Terms of Reference

UK National Decade Committee for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

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Document Scope

This Terms of Reference provides guidance on the establishment, management and activity of the UK's National Decade Committee (UKNDC) for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and its relationship with Defra as its sponsoring organisation. It does not intend to duplicate information contained within other scientific codes of practice, or other related guidance, but aims to be specific to the Committee. Whilst the Committee is not a scientific advisory committee in the first instance, the Code of Practice has been developed in line with the Government Office for Science's Code of Practice on Scientific Advisory Committees[1] alongside operational guidelines for National Decade Committees developed by Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO)[2]. It will be reviewed annually and updated as required by the Committee, Defra and FCDO.

Introduction

The world has one ocean shared by all nations. The ocean produces about half the planet's oxygen, supports livelihoods worldwide, contains vast biological and mineral resources, and is critical to trade. But the ocean is under increasing pressure from climate change and environmental degradation. Gaps in our knowledge of the ocean inhibit our ability to understand fully these threats and achieve effective ocean stewardship in the 21st Century. The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 (the UN Ocean Decade) offers a unique opportunity to tackle these challenges through transformational ocean science for ocean action. Bringing together interdisciplinary professionals, ocean users and wider society, the UN Ocean Decade facilitates global communication and new collaborative partnerships to ensure that ocean science delivers greater benefits for both ocean ecosystems and for society.

Its vision is therefore "the science we need for the ocean we want"[3]. The UN Ocean Decade provides a convening framework for diverse stakeholders to co-design and co-deliver solution-oriented research needed for achieving a clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse ocean by 2030. Capacity development, ocean literacy and the removal of barriers to full gender, generational, and geographic diversity are essential elements of the UN Ocean Decade.

The UN Ocean Decade has a broad definition for ocean science; it encompasses natural and social science disciplines, local and indigenous knowledge; and includes the science-policy and science-innovation interfaces, as well as technology and infrastructure. The aim is to create new groupings of actors from natural, social science and humanity disciplines, business and industry, governments, UN entities, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs),

[1] Government Office for Science (2011). Scientific Advisory Committees: Code of Practice

[2] UNESCO-IOC (2021). National Decade Committees: Operational Guidelines

[3] UNESCO-IOC (2020). The Science we need for the ocean we want: the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

NGOs and civil society, educators, early career ocean professionals, ocean sports and recreation organisations, arts and cultural communities, and indigenous and local knowledge holders.

The UN Ocean Decade promotes the emergence of an extensive stakeholder engagement network including National Decade Committees, and regional and thematic stakeholder fora. All of these networks assemble around the UN Ocean Decade's coordination structures to co-design and co-deliver the innovative science we need to improve our understanding and management of a more sustainable ocean.

National Decade Committees are voluntary multi-agency and multi-stakeholder national platforms, which support the formal governance and coordination structures of the UN Ocean Decade which are described in the UN Ocean Decade Implementation Plan[4]. They play an important role in linking national action to the international Ocean Decade framework. Operational guidance on their role is provided by IOC-UNESCO and can be tailored according to the national context. In general, National Decade Committees are specifically tailored to coordinate a wide variety of stakeholders at the national level. They can facilitate the co-design and co-delivery of Decade Actions (at a national level) and facilitate access to benefits derived from the UN Ocean Decade such as data, products, science-policy advice and capacity development.

Role and purpose of Committee

The UK's National Decade Committee is a non-statutory expert group. Its aim is to inspire and enable a whole of UK society approach to meeting the societal outcomes of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030. This has both a UK and international dimension.

The Committee plays an important role in supporting coordination of the UK scientific community and other relevant UK stakeholder contributions ('ocean community') to the UN Ocean Decade, promoting and raising awareness of the UN Ocean Decade and its vision, societal outcomes and priorities across the UK to contribute to closing global knowledge gaps and informing policy decisions.

Its members will develop a strong knowledge of the UN Ocean Decade and become both focal points and champions of this international initiative for the UK's ocean community.

The key objectives of the Committee are to:

- **Inspire UK engagement with the UN Ocean Decade:** through raising awareness and championing the UN Ocean Decade across the UK and different sectors, and keeping the UK ocean community up to date and aware of opportunities within the UN Ocean Decade.

[4] UNESCO-IOC (2021). The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) Implementation Plan. UNESCO, Paris (IOC Ocean Decade Series, 20.)

- **Act as the national focal point for UK engagement with the UN Ocean Decade**: working as the central point of contact to coordinate and communicate updates to and from the IOC-UNESCO, including through support to the UK Delegation to the IOC, and build relationships with other National Decade Committees to promote international collaboration.

- **Communicate research and policy priorities outlined by the UN Ocean Decade**: support the UK ocean community, including policy and research funders, to respond to the UN Ocean Decade Vision 2030 priorities as part of our national contribution to the UN Ocean Decade, promoting and enabling delivery of transformational ocean science to meet its societal outcomes

Key activities

Inspire UK engagement with the UN Ocean Decade: through raising awareness and championing the UN Ocean Decade across the UK and different sectors, and keeping the UK ocean community up to date and aware of opportunities within the UN Ocean Decade.

- Implement national outreach and communications activity to raise the profile of the UN Ocean Decade and its societal outcomes, including the events, data, products, science-policy advice, capacity development and other outputs being developed under the UN Ocean Decade to increase access and engagement across different sectors in the UK

- Encourage and support the submission of UK led Decade Actions to be endorsed by the IOC-UNESCO Decade Coordination Unit as UN Ocean Decade Actions.

- Maintain and publish a record of the UK ocean community's engagement with UN Ocean Decade Actions to mitigate duplication and encourage collaboration in the UK and internationally.

- Raise awareness of, and engagement with, the Early Career Ocean Professionals Programme[5] and its UK node[6].

- Promote greater Ocean Literacy and public engagement in the science being delivered to meet the societal outcomes of the UN Ocean Decade.

Act as the national focal point for UK engagement with the UN Ocean Decade: working as the central point of contact to coordinate and communicate updates to and from the IOC-UNESCO, including through support to the UK Delegation to the IOC, and build relationships with other National Decade Committees to promote international collaboration.

[5] https://www.ecopdecade.org/

[6] United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – ECOP Programme (ecopdecade.org)

- Ensure that relevant information from the IOC-UNESCO Decade Coordination Unit is being disseminated to the UK ocean community.
- Engage with the UK Delegation to the IOC-UNESCO through membership of the NDC and to provide an additional opportunity for formal feedback to the IOC-UNESCO on UKNDC activities and observations on progress of the Decade.
- Support the annual reporting of UKNDC activities to the IOC-UNESCO.
- Engage with other National Decade Committees to share learnings and best practice, to develop partnership initiatives, to assist in developing and establishing other National Decade Committees, and to promote regional and international engagement across the UN Ocean Decade.

Communicate research and policy priorities outlined by the UN Ocean Decade: support the UK ocean community, including policy and research funders, to respond to the UN Ocean Decade Vision 2030 priorities as part of our national contribution to the UN Ocean Decade, promoting and enabling delivery of transformational ocean science to meet its societal outcomes.

- Engage with key stakeholders and networks in the UK ocean community to amplify the objectives of the UN Ocean Decade and the UK National Decade Committee.
- Facilitate dialogue between stakeholders in the UK and abroad; and encourage links between the UK and regional and thematic groups that are convening stakeholders across broader geographical areas, including the G7.
- Facilitate the development of co-designed and co-delivered Decade Actions by UK partners through providing information on existing Decade Actions to interested parties, and providing networking and collaboration opportunities, such as stakeholder events.
- Provide the UK government and its Devolved Administrations, via the Committee membership, with updates on the UN Ocean Decade and on the UK ocean community's engagement; and support them in accessing outputs (data, research, networks, teaching and tools) developed through Decade Actions.
- Respond to and support the communication of UK policy priorities for the UN Ocean Decade to the UK's ocean community to facilitate the development of Decade Actions.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Committee Chair

The Chair is responsible for providing effective leadership to the Committee, developing its operations, work plans and outputs with support from the Secretariat, Defra and FCDO. The Chair is the point of contact between the National Decade Committee and Defra and FCDO via the Secretariat and should have regular access to departmental officials to build their working relationships and to maximise committee effectiveness. With the Secretariat, the Chair is also the designated UK National Focal Point for the UN Ocean Decade.

Additional responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the Committee meets at appropriate intervals, and that the minutes of meetings and any reports have accurately recorded the decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of individual members.
- Ensuring that the Committee develops its work in accordance with its Terms of Reference.
- Agreeing the Committee's work plan with Defra and FCDO.
- Ensuring that every member of the Committee has the opportunity to be heard and that no view is ignored or overlooked. A full range of views of the membership should be appropriately considered and any significant divergence of views among members should be fully explored and discussed. If these cannot be reconciled, they must be accurately reflected in the minutes and in any other communications with sponsoring organisations.
- Working with Defra and FCDO to ensure that there is sufficient diversity of skills, expertise and experience within the Committee's membership to meet its role.
- Participating in the process for the recruitment of Committee Members including discussing and agreeing expertise, skills and experience required in advance of applicants and joining Assessment Panels.
- Ensuring the new Committee Members are briefed on appointment and ensuring performance of members is assessed, particularly when members are considered for reappointment to the Committee.
- Acting as an active advocate for diversity and inclusion.
- Acting as the Committee spokesperson in media engagement, although this may be delegated to other members.
- Assessing the Committee's workload against its work plan and reporting any concerns regarding the levels of resourcing with the sponsoring organisations.
- Reporting the work of the Committee, through annual reporting to the IOC-UNESCO and, where relevant, directly to Defra and FCDO, including alerting to new evidence, issues and events in relation to the UN Ocean Decade that is likely to have an impact on current policy.

The role of Committee members

The members have collective responsibility for the operation of the National Decade Committee. They are encouraged to develop new ideas, take initiative and to lead key work areas and activities, where subgroups may be formed to support delivery, to ensure that the Committee delivers on its aims and objectives. All members should share in the general responsibility to consider the wider context in which their work is deployed within the UN Ocean Decade and UK policymaking. They are required to deliver on the Key Activities listed above with support from the Secretariat.

It is envisaged that the Committee may contribute in the following ways but not exclusively:

- Contribute to the development and delivery of annual work plans for the Committee, ensuring that these are developed in accordance with its Terms of Reference.
- Develop and conduct activities including but not limited to written communications, outreach, public and stakeholder engagement, coordination and advisory to deliver on the Committee's aims and objectives.
- Act as knowledge brokers and seeking opportunities to link individuals from their networks, at any career level, with policy officials whose work may benefit from the connection in line with policy priorities.
- Reach beyond their existing networks to drive action on the UN Ocean Decade, including developing contacts with relevant National Decade Committees in other countries.
- Prepare for and attend quarterly Committee meetings and respond to assigned meeting actions.
- Represent the Committee at national and international events, such as Conferences.
- On occasion, Committee members may be asked to participate in other activities by Government Officials to assist with the Committee's operations.

The role of the Secretariat

It is the responsibility of Defra as the sponsoring department to ensure that the appropriate level of Secretariat support is in place for the Committee to fulfil its duties. The Secretariat is provided by Cefas and can be contacted by emailing ndc.secretariat@cefas.gov.uk. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with relevant codes and standards, for the good governance of committee business and for ensuring that the Committee does not exceed its remit. The Secretariat is the normal channel for communication between the Committee, policy officials, and other internal and external interests. They maintain routine engagement with the Committee Chair.

They are responsible for delivering standard Secretariat services. These include:

- Arranging and delivering Committee meetings, including developing agendas, circulating papers, and booking appropriate venues for in-person meetings
- Writing and publishing Committee meeting minutes and actions, including following up to ensure actions are delivered as agreed.
- Writing and submitting the annual report to the IOC-UNESCO via the online reporting tool
- Contributing to the writing and publication of Committee proceedings, reports, advice, and other outputs.
- Drafting, reviewing, maintaining and updating core Committee documents such as the Terms of Reference, Membership Record, Register of Committee Interests and the Programme of Work.
- Maintaining the Committee website and social media with support from Committee members.
- Managing the Secretariat budget and providing updates to Defra and Cefas.
- When needed, supporting FCDO to handle claims for travel and subsistence from members.
- Dealing with Freedom of Information requests pertaining to the Committee.
- Inviting and liaising with external interests who wish to attend Committee meetings.
- Running recruitment campaigns for the Committee, through developing the role description and essential criteria, facilitating the campaign and providing support to the Assessment Panel throughout the process.
- Induction of new Committee members.
- Writing and publishing the Committee's Annual Report, with support from Committee Members.

In addition, the Secretariat will provide support to enable members to deliver on key activities (communication, coordination, facilitation and science:policy interfacing) described above. The Secretariat will also take the lead on key activities including:

- Supporting coordination of UK engagement with the UN Ocean Decade by maintaining a database of UK engagement with official Decade Activities that will be made available through the Committee website.
- Supporting the delivery of activities developed by the Committee including workshops, education and outreach.
- Facilitating opportunities for international engagement and exchange with wider Decade activity and other National Decade Committees.

Members of the Secretariat also have a key role in working with the Chair as National Decade Committee Focal Points – the main contacts for communication with the IOC-UNESCO Decade Coordination Unit. The Unit will liaise with National Focal Points to share information on Decade implementation and to facilitate linkages with other National Decade Committees, and other structures of the Decade. As such, the Chair and Secretariat can broker new opportunities for collaboration for the Committee and can keep the Committee informed of developments within the Decade.

The role of the Committee Management Group

The Committee Management Group includes the Committee Chair, the Secretariat and the ex-officio members from Defra and FCDO. The role of the Management Group is to provide the oversight of the Committee and ensure that its work continues to align with the objectives set out in this Terms of Reference. The Management Group will also provide sign-off on Committee documents and outputs, such as Committee meeting agenda, updates to the Terms of Reference, strategy documents, plans for engaging with external events, and any recruitment plans for the Committee.

The role of ex-officio members

As further outlined in the Terms of Appointment, ex-officio members are not appointed as individuals but appointed due to the position they hold within an organisation. They contribute to Committee business but also hold additional duties including:

- Providing insight from their organisations to advise and inform Committee discussions and activities;
- Feeding Committee business and updates back to their organisations;

Defra and FCDO, as the sponsoring organisations, will ensure that the Committee is appropriately resourced to deliver its agreed work plans and contains the right balance of skills, expertise and experience within the membership. This membership will be regularly reviewed in the context of current and anticipated future work programmes. If necessary, additional members may be co-opted for a limited period to provide specific input based on their skills, expertise, and experience (see Ad hoc members below).

Meetings

It is anticipated that the Committee will meet at least four times a year (once every quarter) through virtual, hybrid and face to face meetings. A simple majority of Committee members must be present for a meeting to be quorate. Much of its work will take place virtually and ad hoc meetings may be requested to advance specific work streams. In addition to the Committee and the Secretariat, attendance may include other officials from UK Government Departments, Agencies and Devolved Administrations. Invited guest speakers and participants may also attend meetings to support or provide insight into key work areas.

Where there is agreement to coordinate work with other ocean science organisations in the UK and internationally, agendas and minutes may be exchanged to facilitate engagement and collaboration and to avoid duplication, unless they contain confidential information. Cross representation at meetings is encouraged on collaborative topics where members of the National Decade Committee may join other committee meetings and vice versa. This intends to develop closer links, provide opportunities for the Committee to

contribute to wider work, and to increase coordination and avoid inconsistencies of approach in related areas.

Meeting agendas will be set by the Secretariat and Management Group with input from the Committee. These will be agreed by the Chair.

Supporting Protocols

Protocol on relationship between Defra and the National Decade Committee. Defra Officials will:

- Sit in permanent posts as ex-officio members of the Committee;
- Sit on the Committee's Management Group (includes the Committee Chair and Secretariat);
- Contribute to agenda setting;
- Agree the Terms of Reference in collaboration with the Committee;
- Agree strategic work plans and activities, receive reports and advice;
- Conduct periodic reviews of the Committee's functions and assess its contributions in terms of value for money;
- Create connections between the Committee and relevant policy teams to promote engagement and science:policy interfacing on key topic areas to drive Committee activity;
- Ensure that Ministers and Senior Officials are sighted on the Annual Reports of the Committee;
- Conduct activities to maintain and raise the Committee's profile within government departments;

Protocol on relationship between the FCDO and the Committee, FCDO officials will:

- Sit in permanent posts as ex-officio members of the Committee and the Committee's Management Group;
- Contribute to agenda setting;
- Agree the Terms of Reference in collaboration with the Committee;
- Ensure that Ministers and Senior Officials are sighted on the Annual Reports of the Committee;
- Conduct activities to maintain and raise the Committee's profile within government departments;
- Process travel and subsistence requests submitted by Members of the Committee in line with these ToRs and the FCDO's travel and subsistence policy.

Protocol on relationship between the Defra Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) and the National Decade Committee.

- The CSA has oversight of expert committees reporting to Defra. Defra ex-officio members will ensure the CSA receives the UKNDC Annual Report, and any updates when needed or requested.

Protocol on relationship between Devolved Governments and the National Decade Committee. Devolved Government Officials will:

- Represent, as ex-officio members, their Devolved Government who have a permanent post on the Committee;
- Be consulted on and agree Terms of Reference for the Committee, contribute to the development of strategic work plans, contribute to agenda setting and receive minutes of meetings;
- Provide a link between the Committee, their Chief Scientific Advisors and their wider science communities.

Protocol on relationship between the Committee and the IOC-UNESCO

- The National Decade Committee will interact with the IOC-UNESCO formally via the UK Delegation to the IOC-UNESCO's Governing Bodies who will sit in permanent posts as ex-officio members of the Committee;
- The National Decade Committee will interact with the IOC-UNESCO Decade Coordination Unit through its National Decade Focal Point (Committee Chair and Secretariat).

As part of its role in coordinating and inspiring UK engagement with the UN Ocean Decade and the development of transformational science and ocean actions it will be important for the Committee to work with other bodies where appropriate. The relationship between the Committee and other relevant ocean science committees will be reviewed periodically to ensure the Committee is represented at and feeding into the appropriate fora.

Terms of appointment

Committee Members

Members will be appointed based on the merit of their personal skills, experience, and expertise, with a focus on their engagement with ocean science[7], their ability to develop networks and passion for communication of ocean issues. The recruitment and appointment of Committee Members will be on the basis of fair and open competition.

To promote transformational ocean science and to ensure a whole of society approach to achieving the UN Ocean Decade's societal outcomes, it is important that diverse voices are included in the Committee. Up to 16 Committee members will be recruited and appointed to serve in an individual capacity, drawn from stakeholders including but not limited to: the scientific community, educators, NGOs and civil society, industry and private sector, philanthropic and corporate foundations, and aquariums, zoos and museums.

[7] Ocean science is considered to include all research disciplines related to the study of the ocean: physical, biological, chemical, geological, hydrographic, health and social sciences, as well as engineering, the humanities and multidisciplinary research on the relationship between humans and the ocean. IOC-UNESCO. 2020. Global Ocean Science Report 2020–Charting Capacity for Ocean Sustainability. K. Isensee (ed.), Paris, UNESCO Publishing. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375147

Diversity and Inclusivity in its membership will be promoted to ensure representation across genders, generations, ethnic groups and regions. At least two posts will be held by Early Career Ocean Professionals.

The Committee is not regulated by The Commissioner for Public Appointments, but Defra and FCDO will ensure that the recruitment process seeks to incorporate the principles of merit, diversity, fairness and openness based on the Governance Code on Public Appointments[8].

Terms of office will be for a period of three years with the contributions of individual members reviewed annually by the Chair. Members may be reappointed but will serve no more than two terms in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. Reappointments are not automatic, and decisions will be based on merit, accounting for the value of contributions of the individual, the diversity of the Committee and its balance of skills and experience. Appointments may be terminated at a member's request, or by the Management Group if members fail to perform as expected of them, with notice periods of not less than three months.

Recruited committee members are appointed as individuals to fulfil the role of the National Decade Committee, not as representatives of their particular profession, employer or interest group, and have a duty to act in the public interest. Where members declare an organisation's views rather than a personal view, they should make that clear at the time of declaring that view.

Committee Chair

The Committee will be chaired by an independent Chair who will serve a two-year fixed-term appointment, with the potential for reappointment for a second term. The Chair will remain in place until a successor has been recruited to mitigate disruption. The recruitment and appointment of the Committee Chair will be on the basis of fair and open competition.

Ex-officio Members

An ex-officio member is not appointed to the Committee as an individual, but serves in an advisory capacity due to their position within a nominated organisation. Officials from FCDO, Defra, the Devolved Governments and the UK Delegation to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) are currently nominated as permanent representatives to the Committee and sit as ex-officio members.

If an ex-officio member leaves their organisation or changes to a new role then a replacement from that same organisation should be sought. New organisations can be nominated to hold an ex-officio membership if agreed by Committee Members and the Management Group.

[8] Cabinet Office (2016) Governance Code for Public Appointments

Management Group

The Committee Management Group will be composed of the Committee Chair, Secretariat, and the ex-officio members from the sponsoring organisations, Defra and FCDO. The Management Group will meet when needed and the Secretariat will arrange these meetings.

Observers

Representatives from specific organisations may be invited by the Committee to participate as observers at meetings if relevant to the Committee meeting agenda or valuable for collaboration and building relationships with other Committees or organisations.

Financial arrangements

As a voluntary Committee, members are not paid or remunerated for their time spent on committee business. Committee members will be provided with a travel and subsistence policy but broadly they are entitled to claim reimbursement for reasonable costs incurred in travelling (standard class) to and from Committee meetings, including any necessary overnight stays, and for any necessary meals and refreshments covering the period of travel. All claims will require supporting receipts, i.e. for accommodation, meals, rail tickets, taxis, car parking etc. which will be verified by the Secretariat and the FCDO. Financial information on the Committee will be reported annually to the sponsoring organisations.

Conflict of interest

As per the Code of Conduct for Members of Public Bodies[9], when accepting an appointment to the National Decade Committee, members should consider if any conflicts of interest arise from their private interests or by virtue of any other roles they hold. They should consider, with advice from the Secretariat, how these should best be managed and agree these with the Management Group.

Members must declare any personal or business interests which may, or may be perceived to, influence their judgements in performing their functions. These interests will be included in a register of interests maintained by the Secretariat and members must ensure that their entries are kept up to date. Members are encouraged to register their own non-pecuniary interests and interests of close family members and persons living in the same household which are closely related to the activities of the Committee.

[9] Cabinet Office (2016) Governance Code for Public Appointments

Should a particular matter give rise to a conflict of interest the member is required to inform the Secretariat in advance and withdraw from discussions or consideration of the matter.

There will also be an opportunity for members to declare, at the beginning of a meeting, any conflict of interests relating to meeting agenda items. Members will withdraw from discussion of matters in which they feel that they cannot act impartially. Where this occurs, it will be reflected in the official record of the meeting.

Standards for members and handling conflicts

Members must observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the work that they conduct as members of the Committee. It is important that all publicly appointed members uphold the principles outlined in the Code of Conduct for Members of Public Bodies[10] and the Seven Key Principles of Public Life which underpin it (see Annex 1). Members must not misuse information gained for personal gain or political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of membership of the Committee to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses, or other organisations.

During recruitment, the Assessment Panel must satisfy itself that all candidates for appointment can meet these standards and have no conflicts of interest that would call into question their ability to perform the role. Candidates will be asked to declare potential conflicts of interest and should disclose information on any relevant business interest, public appointment, or position of authority, including other connections with commercial, public or voluntary bodies. It should be publicly disclosed if a successful candidate has, in the last five years, been employed by a political party, held a significant office in a party, has stood as a candidate for a party in an election, has publicly spoken on behalf of a political party, or has made significant donations or loans to a party. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the Assessment Panel at the shortlisting and interview stages. All potential conflicts of interest and how they might be managed must be discussed with the individual. A potential conflict should not preclude a candidate from being shortlisted or appointed provided that appropriate arrangements are made. The Secretariat is responsible for seeking advice with the Management Group on handling any conflicts.

Committee members must notify the Secretariat of any changes promptly throughout the duration of their position. The Secretariat will hold an up to date Register of Committee Interests. At the start of each Committee meeting, members will be asked to declare if they have any specific conflict of interest in relation to the planned agenda. Members are required to remove themselves from the discussion of matters in which they could have a financial interest. In matters in which they have a non-financial interest, they should not participate in the discussion or determination of a matter where the interest might suggest

[10] Cabinet Office (2011) Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies

a danger of bias. Meeting minutes will record where members have withdrawn from a discussion due to a conflict of interest.

Within meetings, the Secretariat should take care in reporting the contributions of different stakeholders, such as those from the private sector, to Committee work areas.

Communication with the media and use of social media

The Chair will usually act as the Committee spokesperson in media engagement regarding its proceedings, although this may be delegated to other Committee members when this is in scope of their outreach activities. The Chair and Secretariat should be made aware of media engagements relating to Committee activities by members. When speaking in a personal capacity, this should be highlighted at the beginning of any media engagement. Where any personal social media accounts used by the Chair or members make reference to their role within the Committee, they should ensure that it is clear in what capacity they are communicating. Social media biographies should include an explicit line which makes clear that all views communicated via social media are the account holder's own.

Website

Full guidance for the use and management of the UKNDC Website has been developed for internal Committee use and should be referred to for further details. Committee members (Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee) and the Secretariat are responsible for ensuring the website is maintained and updated throughout the course of the UN Ocean Decade.

When appointed, Committee members are requested to comply with codes of conduct for public office appointees. Provision of the Code must be adhered to when developing digital content, and members should at all times respect confidentiality, financial, legal and personal information. Ahead of adding new material or updates to the website, the guidance regarding consent, fact checking, referencing, and accessibility should be followed.

Social Media

Full guidance for the development and publishing of social media content has been developed for internal Committee use and should be referred to for further details. Committee members and the Secretariat will work together to ensure that the social media channels are maintained, updated and adhere to the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. The social media pages are managed by the Secretariat and Management Group as primary administrators. Ahead of adding new material to the social media channels, the guidance regarding consent, fact checking, attaching documents or embedding links, and accessibility should be followed.

Safeguarding

The Committee must uphold the right of all people to live their lives free from bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), exploitation and abuse and that no child should be subjected to abuse of any form and has a zero tolerance approach towards bullying, harassment, exploitation and abuse and child abuse. Committee Members will comply with Cefas' Safeguarding and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Policy.

Ad hoc members

Where the Committee requires extra expertise or support for a particular time-bound project or task (as opposed to their on-going work), then they can co-opt members on an ad hoc, time-limited basis. In such cases the appointment and onboarding process can be simplified to reflect the temporary nature of the roles. This approach should only be used for short-term exercises in direct support of Committee business. Ad hoc members can be sourced from the networks of Committee members, although they are also encouraged to reach outside their networks and to utilise social media and the Ocean Decade Expert Roster. Ad hoc members will be bound by the same standards set out in this document.

Information about the Committee and its Work

Information about the National Decade Committee and its work is published on the Committee's website. This will include core Committee documents such as the Terms of Reference and the Annual Report. The Committee will operate from a presumption of transparency and openness. Meeting agendas, papers, presentations, minutes and other outputs will normally be published in a timely fashion within one month following the meeting. There may be limited circumstances where information is not made available such as draft documents which are still in the process of development, or which contain commercially or officially sensitive information.

The Committee is subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation, and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Accountability and Annual reporting

The Management Group will meet frequently between Committee meetings to discuss and review the progress and impact of the Committee, make decisions on any changes to membership, and review and sign-off any Committee documents.

Annual Reporting

The impact of the Committee will be assessed against the key objectives and remit as described in this Terms of Reference. Every year, in line with the reporting to the IOC-UNESCO Decade Coordination Unit, the Secretariat will lead the production of a brief annual report that provides an update on the Committee's progress against their key objectives, including outreach and communication efforts, events and workshops, and joint activities with other National Decade Committees. This annual report will also reflect any changes to the membership and the Terms of Reference.

The report drafting will be supported by the Committee members and will require approval from the Management Group ahead of publication on the UKNDC website. This will ensure that a record of the Committee's work is maintained and available for the public to view. This record will also be important for government ex-officio members to report back to their respective Departments and monitor and evaluate performance.

Reporting to the IOC-UNESCO Decade Coordination Unit

The Secretariat will lead the production and submission of the Annual Report for the IOC-UNESCO Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) on the Committee's activities with support from the members and approval by the Committee Management Group. This report will provide an annual update on the impact and engagement of the Committee.

Annex 1 – The seven principles of public life

Selflessness

Holders of public offices should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.