

Evaluation of the GEES Subject Centre's Project on the Open Release of Educational Materials in the Disciplines

Interim Report

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Introduction

The final deliverables for the evaluation of the GEES Subject Centre's OER projects will be:

- A case study of the GEES Subject Centre on the open release of educational materials in the disciplines (to include set-up processes, day-to-day running and quality assurance); and
- A report on the benefits and constraints of a discipline-based, thematic project and outputs.

This interim report brings together information from a variety of sources to produce the first half of the case study and a bullet-point draft report on the benefits and constraints of the project.

The JISC Programme

"Between April 2009 and April 2010, JISC and the HE Academy are supporting pilot projects and activities that support the open release of learning resources; for free use and repurposing worldwide. This pilot programme is intended to inform a larger programme covering a significant portion of the HE Sector."

Projects have been funded under three strands: individual, institutional and subject-based (through the HE Academy Subject Centres).

"Projects are expected to make a significant amount of existing learning resources freely available online, licensed in such away to enable them to be used and repurposed worldwide.

It is expected that funded projects will demonstrate a long term commitment to the release of OER resources. Projects are working towards the sustainability of long term open resources release via the adoption of appropriate business models to support this. Supporting actions may include modifications to institutional policies and processes, with the aim of making open resources release an expected part of the educational resources creation cycle.

As a part of this programme, support and advice on all aspects of open educational resource release will be offered. This will include guidance and advice from existing JISC services and other organisations and will cover issues around licensing, intellectual property rights, technical aspects such as the use of standards and metadata, and resource discovery. Programme support will benefit all of those interested in OER release, not just funded projects."

(JISC Website: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/oer.aspx>)

Overview of the GEES OER Project

The HE Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences (GEES) successfully bid for a project under the subject-based strand of the OER programme. The Subject Centre chose to take a thematic approach to the project and to focus the resources on the teaching and learning of climate change. The 'C-Change' project (<http://c-changeproject.org.uk/>) involves six partner departments/schools:

University of Southampton: School of Ocean and Earth Science (Dr Jim Andrews). Resources on climate change, both from a contemporary and palaeoclimate perspective:

- Level 1: 42 lectures (ppt/pdf) + video clips and 2 IT delivered practicals with Google Earth images, online quizzes, computer & practicals. Java models of Earth system regulation
- Level 2: 2 lectures (ppt/pdf format)
- Level 3: 27 lectures, 7 practicals
- Level M: 52 lectures, 8 sets of notes, 2 worksheets, 1 problem sheet, 6 practicals with extensive on-line support, 2 videos

University of Exeter: Department of Geography (Dr Richard Jones). Resources on climate change: past variability and future response

- Level 2: video, photos, data analysis, reading lists, data sets
- Level 3: 12 lectures (ppt), reading lists, practical assessment
- Level M: ice core data, photos movies, historical images, interviews

Keele University: School of Physical and Geographical Sciences (Dr Zoe Robinson). The teaching resources on offer have been collated under different climate/sustainability themes, coming from a wide range of modules (Geography, Physical Geography, Human Geography, Applied Environmental Sciences, Earth System Science and Geology).

- Level 1: 34 lectures (ppt) + reading lists and accompanying in-class activities/assessments
- Level 2: 9 lectures (ppt) + reading lists and accompanying in-class activities/assessments
- Level 3: 20 lectures (ppt) + reading lists and accompanying in-class activities/ practical activities/assessments

Open University: Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences (Drs Sandy Smith & Martin Reynolds). The exact materials repurposed by this partner will be determined by gaps in subject coverage and whether it is desirable to focus on materials containing certain resource types so as to identify practice not explored by other partners. This latter exercise might yield less volume of materials than anticipated from this WP but because it explores an area of relicensing work that is particularly challenging, is considered highly desirable.

- Level 1: Working with our environment: technology for a sustainable future; Understanding the weather; Environmental openings (scientific and technological aspects)
- Level 2: Science in context: climate change; Earth's physical resources: origin, use and environmental impact; International development: challenges for a world in transition; Environment; Environmental control and public health; Understanding systems: making sense of complexity
- Level 3: Managing complexity; Innovation: designing for a sustainable future; Earth in crisis: environmental policy in an international context; The environmental web
- Level M: Environmental responsibility: ethics, policy and action; Environmental decision making: a systems approach; Enterprise and the environment

University of Wales, Newport: Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (Prof Simon Haslett). The teaching materials on offer cover two packages, one on Global Environmental Change (intermediate) and the other on Quaternary Palaeoclimatology and Stratigraphy (Honours level).

- Level 2: Lecture-based, laboratory and field-based material, including handbook, 15 lectures (ppt), accompanying reading lists, handouts, and assessment activities

- Level 3: Lecture-based, laboratory, seminar and field-based material, including handbook, 15 lectures (ppt), accompanying reading lists, handouts and assessment activities

University of Liverpool: Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences (Dr Alan Boyle). The following 4 (out of an original 21) modules from the UK Earth Science Courseware Consortium (UKESCC) materials (materials developed under the Teaching and learning technology project in the 1990s) have been identified for repurposing. This mini pilot will explore 2 approaches to repurpose assets and materials into Xerte from in demand, but not readily accessible, resources originally created in Adobe Authorware.

- Level 1: Compass clinometer module (originally created at Derby)
- Level 2: Structural geology module (originally created at St Andrews)
- Level 1: Optical mineralogy module (originally created at Keele)
- Level 1: Basic skills for earth sciences module (originally created at OU)

The broad aims for the project are to:

- Encourage cultural change towards open licensing of educational resources within the GEES disciplines;
- Build capacity for continued release of OER in the GEES disciplines beyond the funded life of the project;
- Enhance the profile of the theme climate change and sustainability within both GEES and the broader stakeholder community;
- Enhance the profile of UK HE GEES learning and teaching both nationally and internationally.

Purpose of and Audience for Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation strategy for "C-change in GEES" is to capture the story of the project in a form that is meaningful to the key stakeholders and provides useful information for future projects. The evaluation is being conducted as a qualitative, formative study alongside the C-change project. Hence, the evaluator does not sit outside the project as an independent observer but has, necessarily, become part of the process. In particular, the project evaluation has an influence on dissemination and sustainability by encouraging partners to reflect and through awareness raising with key stakeholders.

The audience for the overall evaluation of the C-Change project includes the GEES Subject Centre and GEES communities, the HE Academy, JISC, and individuals and institutions interested in OER. This interim report is targeted at the GEES Subject Centre as a record of the project's progress to date.

Evidence

The data which inform this evaluation have been gathered through a variety of media:

- Discussions with the GEES Subject Centre Associate Director, Dr Yolande Knight;
- Structured telephone interviews* with personnel involved in the bidding and set-up phase:
 - Project Manager (& GEES Subject Centre C&IT Manager): Mike Sanders
 - Project Adviser
 - 2 x Project Partners
 - Professional Body
 - GEES community (colleague interested in the project but not a formal partner)
- Review of the C-Change blog;
- Review of emails with the GEES community during the bidding phase;
- Poster presentation and discussion at the 2009 Geological Society of America annual meeting in Portland, Oregon;
- 2 x 6-weekly informal monitoring reports from the Project Co-ordinator, Ed Bremner.

*The interview with the Project Manager enabled the evaluator to establish the details of the background to the Subject Centre's bid. Interviews with other stakeholders were guaranteed confidential and asked for their perceptions of the C-Change project (see Appendix 1 for interview questions).

A case study of the GEES Subject Centre on the open release of educational materials in the disciplines: December 2008-December 2009

Bidding Phase

In December 2008 JISC and the HE Academy announced a call for institutional, individual and subject-based projects to pilot to the open release of educational resources. Within four days of the announcement, the GEES Subject Centre circulated an email to their discipline communities. This consultation approach was considered important in order ensure ownership, to raise awareness and invite contributions. Many of the initial responses were offers of resources which were already open access. However, in the New Year, it was stated that the purpose of the programme was to turn 'closed' materials into open educational resources (OER). Despite this slight change of approach, the initial consultation phase had been useful as a means of getting a sense of the landscape for OER in the GEES disciplines.

The scale of the programme is the largest that the GEES Subject Centre has undertaken to date. There were several key issues to consider including maintaining credibility with the discipline communities, ensuring that the resources were of high enough quality and, most significantly, the legal aspect of the project. However, it was felt that OER is likely to become bigger in the future and that it would be good for the Subject Centre and an opportunity for the disciplines to become involved from the beginning. Colleagues interviewed as part of this evaluation indicated the following strengths of the GEES Subject Centre that put it in a strong position to bid for and manage the project:

- *"GEES has a lot of experience in project management"*
- *"Drawing on existing networks within the GEES disciplines"*
- *"the GEES Subject Centre is good at communicating with people in a variety of different ways"*
- *"There is a familiarity of working with each other so relationships are quick to develop."*
- *"The infrastructure that the Subject Centre provides makes it easier for colleagues in departments take on the tasks"*

Early on, the Subject Centre felt that it would be effective to structure resources around a coherent theme. The idea of climate change was suggested to the communities and readily taken up as a broad topic which encompasses the spectrum of the GEES disciplines from social / human issues to environmental and geological science. A small number of dissenters felt that the topic would exclude colleagues / resources in other areas. However, the strengths of this approach (a focused project producing a coherent set of resources) were particularly important for this pilot programme which seeks to test issues of copyright clearance for the educational materials to an open repository.

After the restated call to the communities in January 2009, five individuals / departments came forward with a commitment to be partners in the project. One department who had expressed an interest early on decided not to get involved. Although they agreed with the principle of OER, the legal and time-consuming issues of open release dissuaded them from committing as a project partner. Another aspect of the project that had deterred some colleagues was the need to provide matched funding to support the full economic cost (FEC). This meant that there was little financial incentive to get involved. Those who did commit to the project found other motivations, for example, one partner noted that it was an investment in outreach and self-promotion for the University. A sixth partner was identified by chance during a routine visit from the GEES Subject Centre to one of their own small-scale project holders, Prof Simon Haslett at Newport. The majority of the partners would be repurposing their own resources for the project, with Dr Alan Boyle at Liverpool facilitating the transposing of four computer-aided learning modules from Authorware to the more accessible Xerte platform.

Based on expressions of interest the Subject Centre was confident that the theme was a good one that would provide relevant learning resources to the communities even if the practicalities of Open release and the short timescale were a concern.

Once the partners had been identified and selected resources, the GEES Subject Centre took on the majority of the work to write the bid with support from project advisors, Neil Witt and Brian Chalkley (University of Plymouth). Neil's advice was particularly useful as he had previous experience of writing and reviewing bids for JISC funding. He helped in drafting the bid as a mentoring process to get Mike Sanders (the project manager) up to speed; in addition he had been doing a lot of work on repositories through another JISC-funded project, so could offer the UPlace repository to the GEES project as matched funding .

April – July 2009

The deadline for bid submission was 4th March 2009 and successful projects were announced a month later. The schedule for project completion was outlined in the success confirmation email:

- 29th May 2009 - Draft Project Plan
- 30th June 2009 - Final Project Plan and budget
- 31st July 2009 - Consortium agreement
- 9th November 2009 - Interim project report and budget
- 1st March 2010 - Draft Final Report
- 26th April 2010 - Final Report, Completion Report and Budget

The email also noted some areas where the bid needed to be refined. Two aspects took up most of the time: costing and legal issues.

The project was required to identify matched funding from the host and partner institutions. Sorting out the matched funding on such a large scale was a new process to Mike and the GEES Subject Centre. The University of Plymouth (the Subject Centre's host institution) had a formula to calculate full economic costing (FEC) for staff time. However, the formula was different at different institutions and so it took some time to get the information from the six partners. This was something that all Subject Centre OER projects struggled with. HEFCE ran a support event about this which was useful in outlining the principles though did not provide the details of how to go about it. Mike talked with the University of Plymouth Research & Enterprise team as well as Neil Witt to seek advice.

Putting together the consortium agreement was an issue that only subject-based projects had to deal with. Individual and institutional projects generally only involved one institution. The legal aspects of putting together the consortium agreement took a lot of time. The GEES Subject Centre had been fairly prescriptive to the community (in terms of theme / types of resources) in order to constrain the number of consortium partners. Other Subject Centres, e.g. Materials, Economics, Physical Sciences) had upwards of 14 partners and had to get agreements from all these institutions. GEES was the only Subject Centre to submit the agreement on time at the end of July. Initially Mike drafted an agreement in plain English which the partners' legal people didn't like, so he went back to the JISC template which they were happier with. Exeter was the linchpin in the process, the legal person there was really helpful. Fortunately the other partners' legal people agreed with Exeter's approach which helped to expedite the process.

After the GEES Subject Centre had submitted their agreement the deadline was extended and someone brought in to provide support. Although an agreement was produced which was satisfactory to all the partners, it might have been stronger if GEES had had access to the same support the other Subject Centres received (i.e. if the support had been provided sooner). The whole process took a lot of time (by mid-October some Subject Centres still hadn't finalised their agreements).

Whilst these two big issues were being dealt with, recruitment of staff, steering group meetings etc. were also happening. A problem for all short-term projects is the time taken for recruitment: paperwork & HR processes always slows things down (even for externally funded projects with the VC's consent). The flexibility in the Subject Centre meant Mike's time could be freed to cover the project management role before a full-time member of staff was in place.

In May the project name (C-Change) and website was launched at <http://www.c-changeproject.org.uk>

July – December 2009

In July and August the project partners began looking at their modules for repurposing and the Subject Centre devised the evaluation strategy for the project together with the external evaluator, Helen King. In September the Subject Centre ran a session on IPR for the C-Change partners (four were able to attend), hosted by the OU and facilitated by Naomi Korn by Skype from London. The partners present agreed to use the Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 2.0 UK: England & Wales or (BY-NC-SA) license. Later, at a JISC OER IPR meeting in October, most of the other projects agreed with the C-change choice of using this license.

The project stepped up a gear in October with the two new members of staff commencing work: Ed Bremner (Co-ordinator) and Mark Treagust (Learning Technologist). Ed's role was to work with the partners to help them establish methods and workflows that they will be able to use to clear the 3rd party copyright included in their resources. Mark was to take the Open Resources created by the partners and upload them and/or their metadata to JORUM (the online repository provided by JISC).

By early November the project was progressing well and according to schedule. However there was some concern about the tightness of the targets and milestones and whether the partners would be able to undertake their copyright clearance and re-purposing within the proposed timescale without some slippage. This issue might have been eased if the staff members had been in place earlier, however, it is unlikely that the partners would have been in a position to begin working on their materials before the start of the new academic year. So it's hard to evaluate whether early staff appointments at the Subject Centre would have made any difference to the partners meeting their targets.

By the end of December the project was well underway and five of the project partners were all active with their repurposing tasks (the sixth intended to have a research assistant in place by January). Some had an early start with the appointment of research assistants, post-docs or PhD students to support the work. The major task for the project co-ordinator at this stage was dealing with issues of copyright clearance particularly for illustrations and diagrams in journals and, perhaps uniquely for GEES, maps. Discussions with the Ordnance Survey (OS) and correspondence with various publishers were not successful. The original plan was for all re-purposing and copyright clearance work to be finished by the end of the year and for the repository work to be undertaken in January / February. By December the project was having to consider making a decision whether to continue investing time and effort in securing clearance from publishers or whether to seek alternatives (e.g. redrawing diagrams).

A variety of opportunities have arisen that benefit the C-Change project:

- In July 2009 the University of Southampton announced that materials in their EdShare repository could be assigned open access if the authors wish;
- The SCORE (Support Centre for Open Resources in Education) project at the Open University builds on the OpenLearn project and will extend the use of OER to help support other programmes such as the HEA/JISC OER programme. The programme aims to produce a further 3,600 hours of OER content including 75 hours of material on climate change;
- Considerable media coverage of OER in general;
- Dissemination of C-Change project at the Scottish Universities' and Colleges event on ESD;
- In December 2009, the British Geological Survey (BGS) announced their Open Geoscience resource (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/OpenGeoscience/>).

A sleeping partner on the bid noted that there had not been any correspondence from the project with updates on progress. At the end of October, a forum page was added to the website to encourage discussion about OER and pedagogy across the broader GEES community. An email was sent out to advertise the forum and it was also noted on the Subject Centre's regular email newsletter. To date, 22nd December, there have been no contributions to the forum from outside the core project team.

GEES Subject Centre: Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities and Aspirations

The evaluation interviews and review of the blog identified the strengths, constraints, opportunities and aspirations within the GEES Subject Centre in taking forward this OER project.

Strengths:

- The Subject Centre had nine years of project management experience to draw from and a professional and flexible team. The inter-changeability of the staff was a useful strength as everyone was able to work together to support the (unfunded) bidding phase. The strong infrastructure provided by the Subject Centre made it easier for colleagues in departments to take on the tasks: i.e. it was easy to get involved with the project as GEES did the major work on writing the bid. Mike Sanders, in particular, was commended for his hard work both at the bidding stage and in establishing the consortium agreement.
- The team knew the GEES community well and were aware of the need to support / protect it in running with this difficult agenda. The Subject Centre drew on the way it had worked in the past and were open and transparent with the GEES community from the beginning. The good relationship with the GEES community meant that it was able to draw on existing networks and readily identify colleagues who were interested in working on the project. This meant that a good mix of institutions was involved and the familiarity of working together enabled relationships to develop quickly.
- The choice of theme allowed for connections to be made with other aspects of the Subject Centre's work. For example, a GEES-funded small-scale project produced an online resource on climate change education using Google Earth.

Constraints

- Dealing with the legal aspects was new to the Subject Centre and there was no specialism within the team.
- Learning how to set out the matched funding was also a new experience which took time to get up to speed with.

Opportunities

- This project provided an opportunity for the Subject Centre to get involved with a major new initiative and to raise awareness of its work on a national and international scale.
- Collaboration with colleagues at the University of Plymouth (academic and administrative staff) was more involved than previous initiatives, hence allowing a stronger relationship to be developed with the host institution. If there's further funding UoP will be well-placed for putting in a bid, so this project has been good for GEES's relationships with its host institution.
- If this project is done well then there could be more opportunities for further funding.

Aspirations

- The aspirations of the Subject Centre align with those of the project, which is to open up resources from subject areas beyond the climate change theme.

Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Monitoring of the project's progress is being undertaken by the project manager (Mike Sanders) and co-ordinator (Ed Bremner). Despite slow progress with respect to copyright clearance from publishers the project has been kept on track. Relationships with the partners are good, however, communication has been varied. Two have been good from the start, another two were slow to start but are now engaging, whilst the other two have been a little reticent so far. Relationships with the Subject Centre and its host institution have been good both on a practical and an organisation level. Support from JISC / HE Academy has been helpful. There has been surprisingly little engagement between staff working on OER projects in different Subject Centres beyond the occasional discussion at meetings. Despite the fact that they are all struggling with similar issues the sharing of problems / solutions has been less than expected on the jiscmail discussion lists.

The quality of the resources released by the partners is considered to have been already established through the institutions' internal and external quality assurance and accreditation processes. One concern raised through the copyright clearance process is that of maintaining the pedagogical quality of the materials should it be necessary to alter or remove illustrations if clearance cannot be obtained.

A draft report on the benefits and constraints of a discipline-based, thematic project and outputs

Benefits and Constraints for the Discipline-based Strand of the OER Programme

Benefits

- Cross-institution collaboration:
 - *“Opportunities to talk to other people in other institutions and find out what they are doing. For example the OU has a lot of experience with this type of activity; this is an excellent opportunity for us to benefit”.*
- Populate existing repositories:
 - *“Southampton put in an institutional bid which was not successful. This may have been because they already had the EdShare repository.. It’s all very well having an institutional repository but if there’s no support for putting materials in then it won’t be used. The subject-based strand provides the incentive for people to put resources into the existing repository.”*
- Public access to material (v PR for institution)
 - *If the ethos is to enhance public access to quality material then the subject approach, particularly with an applicable theme such as climate change is useful. For the institutional strand there is a conflict in that HEIs could jump on it as a big PR exercise and the pedagogy goes out the window. Subject Centres are slightly more immune to that but nonetheless there is an opportunity for partners to brand their contribution. The ‘greater good’ outcomes are more likely to be achieved from the subject-based approach.*
- Sense of community for those involved
- Potential for expansion
 - *“Also there’s the potential for it to be expanded on a global scale with contributions from e.g. USA and Australia because it’s about a theme, idea, topic rather than an institution.”*
- Impact on IPR policy / flexible licenses
 - *Southampton currently doesn’t have a written IPR policy.... If the aim of the project is to get institutions to think about these things then it’s had an impact at Southampton.*
 - *With institutional projects there is the danger that it is too specific to that HEI. Subject Centres look across HEIs and can develop a shared perspective. The process are necessarily more robust and transferable; and the content is released under a more flexible license.*
- Potential for multiple solutions to problems
 - *I would have thought the subject-based approach is preferable because it takes on board a number of institutions. An institutional-based project will take on the needs of that institution. The subject-based approach is more holistic, involving different ways of working and potentially multiple solutions to the problems.*
- Collaboration and sharing experience across Subject Centres
 - Tim Denning at MeDev project intends to undertake survey of institutional IPR policies.
 - Dec2009: Ed & Mike attended event hosted by HumBox at Southampton (LLAS). Opportunity to hear about other OER projects and Southampton’s EdShare.

Constraints

- Physical distance between Subject Centre hub and partners
- Less top-down motivation
 - *With HEIs it’s possible to lay down the law from the top-down to get the work done. Subject Centres don’t have this so have to take a more gentle, transparent approach. Subject Centres have fewer sticks than carrots.*
- Potential duplication of material
 - *The project may end up with more material than we need on particular topics. Not sure how much materials will be duplicated.*

Benefits and Constraints of a Thematic Project

Benefits

- Coherent focused resources
 - *The subject-based approach provides greater coherence and profile to the materials and the opportunity to produce a rich set of resources on a theme.*
 - *From the project there will be 360 credits worth of resources on a single topic, so potentially somebody could take this and have a degree's worth of material. Whereas with the institutional approach it is quite fragmented across various disciplines; so it's harder to see how it might be used in a consolidated way.*
 - *The outputs – hopefully end up with a coherent set of resources (albeit with different approaches from each department). This might make them more useable than if the project involved a whole range of different topics.*
- The climate change theme covers the broad spectrum of GEES and is highly current / relevant
 - Comments from North American colleagues indicate that the resources would be used internationally even though they are sourced in the UK.
 - *"the teaching material we want to post is generated by a cohort of internationally recognised scientists at the cutting edge of climate change research. It will contribute to our general outreach and the global dissemination of the science of climate change."*
 - *It has allowed the three disciplines to work more closely together. They could have taken, say, a methodological approach with a theme on fieldwork. The climate change theme is something that all three disciplines can contribute to. It was a wise strategic decision to go with this theme.*
- Small number of focused projects makes the overall project co-ordination more manageable.
 - *"If there was no theme it would be very unfocused, it would be difficult to coordinate lots of people doing lots of different things."*

Constraints

- Exclusive
 - *"GEES is more than just climate change."*
 - *"There may be some individuals / departments for whom it is not relevant. But the benefits outweigh the weaknesses."*
 - *Very one dimensional. Can be exclusive. Choosing the right theme is important and, in [a partner's] opinion, climate change is a good choice.*

Overall Benefits and Constraints of the Open Release of Educational Resources as Identified by the GEES Subject Centre's C-Change Project

Benefits

- Opportunity to enable social impact of research
- Meets institutional outreach and public engagement strategies
- Other general benefits of OER including raising the profile of the disciplines and the institutions involved.

Constraints

- Copyright release
- Sustainability / funding
 - *"It's a very good idea. It would be nice if it could be funded further. More substantial funding over an extended period, say 3 years, would be better for getting it embedded as a cultural activity within academia."*

Additional Notes to the GEES Subject Centre

Following my various conversations and observations during the project to date, I have the following suggestions / comments for the GEES Subject Centre (some or all of which you may be thinking about already):

- Bidding for funding: would it be useful to devise a rubric against which to judge / rationalise whether the GEES Subject Centre should bid for funds for new initiatives? It seems that, as with other smaller projects previously, the Subject Centre was initially reluctant to get involved due to the scale of work but then persuaded itself that it was a good thing. I feel there should be a stronger rationale and perhaps some means of structuring the decision-making process.
- The IPR / copyright outputs of the project are going to be very important. If colleagues are to be persuaded to open up their materials then they will need optimum support in this area.
- Case for OER: it would be helpful if the GEES Subject Centre could develop a clear case for OER in the disciplines to give support to champions trying to involve reticent colleagues (e.g. building on the 'Good Intentions' business cases).
- Future funding / sustainability: the climate change theme may be attractive to potential funders. It might be worthwhile beginning to explore possible future funding now (e.g. UNESCO) rather than just hoping JISC / HEFCE might produce the goods later.
- Community visibility: this relates to sustainability and I feel that more work should be done on this. The first email on the jisclist raising awareness of the forum was in mid-December. It might be worth keeping the OER project as a permanent item on the newsletter so it gets in / stays in people's minds. It's never too early to start advertising the launch event. How are the partners (e.g. professional bodies) being kept up to date?

Appendix 1: Telephone Interview Questions

Project Manager

1. Why did GEES want to bid?
2. You developed some ideas in-house and then presented them to the community. Wouldn't it have been easier just to decide the approach and cherry pick known partners? Why take the consultation approach?
3. Once you had received the formal expressions of interest how did you go about writing the bid? Were partners involved in this process? [NB this question was answered by email post-interview]
4. What, if anything, happened between the bid submission and success notice?
5. Describe the activities of the first month or so of the project: How did you get things going? What were the priorities?
6. How, if at all, did the approach during the bidding process support the initial phases of the project?
7. How, if at all, have you maintained contact with those individuals who expressed an interest but didn't become formal partners?
8. Thinking about the bidding process and the initial few months: What were the strengths of the Subject Centre;
9. and the process?
10. What constraints were encountered within the Subject Centre;
11. What opportunities became available to support the work? What opportunities might arise in the future as a result of this project?
12. What are your aspirations for the project, the consortium partners and the GEES community?
13. What do you think the benefits are of a discipline-based approach, compared with institutional or individual?
14. And what are the constraints?
15. Finally, you decided to have a theme for their project – what do you think are the benefits / constraints of this approach?
16. Any other comments?

Partner 1

1. Why did you / your department choose to become involved in the OER project?'
2. JISC decided to channel the subject strand of the OER programme through the Subject Centres. From your experience of working with GEES what do you think have been the strengths of this approach?
3. What were the constraints?
4. What opportunities have arisen?
5. Any other comments about the GEES Subject Centre's approach to the bidding or set-up phase of the project? [If all positive prompt for negative, and vice versa]
6. What do you think the benefits are of a discipline-based approach, compared with institutional or individual? And what are the constraints?
7. Finally, the Subject Centre decided to have a theme for their project – what do you think are the benefits of this approach?
8. And the constraints?
9. Any other comments?

Project Adviser

1. Why did you choose to get involved with the GEES Subject Centre's OER project?
2. In your experience, what have been the strengths of the GEES Subject Centre's way of working with the project?
3. And the weaknesses / constraints?
4. What opportunities have arisen for you as a result of being involved in the project?

5. What opportunities do you think might arise in the future?
6. What are your aspirations for the project and its resources?
7. And the constraints?
8. Finally, what do you think are the benefits of having the focus on a theme, in this case climate change?
9. And the constraints?
10. Any other comments

Sleeping Partner (Professional Body)

1. Why do you think it's important that the GEES Subject Centre and the GEES disciplines be involved in the
2. In your experience, what have been the strengths of the GEES Subject Centre for taking forward this project?
3. And the weaknesses / constraints?
4. What opportunities for the Subject Centre or GEES communities do you think might arise as a result of the project?
5. What are your aspirations for the project and its resources?
6. And the constraints?
7. Finally, what do you think are the benefits of having the focus on a theme, in this case climate change?
8. And the constraints?
9. Any other comments

GEES Community: expressed interest but not formal partner

1. Why do you think it's important that the GEES Subject Centre and the GEES disciplines be involved in the OER project?
2. In your experience, what have been the strengths of the GEES Subject Centre for taking forward this project?
3. And the weaknesses / constraints?
4. What opportunities for the Subject Centre or GEES communities do you think might arise as a result of the project?
5. What are your aspirations for the project and its resources?
6. What do you think are the benefits of a subject-based approach compared with institutional or individual?
7. And the constraints?
8. Finally, what do you think are the benefits of having the focus on a theme, in this case climate change?
9. And the constraints?
10. Any other comments

Project Partner 2

1. Why did you / your department choose to become involved in the OER project?
2. JISC decided to channel the subject strand of the OER programme through the Subject Centres. From your experience of working with GEES what do you think have been the strengths of this approach?
3. And the constraints?
4. What opportunities for yourself or the GEES communities do you think might arise as a result of the project?
5. What do you think the benefits are of a discipline-based approach, compared with institutional or individual? [Same response for thematic question]
6. And what are the constraints?
7. Have you come up against any IPR / copyright issues?
8. Other comments?