriate weightings (some would be more important than others), with a simple subjective approach to scoring, would provide a common test process for any proposed scheme.

## 7.5 C) DELIVERY OPTIONS

7.5.1 Options for whether the NRA's part in collaborative projects could be delivered by some other agency or route are explored in the SWOT analysis Table 1.

7.5.2 It is evident that the amount of staff time involved in the delivery of the service is very small, involving fractional staff resources in each region. These modest staff and overhead costs are unlikely to be reduced even if others could be found to administer the schemes and therefore makes market testing impractical.

7.5.3 Some of the advantages to retaining the present locally based, in-house control over the distribution of financial and other assistance are:-

- River expertise and influence on project decisions
- Excellent PR value and credibility factor
- Opportunities created as the result of direct contact
- Synergies with other functions and networking outside the NRA
- Virtually all the staff currently delivering the service have other non-recreation

duties which bring other skills to the project

7.5.4 There are also some distinct disadvantages to all alternative methods of service delivery (see SWOT analysis):-

- The NRA may be considered to be just one of many grant-aiding bodies and this may put at risk NRA credibility and future recreation GIA.
- The NRA would lose the present guiding influence in project decisions.
- Many current synergies would be lost
- There are no significant savings to be made by transferring the delivery of the service to others; indeed it is likely extra costs may be incurred.

#### 7.6 D) IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SERVICE

7.6.1 Although good progress has been made to improving the level and quality of service to customers e.g. the creation of a Recreation Facility Design Manual and an investigation into the establishment of nationally agreed collaborative criteria (see appendix 2), further gains could be made in adopting standard techniques for project prioritisation.

7.6.2 Project prioritising is at present, largely carried out by individual officers, who evaluate on a project by project basis and this is therefore a key area in need of improvement. At present, there is no clear natural guidance or framework with which to prioritise potential projects and therefore the process is subjective and may invoke criticism for not justifying best value for money.

7.6.3 Public relations benefits accruing from collaborative projects may not always be realised to the full. Guidelines should be drawn up which ensure all appropriate avenues have been explored.

7.6.4 One essential issue from the point of view of propriety, of value for money, and of learning and hence improving processes, is that of post-project appraisal. Again this should be simple, but some sort of reassurance, with various levels of enhanced inspection, should be expected on all collaborative schemes. Again, details should be worked out by the national group.

#### 7.7 ENVAGE

7.7.1 Text in the Envage Bill which relates specifically to recreation remains largely the same as the Water Resources Act 1991.

7.7.2 However, changes in legislation contained in other sections of the Bill may exert pressure on the new Agency to provide a more formalised cost-benefit analysis in order to substantiate bids for GIA. If so, a significant extra workload will result...

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 The following is a summary of recommendations for the arrangement/delivery of Collaborative Recreation Projects. We suggest they are all for the Head of FRCN to take forward:-

- i) The arrangement of Recreation Collaborative projects should remain in-house as an essentially locally-driven system.
- ii) Consideration should be given to the quantification of benefits ensuing from various kinds of collaborative project. This could contribute to forming a view about justifiable overall level of spend, [response/proposal by March 96].
- iii) Efforts should be made to develop and agree a multi-attribute scoring process, which could include cost-benefit analysis as a guide for prioritising between projects of different types or of different magnitudes, within Regions [by Feb 96].
- iv) These, together with the process developed by the function group in FRCN (95)7, should be used to assist in the distribution of "collaborative" money nationally. Scope for large projects, or large commitments associated with "Lottery Money" bids, should be considered, (but may be difficult).
- v) A simple form of post-project appraisal should become the norm for collaborative projects, to be signed off locally with lessons shared nationally, [process agreed and implemented by 31 March 96].
- vi) Consideration should be given to producing (with PR colleagues) brief "good practice" guidelines for maximising the PR benefits to the NRA from all collaborative projects [by March 96].
- vii) Clarification should be offered to the Regions on whether the Environment Act 1995 imposes any change to the existing status or future scale (for the Environment Agency) of collaborative Recreation projects [by January 1996].

## OPTIONS (USING SWOT ANALYSIS)

OPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Transfer funds to Sports Council/CoCo to administer	Good regional admin. services	No expert knowledge of rivers No integrated river management/ synergies Will incur admin charges not currently taken into account. Very small amount of funds compared with administrators - they may not wish to take on numerous small projects.	Possible staff time savings	loss of NRA kudos and PR potential Could impact on other functions and other rec. duties (critical mass) Possible loss of future discretionary GIA
Administer all collaborative funds centrally	Could perhaps more effectively implement national priorities and target larger, more high profile projects	No local knowledge Fewer spending safeguards or will still require local liaison May incur more on-costs	Possible staff time saving	Public perception of NRA would change Will miss opportunistic local events
Cease Collaboration	Cost saving	Fail to comply with strategy Loss of potential goodwill	GIA released for other work	Public perception of failing duty
Colaborate withuot advice	Streamlines administration	Lack of NRA guidance - high risk of output failing target	manpower savings	Failure to achieve best VFM
Retain existing arrangements but improve effectiveness	Synergies working Expert knowledge retained 'Hands on' approach thus local needs satisfied.	Few projects of national status therefore many projects are of local PR value only Priority problems generated by multi-functional staff	Implement national project selection criteria Implement EA analysis of projects to provide more informed future decision making	Any reduction in GIA will probably impact on collaborative projects first as this is discretionary spend.

# PROFILE OF CURRENT COSTS ( SPREADSHEET)

## Appendix 1

### RECREATIONAL COLLABORATIVE SCHEMES BY REGION -1994/95

REGION	No. PROJECTS INVOLVING STAFF TIME OF:-			TOTAL No. PROJECTS	TOTAL No. OF STAFF DAYS	NRA MATERIAL INPUT £k	NRA FINANCIAL INPUT £k			TOTAL PROJECT COSTS £k	COMMENTS
	0-3 DAYS	3-10 DAYS	> 10 DAYS				£1-£10k	£10-£100k	> £100k		
ANGLIAN	3	1	2 pro. 80 days	6	94	4.4	2.4	-	-	83.8	Incl. 2 Projects which are both C&R Not inc' in Con proforma with combine TCP of £70k , 40 days each. NB figures are obtained from 93/94 and 94/95 from 2 areas and added to assume average year.
NORTHUMBRIA AND YORKSHIRE	2	11	1 pro 20 days	14	107.5	19.5	63.3	20	-	538.8	1 project= material and staff time only. 1 of the unknown TCP's is several million £'s
NORTH WEST	10	0	0	10	10.5	-	30.4	-	-	351.2	
SEVERN TRENT	5	4	6 pro 124 days	15	160	14.8	54.6	73.1	-	760.3	
SOUTHERN	9	0	0	9	11	-	5.7	101.6	-	333.0	
SOUTH WESTERN	10	4	1 pro 12 days	15	43.5	33.2	20.6	37.5	-	76.3	6 C&R projects are included in Conservation proforma only 3+ material and staff time For 1 area PRand Area managers funded some projects( not recorded here)
THAMES	9	8	1 pro 30 days	18	93	-	25.5-	104.4	-	1012.4	Includes the funding of 2 project officers but not their time as these are full time temporary posts working on specific projects
WELSH	3	2	2pro 30days	7	45.5	13.5	12.5	50	-	381.0	1 project = Staff time only 1 project = materials and staff time only
TOTAL	52	28	15 pro 838 days	94	565	85.4	215	386	-	3536.8	TOTAL NRA INPUT = £686 k & 565 Man days for 94 Projects

**AN EXAMPLE OF A SYSTEM OPERATED BY SEVERN-TRENT REGION****COLLABORATIVE PROJECT CRITERIA**  
**FOR**  
**CONSERVATION AND RECREATION**

The following criteria are designed to act as a guide to collaborative project selection such that there is a uniform and consistent approach shown by the NRA in the Severn-Trent Region to applicants and other bodies. It will also act as a coarse filter at area level to screen out unsuitable projects at an early stage such that the work involved in project appraisal is only undertaken for potentially successful applications and an early response can be given to many enquiries.

**DEFINITION**

The nationally agreed definition for reporting purposes (OPM's) for collaborative projects is as follows:-

A NRA project which has an input of finance and/or resources from an external organisation which exceeds 10% of the total cost of that project in that year; or an external project to which the NRA contributes finance and/or resources in excess of 10% of the total cost of that project on that year (Chart of Accounts Task BT10).

Expenditure includes revenue or capital costs, land and staff time. Land is regarded as a resource which has notional value even when no payment is made. Staff time should be costed and accounted for in the total cost of the project.

**CRITERIA**

- 1) The project must have a strong, water or wetland element included in its theme. Schemes on still-waters, wetlands, canals, non-main rivers as well as main rivers can all be considered for NRA support.
- 2) The Authority's contribution to any collaborative project should not normally exceed 50% of the total cost. This contribution could be land or labour calculated at normal contractor rates. This is to ensure the recipient has a financial stake in the project and is more likely to show sustained interest in its success. It should also be demonstrated that no alternative, more appropriate source of funding is available.
- 3) The combined contributions of any DoE funded organisation including eg Co Co, English Nature, etc should not exceed 50% of the total project cost. The remainder should be sought from other sources.
- 4) Assurances must be given by the lead organisation regarding the long term viability of the proposal and will include evidence of ownership/long lease, financial stability and plans for future maintenance provision.



- 5) A simple cost-benefit analysis or justification report of the project must be undertaken to show good value for money (could be part of SOD approval or PM1). This may be a comparison of costs against numbers of people estimated to benefit from additional facilities or a justification of the importance of created or protected habitat.
- 6) The project must be able to show that it is environmentally sustainable and will not lead to degradation of important landscape or habitat. A phase 1 environmental assessment of the project should be undertaken by the Authority in every case that progresses beyond stage A. Consideration should be given to harmonise recreation and other uses.
- 7) Consultation with other NRA functions (where applicable) should be sought at an early stage, such that there is no conflict of interest between functions within the Authority.
- 8) Where work is to be undertaken by a contractor employed by the collaborating organisation, a specification should be written and details submitted to the NRA in advance of work actually starting. Selection of the contractor will normally be based on the lowest submission although technical merit and competence are mitigating factors in acceptance of other than the lowest quotes or tender.
- 9) Where appropriate, suitable provision for disabled and chronically sick persons must be incorporated in the project. It is particularly important to consider access and safety features for disabled people when designing the project.
- 10) In order to ensure proper and on-going recognition of the Authority's contribution to any project it is essential that assurances are sought, in writing, at an early stage that any signs, leaflets, publicity material, press releases, radio interviews etc relating to the project will make appropriate reference to the NRA. A campaign of promotion should be drawn up in consultation with NRA public relations section where appropriate. Priority should be given to projects that raise the public profile of the NRA.
- 11) There should be a clearly identified need for the project which can be supported by market research, surveys or other collected evidence. Only project based schemes will be considered. Non-specific financial support for organisations or the sponsorship of individuals or events is not usually considered appropriate because of the difficulty in monitoring and assessing spend and ensuring that no criticism can be levelled at the Authority concerning use of public funds for private gain.
- 12) No assistance can be given to any project retrospectively. Sufficient time should be allowed for the Authority to consider the project in advance of the start date.
- 13) Any recreation facilities created as a result of Authority assistance must be made available with reasonable ease for general public use. Any charges for the use of facilities provided by the project shall be reasonable and not for commercial gain or profit.
- 14) The Authority reserves the right to withdraw or refuse support for any project.

**C MARSH**  
Recreation Officer - Severn-Trent Region  
Jan 1995

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## NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY

FISHERIES, RECREATION, CONSERVATION  
AND NAVIGATION FUNCTION COMMITTEE

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**SUBJECT: GRANT IN AID ALLOCATION (GIA) FOR RECREATION AND CONSERVATION**

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**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to initiate debate regarding the allocation of GIA to Regions for recreation and conservation. A number of different options are identified.
- 1.2 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the paper and suggest how best the issue is progressed and over what timescale.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 To date, the allocation of GIA for recreation and conservation has been based on a loose rationale whereby the Director of Operations has sought to provide funds on a more equitable basis than the relative total budgets for Regions i.e. Regions with relatively low overall budgets are favoured at the expense of larger ones such as Thames and Severn-Trent. However, there needs to be a more robust rationale and clearly identifiable criteria and rules for the allocation. In particular, resource allocation must closely reflect need.
- 2.2 There is general agreement that GIA should be used only for promotion of conservation and recreation (i.e. fulfilling the Section 2(2) duty) and that the advisory activities (e.g. screening of proposals and consent applications, advisory input to capital and maintenance schemes) be recharged to other functions which generate the work.
- 2.3 It is less clear how the duty to make best recreational use of NRA sites (Section 16 (4)) should be funded. Whilst income from the site (where this is recoverable) will contribute, it is almost certain that additional resources will be required from GIA or recharge.

- 2.4 The principle of GIA allocation cannot be implemented until there is agreement at Executive Group level regarding recharging to other functions for advisory services provided by recreation and conservation or site management. The issue is dealt with separately in paper FRCN(95) 6.

### 3. CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATION

- 3.1 Given the agreed principle that GIA should be spent only on promotion activities, it is logical that the type and scale of such activities is identified.

#### National Needs

- 3.2 Nationally, promotion expenditure is focused on national leaflets, joint publications (e.g. New Rivers and Wildlife Handbook), exhibitions and subscriptions to organisations. The Head Office budget for these items is extremely limited. Furthermore, many Regions produce leaflets which could, with very little extra work be transformed into a standard national version.
- 3.3 On this basis, it would appear sensible to allocate a proportion of GIA to a national "promotion" budget managed at Head Office. This would comprise an amount determined as part of the Corporate Planning bids and reflect costs for identified publications, contributions to exhibitions and selected corporate subscriptions such as to the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Countryside Recreation Network (CRN).
- 3.4 The precise detail would be established by priority planning through the Conservation and Recreation Technical Groups and confirmed by the FRCN Committee.
- 3.5 On previous experience, this may involve on an annual basis publication of two Conservation Technical Handbooks, a Recreation Technical Manual, two national leaflets and attendance at two major exhibitions. The cost would be in the region of £100k.

#### Regional Needs

- 3.6 Regionally, there is expenditure on Regional partnerships and in particular, contribution to local projects. Some Regions also have base expenditure and commitments on facility upkeep.
- 3.7 There are two types of expenditure: planned and opportunistic. Planned expenditure will include production of leaflets and contribution to large collaborative projects whereas opportunistic expenditure will tend to focus on short-term projects.
- 3.8 Regions would put in costed bids for the planned expenditure component as part of the corporate planning round. Priority-setting would be agreed by the function committee. There would be scope for combined inter-regional bids where a collaborative project extended across Regional boundaries.

- 3.9 This priority-setting should be set in a national framework whenever possible. For example, the national otter strategy comprises three management options: monitor/protect stronghold; monitor/encourage recolonisation; monitor as resources allow (Fig. 1). Bids for expenditure on otter related projects would need to reflect the overall strategy, with priorities determined by an "effort matching need" basis.
- 3.10 The opportunistic component of the GIA allocation could be based on simple rules reflecting anticipated need. The basis for rules could be "objective" (e.g. length of main river, number of recreation sites in use etc). A tabular summary of this approach for selected attributes is illustrated by Table 1.

#### 4. DIVIDING UP THE MONEY

- 4.1 The first stage for allocation would be identifying national and regional components. An indicative budget for national items would be established (say £100k) and the precise amount agreed as part of the corporate planning bidding.
- 4.2 The remaining budget would need to be allocated on the basis of planned promotion agreed at Regional level and by the FRCN Committee on a bid basis.
- 4.3 The opportunity component would represent a small proportion of the budget, simply because (i) priorities for planned expenditure nationally and regionally would account for most if not all the expenditure and (ii) local projects are likely to be relatively small in nature.
- 4.4 To reflect the contingency nature of the opportunity component, a small percentage (say 10%) of GIA would be allocated on the basis of rules along the lines of broad guidance in Table 1.
- 4.5 A rule for the opportunity component would need to be that it should be committed or spent by the end of the second quarter of the financial year. If not other projects which did not make the planned expenditure component bid could be taken off the shelf and funded.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The current allocation of GIA does not necessarily reflect the need to fulfil the Section 2(2) duty to promote conservation and recreation in a consistent fashion.
- 5.2 Until there is Executive Group approval for recharging other functions with respect to advisory services provided by recreation and conservation staff then GIA allocation will still not fulfil this need.
- 5.3 Promotion activities supported by GIA should be based on national and regional priorities. Funding priorities should comprise two main components: (i) national promotion, particularly dissemination of information through national publications and leaflets, and (ii) regional partnerships.

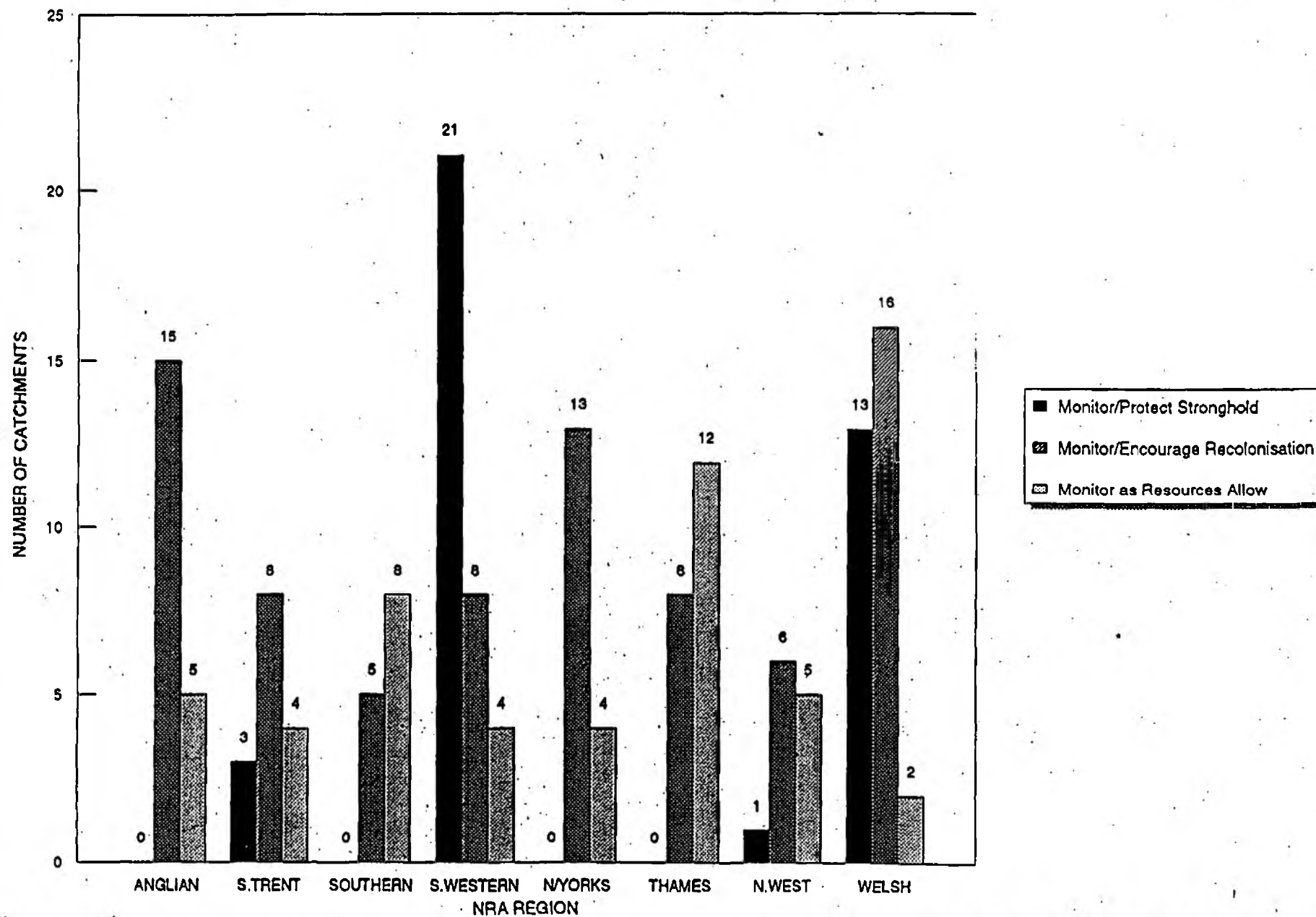
- 5.4 Both components should be based on costed bids and allocation agreed by the function committee or part of the corporate planning process and fed into regional bilaterals with the Directors of Operations and Finance.
- 5.5 In addition, a small contingency budget for opportunity (i.e. not planned) collaborative projects should be retained. Allocation could be made on anticipated need using objective rules (Table 1).
- 5.6 The advantage of this approach is that expenditure can be planned and that priority projects would be funded based on the availability of GLA i.e. resources would be targeted on actual need.
6. **RECOMMENDATION**
- 6.1 The committee is asked to note the contents of this paper, agree the principles involved and suggest a timetable for progressing the issue bearing in mind that the recharging item paper FRCN(95) 6 needs to be resolved first.

**TABLE 1. Regional percentage breakdown of five selected factors.  
Figures represent percentage of national total.**

ATTRIBUTE	A	S-T	S	SW	NY	T	NW	W
POPULATION	10.5	16.4	8.9	7.7	14.0	22.9	13.4	6.1
NUMBER OF SSSIs	10.2	17.6	9.4	11.6	4.9	7.1	7.0	32.2
AUTHORISED GROUNDWATER SUPPLY	10.1	14.3	25.4	7.5	6.2	30.4	4.8	1.3
WATER QUALITY CLASS F RIVERS	11.7	15.0	5.2	12.7	31.5	3.3	17.8	2.8
MAINTAINED FLOOD DEFENCES	19.8	15.2	7.2	8.0	11.5	16.3	15.6	6.5
AVERAGE %	12.5	15.7	11.2	9.5	13.6	16.0	11.7	9.8

FIGURE 1

OTTER STRATEGY  
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT CATEGORIES



## **Recreation & Conservation Market Testing**

### **ACTIVITY: LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The original task proposed for market testing was 'landscaping.' This was found to be impossible to define separately from the other tasks being reviewed under conservation and recreation and was replaced by landscape assessment. A definition of landscape assessment is given below:
- 1.2 The term landscape assessment is a broad term which embraces all the various ways of looking at, describing, classifying and evaluating landscape. It is used for a number of purposes, the most important being to identify landscape character and make proposals for its conservation, management and enhancement and therefore provides baseline data to input into existing proposals and to aid the generation of new ones.
- 1.3 We tend to take for granted many features of the surroundings in which we live, but it is often these elements of the landscape which give our part of the country, its particular, often highly valuable, character. Variation in character is a particular feature of the British landscape and maintaining this diversity is one of the main aims of landscape conservation and management.
- 1.4 Landscape assessment is a practical tool which enables landscape to be described and evaluated and facilitates the identification of appropriate management.

#### **2. Scope**

- 2.1 The basis for the activity is the Water Resources Act 1991 which entrusts the NRA with conservation responsibilities in respect of landscape wildlife and natural beauty, geological and physiographical features, buildings and other objects of archaeological, architectural or historic interest.
- 2.2 Under Section 16 of the Water Resources Act the NRA must further conservation in respect of proposals relating to its functions and take into account the effects any proposals would have on the beauty and amenity of any rural or urban area. The Code of Practice on Conservation Access and Recreation also sets out clear obligations regarding landscape matters.
- 2.3 Landscape assessment can facilitate policy making, catchment planning, the development and prioritisation of environmental enhancement schemes and the environmental assessment of capital schemes. It is a vital tool in the process of restoration and enhancement of impoverished river landscapes.

### **3. Profile of the Current Service**

- 3.1 Research undertaken by the Market Testing Team indicates that landscape assessment is a relatively new area of work for the NRA. A national methodology for river landscape assessment was developed by the NRA in 1992 and published in 1993, as Conservation Technical Handbook No 2.
- 3.2 The work undertaken within the Regions varies according to the resources available each year. Five of the eight Regions have devoted small but measurable resources to this activity over the last few years. It was found that virtually all the work being undertaken was contracted out in some form, generally utilising landscape consultants who were briefed and monitored by appropriate NRA staff. These staff are fulfilling an intelligent client role when co-ordinating and managing outside consultants, but when the assessment is completed it is the role of the NRA staff, to utilize, disseminate, advise, and interpret the "product" through synergies with other key areas of NRA work such as catchment planning, capital schemes (all functions) and environmental enhancement.
- 3.3 Resourcing for this activity is currently inconsistent across the NRA, not all Regions are providing the resources necessary to achieve a minimal landscape assessment programme and national targets do not exist to improve this situation. However most or all Regions recognise the importance of obtaining greater knowledge of river landscapes in order to help plan and prioritise the NRA's work.

### **4. Current Costs**

- 4.1 Nationally this area of work is small, and is being delivered by a total of approximately 2 FTE's, consisting of a number of individuals usually investing a small proportion of their time. The approximate costs in 1994/95 were:

	<u>£000's</u>
Staff	43
Consultants & Hired & Contracted Services	91
Overheads	32
	—
	166
	—

- 4.2 Three Regions were unable to identify landscape assessment as a discrete activity and the costs identified overall are less than 5% of the expenditure in conservation. In view of the small sums involved it is unlikely that significant savings could be made by changing the method of service delivery.



## **5. Service Required**

- 5.1 It is clear that landscape assessment is a developing area of work which is gaining in importance as the emphasis on environmental quality is increased. Catchment Planning and Planning Liaison can both benefit from reliable baseline information in this area in order to achieve competent policies and responses roles which are becoming increasingly important as both activities develop. There are other important synergies between the production and use of river landscape assessments and other NRA work; for example work to assess and enhance wildlife habitats, to survey and improve recreational and heritage features and also to design and manage NRA assets such as flood defence, navigation and water resources facilities. In fact landscape assessment is intended to provide an indication of the sensitivity of existing sites to change as well as identifying the need and opportunity for improvements for all types of land and water usage or function.
- 5.2 Through the use of landscape assessment techniques NRA staff are enabled to ensure that sensitive landscapes are conserved while also taking the opportunities that are presented to develop multi-functional enhancements.
- 5.3 In addition the need for baseline information on landscape quality is likely to increase as a result of the formation of the Environment Agency (due to the diversification into waste management) and due to the pressure and interest from outside organisations, such as local authorities who have become increasingly interested in properly planned and prioritised programmes of river restoration. The Countryside Commission is another organisation currently recommending this work to the NRA through its Draft Advice to the National Rivers Authority (May 1995) - in which it demonstrates the need for landscape assessment and the value of this work to the NRA.

## **6. Practice Elsewhere**

- 6.1 Investigations on practice elsewhere have revealed that landscape assessment is being increasingly utilised by national and local organisations, particularly in the public sector to provide baseline information to plan and prioritise their business. For instance the Forestry Authority and the Countryside Commission utilise it as a tool to identify the scope and need for major projects such as the National Forest, Community Forests and for the production of AONB Management Plans.
- 6.2 No external organisations undertake catchment wide river landscape assessments. Some do incorporate high level landscape assessment at an insufficient level of detail for direct NRA use. Others look at very localised sections of watercourse, usually in order to undertake environmental enhancement. For instance many local authorities are also producing landscape assessments to guide planning policies and to produce environmental enhancement ideas on a logical basis. It was not possible to establish the extent of work contracted out but in many instances freelance staff or consultants are bought-in to undertake the landscape assessment, leaving specialist in-house staff to perform the intelligent client role and then utilise the results.

**7. Conclusions and Recommendation**

- This is a developing area of work where the bulk of the service is contracted out. In-house staff perform an intelligent client role and are needed to ensure value for money is obtained, while at the same time utilising the products widely throughout the organisation. The synergies derived from the use of in-house staff in an intelligent client role are important to achieve maximum benefit from the resources devoted to the work. Before carrying out our own Landscape Assessments, existing sources of such information should be explored, and opportunities for co-operation investigated.
- The resources devoted nationally are very small and it is unlikely that savings could be achieved by changing the method of service delivery. Cost-effectiveness of the current external delivery should be explored as for Conservation Operational Advice.
- In due course a national review of the benefits deriving from completed landscape assessments should be carried out, with results disseminated (1997/98).

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES (Project Executive - Les Jones)

**ACTIVITIES:** Conservation Operational Advice, Conservation Collaborative Projects, Recreation Collaborative Projects, and Landscape Assessment.

Introduction and Background

1. In terms of resources, Conservation and Recreation are small functions. Both, particularly conservation, have a very strong reactive role, and they were both affected by the splitting of already small teams into Areas. Consequently neither function has undergone an 'Activity Review' yet, and there has so far been limited strategic progress, although it is increasing. The project team has therefore had to seek raw 'data' from providers and users; the picture is of small numbers of very busy staff, using consultants to a substantial extent.
2. In total these activities involve some 45 FTEs spread over 34 Area and Regional units. For Conservation Operational Advice, some £0.9m is expended on in-house contributions, and £1.3m externally. Collaborative projects for 1994/95 cost some £7.4m, towards which the NRA contribution was about £3m. Landscape Assessment is estimated to cost £0.24m p.a. at present.
3. Conservation and Recreation activities are over-arching ones, and are very important to the NRA's credibility; it is essential that we are able to make judgements through an active and expert client role. Useful measures of service output have not yet been developed so objective comparisons between Regions or between methods of delivery are not possible. Development and application of consistent standards offer the only way of providing a focused service which allows for prioritisation in meeting new workloads. The changes in role in the Environment Agency are not yet clear; certainly there will be some increase in workload to be absorbed, which makes this need an urgent one.

Synergies

4. Important synergies exist both within Recreation and Conservation, and between them and other functions. With hindsight, this exercise should have tackled the whole of Conservation at one go; but our conclusions are believed to be robust.
5. Our Conservation experts actually need to understand all functions of the water environment, to provide balanced and practical judgements or advice to their customers within the NRA.

**A. CONSERVATION OPERATIONAL ADVICE**

Service Required

6. Operational advice supporting NRA revenue activities and capital schemes currently costs some £2.2m p.a., of which £1.3m is externally purchased. About 30 FTEs are committed, over the 26 Areas, although if responses to external proposals and planning issues were included, the numbers would be higher. The impression from most Regions is of staff who are very busy, and of work often put to consultants, or not done, simply because the in-house resources can't cover it. The work is paid for by the other functions - Flood Defence etc.
7. Internal customers are clear about their need for expert advice, but the quality of advice given or needed is not clear, and nor is there consistency between Regions in quality of advice provided. Without explicit standards, the NRA will continue to find it difficult to prioritise work. It is clear that Conservation staff are not only acting as advisers, but are also internal regulators performing an audit role.
8. Under the Environment Agency, the water-related advice needed may not change, but the extent of increased support for pollution control is unclear and needs clarification.

Practice Elsewhere

9. Both 'customers' and providers have been investigated. Other customers generally regard in-house departments as necessary to deal with day-to-day guidance, to respond to queries, to carry out some casework and to act as intelligent client for managing contracts.

10. An external provider market does exist, but there are limitations in terms of geography, and of ability to span multi-functional water-environment tasks.

#### Options

11. Day-to-day enquiries and guidance on ongoing maintenance activities require local knowledge and broad understanding of the water environment; these appear best done in-house for continuity and availability reasons.
12. For advice on projects, we considered a wide range from fully in-house to fully external provision. Our conclusion is that an in-house "intelligent client" capability is essential, and that a "mixed economy" approach, which already exists, is probably best value for money, but cost and quality data are currently inadequate for judging the right balance.

#### Efficiency Options

13. Without standards and a sense of the quality of advice required, it is not practicable to assess and compare efficiency; we consider that
- (i) the likely impact on Conservation workload of the Environment Agency duties should be clarified (by Nov 95).
  - (ii) the base-load of intelligent client work in Regions and Areas needs clarification, with national guidance, by January 1996.
  - (iii) a programme of Post Project Appraisals needs to be planned, with conclusions feeding into quality requirements (programme by Mar.96: lessons by Oct. 96).
  - (iv) a training day (or alternative approach) for Conservation staff is needed to discuss standards and practices, with a view to achieving more explicit and consistent standards across the country (by March 96).
  - (v) detailed use of consultants should be reviewed to establish availability, costs and competences to assist selection of most appropriate tasks and levels for external work (by June 96)
  - (vi) these initiatives should allow an informed Activity Review of the function during 1997/98.

#### **B. COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS**

14. Collaborative projects in Recreation and Conservation have many similar characteristics although their detailed implementations vary (refer to detailed papers).

#### Service Required

15. These activities are a relatively 'easy' way for the NRA to ensure it achieves its duties to promote and enhance Recreation/ Conservation potential of inland and coastal waters and associated land.
16. 1994/95 activities are summarised by:

	Recreation	Conservation
FTE's	5	6
No. of collaborative projects	94	179
Total cost of collaborative projects	£3.5m	£3.9m
NRA contribution	£768k (22%)	£2.3m (59%)

17. The levels of service provided vary between regions but they are currently being limited by funding, not need. There is a need to clarify the quality and consistency of approach to collaboration. We cannot fully appraise the benefits from most collaborative schemes in corporate terms, and have no mechanism for deciding whether current expenditure levels are appropriate ones.
18. There is a need to consider whether the Environment Act 1995 imposes any change to the existing status or potential scale of collaborative R&C schemes.

### Practice Elsewhere

19. There is no significant market for these small activities. The findings identified 2 approaches to collaboration; grants which have little control or involvement, or discretionary fund contributions and involvement. Neither could provide evidence of a sound mechanism for long-term planning and prioritisation nor guidance on how best to approach collaboration to ensure propriety and to maximise benefits.

### Options

20. Options were considered for arranging and influencing collaborative projects. The typically very small amount of time involved in this activity means it is difficult to hand over efficiently to other agents; such projects provide not only useful scheme development for the community and the environment, but also local involvement and good public relations for the NRA.

### Efficiency Options

21. To improve focus and confidence in achievement of best-value results, we consider that the arrangement of collaborative projects for R&C should remain core activities. The procedures for arranging collaborative projects should remain simple and locally-driven but need more coherence.
- (i) Clarification should be produced, of any legal impact of the Environment Act 1995 on scope for collaborative projects (by January 96.)
  - (ii) The NRA should consider what benefits are achieved from different levels of expenditure on collaborative projects. (response by March 96)
  - (iii) There should be some standardised selection and prioritising criteria produced nationally to help establish or demonstrate better value for money. (by February 96)
  - (iv) The introduction and development of post-project appraisal should be implemented and a lessons-learnt feedback mechanism adopted. (by April 96)
  - (v) We should consider introducing guidelines to staff to maximise the public relations and environmental benefits from all projects. (by March 96)

### C. LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

22. Landscape assessment is a relatively new activity for the NRA. Its purpose is to assemble information about the river environment in anticipation of issues arising. At present, it involves a tiny human resource nationally, since most actual survey work is contracted out.
23. Collection of data should make use of information held locally by other bodies. The Countryside Commission advises the NRA to consider landscape assessment in/for our Catchment Management Plans. It is too early to identify the "service required", but again the disparity between Regions is apparent. A national review of the benefits of (having carried out) landscape assessments would be useful in due course and should be undertaken during 1997/98.
24. There are competent contractors to undertake assessments. Subject to 13(v) above, external provision with NRA quality management, is realistic.
25. Head of FRCN should be asked to address the wider aspects of Landscape Architecture as a "function"; there are currently 13 staff who have skills which could be harnessed in this area.

### Management Driver/Route Map

26. The key steps and timescales are given above for each activity, under "Efficiency Options". The Head of FRCN should be asked, through groups of experts, to address the tasks suggested to the timescales indicated.

### Consultation with Trades Union

27. The Regional NJSC representative has been fully briefed on the various investigations and findings.

## APPENDIX 1

## **PROJECT BOARD**

L D Jones	Project Executive
B Buckley	(Regional General Manager, Severn-Trent)
D Jordan	(Head of FRCN, then Area Manager, Southern Region)
A Wood	(Head of FRCN)
R Gall	(Finance, Head Office)
P Lacey	RRAC Chairman, Wessex Region
S Miles	Market Testing Unit
G Phillips	Project Manager, Thames Region

## **PROJECT TEAM:**

G W Phillips	Regional Technical Manager, Thames Region
J Hogger	Planning Services Manager, Northumbria & Yorkshire Region
R Howell	Conservation & Recreation Officer, Welsh Region
M Pettifor	Area Planning Manager, Anglian Region
C Marsh	Recreation Officer, Severn-Trent Region
R Copas	Landscape Architect, Thames Region
J Victory	Financial Planner, Head Office, Bristol
F Bayley	Conservation Officer, Thames Region
S Miles	Market Testing Unit

**APPENDIX 2**



## MARKET TESTING OF RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

ACTIVITIES, 1995/96

### Landscape Assessment

Survey and evaluation of existing river landscapes as a basis for guidance on or preparation of NRA operational schemes or plans.

[Reactive work, eg. to contribute to EIA, not included here]

### Conservation - Operational Advice

The input of conservation [taken to include nature conservation/ecology, landscape, heritage and archaeological] contributions to NRA capital schemes or operating schemes or maintenance activities (i.e. where the NRA is the developer or operating authority). These should always be other-function led, eg. Flood Defence, Water Resources. Contributions to include initial input, consultation with other environmental organisations, assessment of environmental impact, ongoing advice and implementation arrangements (including design) and appropriate quality assurance measures and monitoring during or after the scheme.

### Conservation Promotion

The promotion of conservation through (Conservation budget) collaborative projects with external organisations, bodies or individuals.

[i.e. only where the contribution comes from the Conservation budget]

### Recreation Promotion

The promotion of recreation through (Recreation budget) collaborative projects with external organisations, bodies or individuals.

[i.e. only where the contribution comes from the Recreation budget]

GWP

11.4.95 - final

4pm

