

Terms of Reference

UK National Decade Committee for the UN Decade of
Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

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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 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 Committees¹ 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 and Defra.

Introduction

The world has one ocean shared by all nations. The ocean provides 50% of the oxygen we breathe, supports livelihoods worldwide, contains vast biological and mineral resources, and is critical to trade. The UK's vision is that by 2030 the ocean will be effectively governed, clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse, linking resilient and prosperous coastal communities around the world, and supporting sustainable economic growth³.

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 (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 will facilitate 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"⁴. 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 Decade.

¹ Government Office for Science (2011). Scientific Advisory Committee: Code of Practice.

² UNESCO-IOC (2021). National Decade Committee. Operational Guidelines.

³ Cabinet Office (2021). Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

⁴ UNESCO-IOC (2020). The Science we need for the ocean we want: the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

The Decade will promote the emergence of an extensive stakeholder engagement network including National Decade Committees, regional and thematic stakeholder fora. All of these networks assemble around the Ocean Decade's Global Stakeholder Forum 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 Ocean Decade which are described in the Implementation Plan⁵. 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 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 will have both a UK and international dimension. The Committee will play an important role not only in supporting coordination of the UK scientific community's contributions to the UN Ocean Decade and the delivery of the UK's commitments under the G7 Ocean Decade Navigation Plan⁶, but also in promoting the UN Ocean Decade, its vision, societal outcomes and challenges across the UK. It will support the objectives in the Integrated Review of promoting UK science internationally and the UK's vision that by 2030 the ocean will be effectively governed, clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse linking resilient and prosperous coastal communities around the world⁷. 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 science and sustainability community.

The key objectives of the Committee are to:

- Communicate and inspire UK engagement, keeping the UK ocean community up to date and aware of opportunities within the UN Ocean Decade.

⁵ UNESCO-IOC (2021). The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) Implementation Plan. UNESCO, Paris (IOC Ocean Decade Series, 20.)

⁶ Defra and BEIS (2021) G7 Ocean Decade Navigation Plan

⁷ Cabinet Office (2021). Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

- Coordinate UK engagement with the UN Ocean Decade to deliver its societal outcomes, including through support to the UK Delegation to the IOC.
- Facilitate the co-design and co-delivery of Ocean Decade Actions in the UK as part of our national contribution to the UN Ocean Decade, promoting and enabling delivery of transformational ocean science to meet its societal outcomes.
- Inform and support UK policy awareness of the UN Ocean Decade and respond to UK policy priorities for the UN Ocean Decade

Key activities

Communicating and inspiring UK engagement, keeping our ocean science 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 across the UK – stimulating engagement at the regional and community level in projects that promote the societal outcomes.
- Ensure that information from the Decade Coordination Unit is being disseminated to the UK ocean community.
- Raise awareness within the UK’s ocean science and sustainability community of the events, data, products, science-policy advice, capacity development and other outputs being developed under the UN Ocean Decade to increase access and engagement.
- Support the roll-out of the “GenOcean” the official communications campaign of the UN Ocean Decade⁸ and raise UK engagement with the Early Career Ocean Professionals Programme⁹.
- Promote greater Ocean Literacy and public engagement in the science being delivered to meet the societal outcomes of the UN Ocean Decade.
- Engage with key stakeholders and networks in the UK ocean community to amplify the objectives of the UK National Decade Committee.

Coordinating UK engagement with the UN Ocean Decade to deliver its societal outcomes, including through support to the UK Delegation to the IOC

⁸ <https://genocean.org/>

⁹ <https://www.ecopdecade.org/>

- Maintain a map of the UK ocean science and sustainability community's engagement with UN Ocean Decade Actions and support annual reporting to the IOC.
- Identify linkages between officially endorsed Decade Actions to encourage collaboration in the UK and with international partners.
- Support proponents to bring proposals together to develop collective Decade programmes to leverage impact and influence, including through international partnerships.
- Create links between the UK and regional taskforces and groups that are convening actors across broader geographical areas, including the G7 in support of its Ocean Decade Navigation Plan¹⁰.
- Engage with the UK Delegation to the IOC through membership of the NDC and otherwise to provide an additional opportunity for formal feedback to the IOC on UK NDC activities and observations on progress of the Decade.

Facilitating the co-design and co-delivery of Ocean Decade Actions in the UK as part of our national contribution to the UN Ocean Decade, promoting and enabling delivery of transformational ocean science to meet its societal outcomes

- Encourage the submission of UK led projects to be endorsed by the Decade Coordination Unit as UN Ocean Decade Actions.
- Provide input and support to stakeholders developing Decade Actions.
- Play an active role in facilitating interaction and dialogue between stakeholders in the UK and abroad to promote co-design and co-delivery of Actions.
- Work with the Decade Coordination Unit to co-design Calls for Decade Actions.
- Engage with partner countries to share best practice and to assist in developing and establishing other National Decade Committees.
- Utilise the Global Stakeholders Forum and opportunities facilitated by the Decade Coordination Unit to engage with other National Decade Committees to share learning, to develop partnership initiatives and to promote regional and international engagement across the UN Ocean Decade.
- Explore engagement with other National Decade Committees in the G7 and partner countries to support the delivery of the G7 Ocean Decade Navigation Plan.

¹⁰ Defra and BEIS (2021) G7 Ocean Decade Navigation Plan

Inform and support UK policy awareness of the UN Ocean Decade and respond to UK policy priorities for the UN Ocean Decade

- Provide the UK Government and its Devolved Administrations, via the Committee membership, with updates on the UN Ocean Decade and on the UK ocean science and sustainability community's engagement with the UN Ocean Decade.
- Raise awareness of the UN Ocean Decade within UK government and support policy, where requested, in accessing the benefits (data, research, collaboration, teaching and tools) developed throughout the Decade to support decision making.
- Respond to and support the communication of UK policy priorities for the UN Ocean Decade to the UK's ocean science and sustainability community to facilitate the development of Decade actions.
- Support the UK's policy approach to the UN Ocean Decade, including its vision for engagement, and the development and delivery of National Implementation Plans which can be translated by partners into Decade Actions.
- Support the delivery of UK commitments under the G7's Ocean Decade Navigation Plan, including through interactions under the G7 and through the Future of the Seas and Oceans Initiative.

Supporting Protocols

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

- Sit in permanent posts on the Committee;
- 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 Defra Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) and the National Decade Committee.

- The CSA has oversight of expert committees reporting to Defra. The specific relationship between the CSA and the Committee will be developed based on the outcome of ongoing reviews into UK marine science coordination.

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

- Sit in permanent posts on the Committee;
- Be consulted on and agree Terms of Reference for the Committee;
- Contribute to the development of strategic work plans;
- Provide a link between the Committee, their Chief Scientific Advisors and their wider science communities;
- Contribute to agenda setting and receive minutes of meetings.

Protocol on relationship between the Committee and the IOC-UNESCO

- The National Decade Committee will interact with the Decade Advisory Board informally via the Global Stakeholders Forum and formally via the UK Delegation to the IOC's Governing Bodies who will sit in permanent posts on the Committee;
- The National Decade Committee will interact with the Decade Coordination Unit through its National Decade Focal Point within the 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 government ocean science committees is under review and will be developed. Its relationship with the ocean science community, which include bodies such as Challenger Society, Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland, Royal Society, Marine Biological Association, Imarest, Marine Research Plymouth, and the National Oceanography Centre Association of Marine Science National Capability Beneficiaries will also be explored.

Membership

The Committee will initially be co-chaired by the Defra and FCDO before an independent Chair is recruited. Officials from FCDO, Defra, the Devolved Administrations and the UK Delegation to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) will be nominated as permanent representatives. 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. 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.

Defra, as the sponsoring organisation, 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).

Terms of appointment

Members will be appointed based on the merit of their personal skills, experience, and expertise, with a focus on their engagement with ocean science¹¹, their ability to develop networks and passion for communication of ocean issues. The Committee is not regulated by The Commissioner for Public Appointments, but Defra will ensure that the recruitment process seeks to incorporate the principles of merit, diversity, fairness and openness based on the Governance Code on Public Appointments¹². 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 Officials 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.

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.

¹¹ 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>

¹² Cabinet Office (2016) Governance Code for Public Appointments

All claims will require supporting receipts, i.e. for accommodation, meals, rail tickets, taxis, car parking etc. which will be verified by the Secretariat. Financial information on the committee will be included in annual reports.

Conflict of interest

As per the Code of Conduct for Members of Public Bodies¹³, 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 Defra.

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.

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 principals outlined in the Code of Conduct for Members of Public Bodies¹⁴ 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 seeking 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 connection with commercial, public or voluntary bodies. It should be publicly disclosed if a successful candidate has, in the last

¹³ Cabinet Office (2016) Governance Code for Public Appointments

¹⁴ Cabinet Office (2011) Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies

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 an 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 within Defra 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, which will be published publicly and reflected in its annual reporting. 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 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

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.

Official social media accounts for the National Decade Committee will be formed and run by the membership. Guidance on the use of Committee social media will be developed and distributed to members.

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 UN Ocean Decade's Global Stakeholders Forum. Ad hoc members will be bound by the same standards set out in this document.

Use of the Global Stakeholder Forum

The Global Stakeholder Forum (now Ocean Decade forum) allows Decade stakeholders to share information about their activities and to join thematic (e.g., Decade challenges), regional (e.g., Western Pacific), or organizational (e.g., National Decade Committees) discussion groups to share ideas, knowledge, and experience. Committee members are strongly encouraged to join the Global Stakeholder Forum and will be added to the dedicated site for the UK National Decade Committee. The forum allows members to post collaboration ideas and opportunities, raise awareness and seek partners for national or regional Decade programmes or projects, hold virtual meetings or webinars, and use visibility and communications tools to raise awareness regarding their activities. Members of the Secretariat will also join the Global Group for National Decade Committee Focal Points.

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. Meetings will be held openly with independent observers invited to attend. Those wishing to observe meetings should contact the Secretariat. Occasionally, closed meetings or closed sessions within meetings will be held when confidential information is discussed.

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 with input from the Committee. These will be agreed by the Chair.

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 and Defra. The Chair is the point of contact between the National Decade Committee and Defra via the Secretariat and should have regular access to departmental officials to build their working relationships and to maximise committee effectiveness.

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.
- 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 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, in particular 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, both through annual (and where relevant ad hoc) reports and to Defra directly, 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.

Additional responsibilities include:

- Contributing to the development and delivery of annual work plans for the Committee, ensuring that these are developed in accordance with its Terms of Reference.
- Developing and conducting 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.
- Acting 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.
- Reaching beyond their existing networks to drive action on the UN Ocean Decade, including developing contacts with relevant National Decade Committees in other countries.

On occasion, Committee members may be asked to participate in other activities by Government Officials to assist with the Committee's operations. All such requests should be communicated to and agreed by the Secretariat.

Secretariat

It is the responsibility of Defra as the sponsoring departments to ensure that the appropriate level of Secretariat support is in place for the Committee to fulfil its duties. The Secretariat is provided by Defra and Cefas and can be contacted by emailing ndc.secretariat@cefas.co.uk. It is 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 a science:policy interface and the normal channel for communication between the committee and policy officials, and between the committee and other internal and external interests. They maintain routine engagement with the Chair(s).

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

- Arranging and delivering meetings, developing agendas, and circulating papers.
- Writing and publishing meeting minutes and the annual report.

- 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.
- Budget management, including handling 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. They develop the role description and essential criteria, facilitate the campaign and provide support to the Assessment Panel throughout the process.
- Induction of new Committee members.
- Writing and publishing the Committee's Annual Report.

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 to play as the National Decade Committee Focal Points – the main contacts for communication with the Decade Coordination Unit. The Unit will liaise with 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 Secretariat can broker new opportunities for collaboration for the Committee and can keep the Committee informed of developments within the Decade.

Information about the Committee and its Work

Information about the National Decade Committee and its work will be published on a dedicated website which will be set up to support it. This will include core committee documents such as the Terms of Reference, Membership Record, Register of Committee Interests, and the Programme of Work. The Committee will operate from a presumption of transparency and openness. Agendas, papers, presentations minutes and other outputs from meetings will normally be published in a timely fashion within one month. Meetings will

generally be held openly with independent observers invited to attend. 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 impact of the Committee will be assessed against the remit described above. The Secretariat will lead the production of an Annual Report on the Committee's activities with support from the members and approval by the Chair, which will be submitted to Defra within three months of the end of the financial year. This will be published on the Committee's website and will report on any changes to the membership, the Register of Interests, the Terms of Reference, its activities, joint activities with other National Decade Committees, outreach and communication efforts, events and workshops and a financial statement. This will ensure that a record of the Committee's work is maintained and available to Defra to monitor and evaluate performance. Annual reporting to the IOC-UNESCO is also anticipated.

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.