

# 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UK National Decade Committee

## Meeting Minutes

13-14<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Plymouth Marine Laboratory

### Attendees

**Members Present:** Matt Frost (Chair), Aline da Silva Cerqueira, Amy Bray, Antony Firth, Donal Griffin (online), Emma McKinley (online), Francesa Ginley (online), Gina Reinhardt (online), Hayley Roberts (online), Lydia Bach (online), Michelle Frost, Natalie Fox, Natasha Simmonds (online), Victoria Chinery.

**Ex-Officio:** Alan Evans (NOC), Barbara Berx (Scottish Government), Caroline Culshaw (Defra), David Hughes (Secretariat), Edward Atcherley-Symes (FCDO, online), Frances Bird (Defra), Lowri Griffiths (FCDO, online), Max White (Defra), Susanne Painting (Secretariat).

**Apologies:** Richard Hixson, Sien Van der Plank.

**Ex-Officio Apologies:** Bekah Cioffi (Welsh Government), Colin Armstrong (Northern Ireland Executive), Dave Carlin (Defra), Ed Hill (NOC).

**Other Attendees: Whole Meeting:** Camille Visinand (Secretariat support). **Item 7a:** Gideon Henderson (Defra, online), Alessandro Tagliabue (Decade Working Group, online). **Item 7b:** Jon Henderson (Ocean Decade Heritage Network, online), Anthony Ndah (PML), Gregory Cowie (University of Edinburgh, online). **Item 7c:** Steve Widdecombe (PML).

### Item 1: Welcome & Introductions

#### Purpose

To continue to lay the foundations for the UK's National Decade Committee's activities in the next phase of work; To agree future priorities to advance delivery of the NDC vision and inform work plans.

### Item 2. Minutes and Actions

Minutes from June meeting were agreed, and actions were reviewed.

#### Continuing Actions:

- Awaiting IOC feedback on NDC Annual Report, requested 11/07/2023 (Secretariat)
- Inform Secretariat if planning to attend 2024 Decade Conference, either individually or with an organisation (all Committee members)
- Capture and Collate questions from parties interested in endorsement, report to Secretariat (all Committee members)
- Coordinate a FAQ template for all Committee members to add questions (Communications & Engagement Sub-Committee)
- Update spreadsheet of upcoming events and conferences (all Committee members)

## Item 3. Updates

### Secretariat

The Committee were updated on the development of two key documents on the NDC Google Drive by the Secretariat: the **UK NDC Forward Look document** setting out the key dates and milestones for the Committee to the end of FY 23/24; and the **UK NDC Reporting Template** to collate key activities carried out by Committee members to be included in the annual report to the Decade Coordination Unit (DCU). The Committee were reminded of the upcoming review and update of Terms of Reference, Conflicts of Interest and Social Media Guidance. Members were encouraged to continue engaging with the Ocean Decade network through the Ocean Decade Forum and Trello.

### Decade Coordination Unit

The Committee were provided with the following updates from the DCU: NDC Focal Points meeting will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> October; the Decade Call for Action 6 will open on 15<sup>th</sup> October (challenges TBC); and the call for nominations for new expert members of the Decade Advisory Board is open until 30<sup>th</sup> October. A new 'Expression of Interest' pathway will be a separate 2-step option for Decade Calls for Action beginning with Call 6, where teams may submit an EOI for validation by the Decade Advisory Board and if accepted, will be encouraged to submit a full proposal for endorsement.

### IOC-UNESCO

UK representatives to the IOC have provided a key highlights document from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IOC Assembly. Updates included: Government of Flanders funding for Decade capacity development; the development of a Decade Data and Information Strategy; how there needs to be more effort put into addressing Priority Africa, where the DCU is working with the Belmont Forum to seek funding and opportunities; a recognition of a need to increase engagement with SIDS and to identify their priorities. A UK representative also attended the side event: '*Bringing the Ocean Decade home: Best Practices for National Decade Committees*'. It was also noted that the next NDC Focal Points meeting is scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> October.

## Item 4. Website: Updates, Governance, Analytics

### Updates

The Secretariat provided updates on the newly developed content on the UK NDC website: information pages outlining the high-level vision, structure and processes of the Ocean Decade; dedicated pages for descriptions of all UK-led and UK-partnered Decade endorsed actions; a page dedicated to stakeholder maps (awaiting publication).

### Governance

The Committee were also presented with a draft **Website Guidance and Governance document**, which outlines the key responsibilities of the Secretariat and Communications & Engagement Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee will take ownership of overall website structure, layout and design, development of new content, and collaborating with other Committee members. The Secretariat will take responsibility for the reviewing and publication of new content.

### Analytics

The Committee received an update on website engagement analytics, including details on the number of unique users (47 since website launch); website reach and user demographics (site visits from the UK, Canada, France, India, Portugal); average engagement time (14 mins); specific page views as an indicator of how parties wish to engage with the Committee.

## **Item 5. Decade Conference 2024: proposal for UK NDC engagement**

The International Engagement Sub-Committee provided an overview of the proposed UK NDC aims for the Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, April 2024: celebrate and raise visibility of UK contributions to the Decade; inspire wider UK engagement; enhance cooperation and coordination of UK Decade activities; connect with other NDCs to share and learn best practice. The proposed aims were endorsed by the full Committee, providing clarification that connections will be made across a wide range of UK Decade actors and not only those already achieving endorsement.

The Sub-Committee then presented four proposals for activities to promote UK engagement with the Ocean Decade Conference:

### **Pre-Conference activity to facilitate UK community engagement**

A pre-conference activity has been proposed to promote UK engagement with the conference and to communicate the planned UK NDC presence in Barcelona to current and potential future participants in Decade activities. Discussions highlighted a preference for an online event, allowing Committee members to bring together and engage with UK Decade activity representatives. It was agreed that links with UK-based conferences (e.g. Coastal Futures) are to be explored to help disseminate information and reach parties interested in the Decade, acting as a strong starting point for stakeholder engagement.

### **Host a UK reception to celebrate and network UK activity in the Decade**

A UK reception in Barcelona has been proposed for the evening prior to the conference to celebrate UK contributions, raise visibility of the UK NDC and provide a space to build links between participants in UK Decade activities. The Committee expressed favour for a reception, and whilst there was suggestion that two events could run in parallel (one in the UK and one in Barcelona), it was ultimately agreed upon that the focus during the Conference should be on an in-country event (due to the likelihood of a considerable number of UK Decade-involved stakeholders being present). The Committee also considered how to make the event stand out from a number of other satellite events being hosted around the conference, agreeing that a high-profile speaker and an appropriate venue is key to the attractiveness of the event. Prior to resourcing the event, the International Engagement Sub-Committee agreed to gather intelligence on prospective attendees in the coming weeks, through own networks and communications with the DCU during the next NDC focal points meeting scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Attend/co-organise NDC activity on sharing best practice**

As previously confirmed by the DCU, a satellite event is being planned for National Decade Committees to meet, share experiences and build momentum together. Committee members unanimously agreed that it would be of benefit to be able to attend such an event, and potentially help to co-organise it or provide sponsorship. A concern highlighted was the need to identify resources and support in order for Committee members to be able to attend the Barcelona conference in person.

### **Communicate highlights back to the UK to inspire wider engagement**

It was briefly discussed that a conference report will need to be developed by Committee members in attendance, in order to feed information back to the UK community. Suggestions for dissemination of information included reaching out to existing networks and conference organisers such as MASTS and the Coastal Futures newsletter. As well as promotion of the Decade Conference through NDC social media/website posts to improve engagement.

## **Item 6. Sub-Committee Updates and proposed work plans**

### **Communications and Engagement**

The Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee reported the development of a 7-year strategic plan, which included: research on Decade communications; a breakdown of audience to identify and profile key groups; and development of strong communication channels for dissemination of information. Key phases of content creation include branding and visuals, written articles, video content and event design. The Sub-Committee then presented a short video serving as an introduction to Ocean Decade UK, highlighting the need for a business plan to seek funding for content development. Updates were well received by the committee, with a suggestion that a revision of the video script is required to better define the target audience of the Committee.

### **Policy**

The Policy Sub-Committee presented a draft of Policy Brief #1, the first in a series of briefs designed to cover a variety of topics related to the UN Ocean Decade. Policy Brief #1 outlines the overview of the Decade, outcomes and actions, and it was highlighted by the Sub-Committee that a simple statement of UK government support is still required to provide maximum impact. The Sub-Committee expressed desire to share Policy briefs in a web-based format, as well as circulation via distribution lists, in order to provide a feedback function. A process for the reviewing of policy briefs was proposed: quality assurance conducted by Committee Members, followed by a final review and sign off by the Chair and Management Group prior to publication. It was highlighted that the Sub-Committee would need to work closely with the Secretariat and Communications & Engagement Sub-Committee to consider format and branding for publication. A brief discussion was held around topics, where the Committee agreed the series should focus on the societal outcomes, UK-based actions, ocean literacy and the ten challenges. It was also highlighted that briefs could be produced by a variety of authors and experts in relevant fields, noting that much thought is needed on how best to influence policy makers.

### **Decade Action Calls**

The Action Calls Sub-Committee presented a revised set of objectives including: the encouragement of UK submissions to the Decade; provision of support to stakeholders developing Decade Actions; facilitation of interaction between stakeholders and exchanging best practices with other National Decade Committees. Objectives will be achieved through the development of a series of step-by-step guides providing interested parties with guidance on: how to get involved; how to write a proposal for endorsement of Decade Actions; and how to find potential partner programmes. The Sub-Committee also highlighted the need for the development of an FAQ document to be published on the website and publicising calls via social media and personal networks, working closely with the Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee to produce content in a standardised format. Links were also drawn with the International Engagement Sub-Committee, to collaborate on the encouragement of country partnerships on Calls for Actions. It was also noted that the Action Calls Sub-Committee could reach out to other NDCs to explore how others are engaging with Decade Calls.

## **Items 7-8. UK engagement with the Ocean Decade**

This session invited a series of guest speakers to introduce their UK-based activities contributing to the UN Ocean Decade, followed by brief discussions on how to establish links and further develop the role of the UK NDC in supporting Decade activities. Talks were grouped under three themes:

### **Decade groups and initiatives**

Guest speakers: Prof Gideon Henderson (Decade Advisory Board), Prof Alessandro Tagliabue (Decade Working Group), Prof Carol Robinson (UN Decade Vision 2030 - video presentation).

Presentations highlighted the roles of the Decade Advisory Board (approval of submissions for programme/project/contribution endorsement), the Decade Working Group (to generate research funding to support Decade initiatives) and the process for the Decade Vision 2030 (a series of white papers highlighting achievements, gaps and priorities for each Decade challenge). Discussions highlighted the need to identify the specific/flagship challenge(s) that the UK is best placed to take leadership in and consider how to join up and support experts in specific fields (both across the UK and internationally) to achieve a common goal.

Key discussion highlights also included the sources and provision of funding for endorsed Decade Actions. It was noted that whilst the Decade Working Group have primarily generated research funding through NERC and UKRI, there are wider funding ambitions to be explored beyond the remit of physical sciences. With a focus on rapidly changing environments, inputs from Defra and the Blue Planet Fund could be explored in more detail. It was further identified that there is a need to better incorporate the potential of culture-based solutions and integration of social sciences and policy when seeking funding to tackle Decade challenges.

The Committee agreed that there is a need to bridge the gap between scientific and cultural aspects of the Ocean Decade which the UK NDC could help facilitate. It was suggested that regular correspondence between the UK NDC and the Decade Working Group will help to integrate ideas and enable both parties to identify priorities for a UK-wide focus.

### **Supporting UN Decade sector engagement**

Guest speakers: Prof Jon Henderson (Ocean Decade Heritage Network), Natalie Fox & Anthony Ndah (Early Career Ocean Professionals), Prof Greg Cowie (COLaB, University of Edinburgh).

Presentations from invited speakers outlined the key objectives of their Decade related activities. The focus of the Ocean Decade Heritage Network is to showcase the integration of heritage and ocean science, promote the inclusion of cultural heritage into policy and management plans, and aid the endorsement of projects which include cultural heritage within their objectives. The Early Career Ocean Professional (ECOP) programme seeks to elevate and strengthen the diverse perspectives of ECOPs through a collective voice. A case study from the ECOP Africa node highlighted the organisational framework and initiatives across the region, empowering ECOPs with the skills required to contribute to the Decade challenges. The Coastal Observation Lab in a Box (COLaB) project (currently under review for endorsement) provides instruments, methods and training for a range of scientific observations in a low-cost, modular package. The project aims to support global capacity building for standardised marine observations.

The primary element of discussion focused on how the UK NDC could best support stakeholders throughout the Decade. Across all presenters, a key consideration was the need for greater visibility of programmes. The Committee agreed that cultural heritage is often not included in wider conversations about marine science, which the UK NDC can help facilitate in future conversations. It was also highlighted that opportunities for stakeholders to engage with each other are valuable, with invited speakers drawing links between their own Decade Actions. The Committee reiterated that proposals for engagement around the Ocean Decade Conference would help provide such opportunities. Finally, it was noted that the Committee could also help support stakeholders in identifying funding agencies (through use of the stakeholder mapping tool), to encourage growth and success of endorsed actions.

### **UN Decade in action: marine science in support of sustainable development goal 14.3.1**

Guest speaker: Prof Steve Widdecombe (The OARS Decade Programme, PML).

The Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability (OARS) programme is a Decade endorsed action which aims to provide society with observational and scientific evidence needed to sustainably

identify, monitor, mitigate and adapt to ocean acidification. The programme will produce a series of white papers to determine what is required to achieve each of the set outcomes: achieve high quality provision of data across the science community; provide evidence for mitigation and adaptation strategies; development of a long-term ocean observing system.

Discussions highlighted that there are currently no UK-endorsed projects currently affiliated with the programme. There are a high number of UK-based initiatives relevant to OARS, and one way the UK NDC could provide support is through drawing links between these relevant actors and potential funders. It was also noted that foundations often seek to provide funding based on scientific specifics, however there is also a great need for funds to ensure capacity in support and coordination roles. The UK NDC can play a strong role in providing visibility and raising awareness of UK Decade Actions and their specific needs. The stakeholder mapping tool could be greater expanded to consider the philanthropic avenue, where programmes could seek extra support.

### Items 9-10. UK engagement with the Ocean Decade (Continued)

Following the discussions with stakeholders, the Committee reviewed the ways in which they can support UK-based Decade initiatives. It was unanimously agreed that the primary focus should be to promote the visibility of UK Decade initiatives and to bring together stakeholders to inspire collaboration. The Vision 2030 process could be a useful tool to identify priorities and gaps so far for UK Decade science and engagement.

It was decided that the UK NDC does not currently have the capacity to engage directly with the lobbying of research councils and other prospective funders, therefore it would be most appropriate to hold regular conversations and share meeting notes with the Decade Working Group, who take a more active role in resource acquisition. The UK NDC can actively promote and facilitate engagement between funders and stakeholders, which may initiate opportunities for investment. This could be achieved by inviting potential funders to a workshop session in order to showcase the Ocean Decade, providing emphasis on why UK Decade initiatives should be a high priority consideration to invest in.

### Item 11. Finalising Committee Workplans

Through a series of integrated discussions, Sub-Committees discussed how best to work with each other and highlighted tasks requiring collaboration. Sub-Committees then developed and presented a summary of the key set of actions and deliverables required to inform their workplans.

Sub-Committee	Actions	Deliverables
Communications & Engagement	Integrate a whole society approach within the committee. E.g., if presenting a policy brief, make an abstract/simple-terms description to apply to a wider audience.	Develop a communications strategy / 2024 Conference strategy.
	Identify expectations from the UK NDC on the Communications & Engagement Sub-Committee. Meetings need to be held with each group and the Chair to clarify workload.	
Decade Action Calls	Amend objectives to reflect priorities, liaising with International Engagement to identify actions for engaging with other NDCs.	Create a 'how-to' webpage to help facilitate submissions for endorsement.
	Develop a plan for publicising the upcoming Call for Decade Action 6 in October.	

Policy	Create a circulation list and develop a mechanism for policy brief uploads (with Secretariat and Communications and Engagement).	Issue the first Policy Brief.
	Identify potential topics and authors of policy briefs, with consideration for specific Decade Calls and Events.	
International Engagement	Begin to make links with IOC, DCU and other NDCs by invitation to UK NDC meetings, setting up mechanisms for regular communication.	Decide on how the UK NDC will engage with the 2024 Conference.
	Begin to map international funding groups (with specific focus on the philanthropic sector) and add to existing stakeholder mapping tool.	

## Items 12-13. Forward Agenda / AOB

The Committee were informed of the prospective dates for the next virtual and in-person meetings of the UK NDC, with the following items highlighted for the forward agenda:

- It was suggested that a representative of the ocean arts/creative sector is invited to the next meeting, to retain the 'all of society' approach.
- A representative of the G7 may be invited to the next meeting.
- The upcoming review of the Committee Terms of Reference is expected in December 2023.

Committee members were reminded of the annual requirement to submit Conflict of Interest forms and to maintain membership and engagement with the Ocean Decade Network (formerly the Global Stakeholder Forum).

Actions were agreed and no further business was raised for discussion by Committee members.

## Actions

No.	Action	Deadline	Owner
1	Produce a 'ReadMe' file to describe structure/navigation of the Google Drive.	29/09/23	Secretariat
2	Share link to IOC/DCU reporting template on Google Drive / add feedback columns for NDC and DCU	29/09/23	Secretariat
3	Send out template for Sub-Committee workplans (actions, deliverables, timelines).	29/09/23	Secretariat; Chair
4	Investigate requirements/process for UK nominations to the Decade Advisory Board.	29/09/23	Management Group
5	Make a final decision on engagement with the Ocean Decade Conference 2024.	13/11/23	International Engagement
6	Distribute information on Expressions of Interest for Calls for Decade Actions.	29/09/23	Chair

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Owner</b>
7	Share scope/agenda for Focal Points meeting (9 <sup>th</sup> October) and request committee views; feed back to committee after meeting.	29/09/23	Chair
8	Attend Vision 2030 webinar (2 <sup>nd</sup> November); feed into the review process.	02/11/23	Chair; All Committee Members
9	Share links to the UK NDC website more widely throughout own networks.	26/10/23	Communications & Engagement; All Committee Members
10	Provide feedback on update of script for Ocean Decade UK video.	05/10/23	ADS; BB; CC; MF; Communications & Engagement
11	Set actions and share workplans with Chair / Secretariat.	26/10/23	All Sub-Committees
12	Complete Communications & Engagement questionnaire.	29/09/23	All Committee Members
12	Add upcoming events to spreadsheet in Google Drive.	29/09/23	All Committee Members
13	Add NDC activities to IOC reporting document.	26/10/23	All Committee Members
14	Defra representatives to liaise with COAST Group secretariat re UK NDC links / input.	29/09/23	CC
15	Liaise with FCDO and Edinburgh Napier University to organise March 2024 in-person meeting.	29/09/23	Secretariat; Chair
16	Approach Coastal Futures re UK NDC talk.	05/10/23	EM; Relevant Committee Members
17	Send invite for 7 <sup>th</sup> UK NDC Meeting (virtual) on 14 <sup>th</sup> December	29/09/23	Secretariat



## Agenda

### Day 1 (10.00am-5pm):

Time	Item		
10:00-10:30		Registration and refreshments	
10:30-11:00	1	Welcome & Introductions	Verbal
11:00-11:20	2	Minutes and Actions	Paper - Secretariat
11:20-11:30	3	Secretariat updates	Paper - Secretariat
11:30-11:50	4	Website: updates, governance, WoW	Verbal - Secretariat
11:50-12:20	5	Ocean Decade Conference: proposal for UK NDC engagement	Slides – Caroline Culshaw
12:20-13:30	Lunch		
13:30-14:35	6	Sub-Committee updates and high-level outline of proposed work plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communications and Engagement</li> <li>- International Engagement</li> <li>- Policy</li> <li>- Action Calls</li> </ul>	Papers/Slides
14:35-15:00	Refreshments		
15:00-16:45	7	UK engagement with Ocean Decade Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 minutes talks from invited stakeholders involved with different Ocean Decade activities</li> <li>- Discussion on how NDC can engage/support</li> </ul>	Verbal/Slides
16:45-17:00	8	Summary and Close	Verbal
19:30	Dinner at local restaurant (venue tbd)		

### Day 2 (9am-1pm):

09:00-09:30	Refreshments		
09:30-09:50	9	Recap of Day 1 and aims for Day 2	Verbal
09:50-11:30	10	Finalising committee workplans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breakout groups (cross-subcommittees)</li> <li>- Plenary agreement on overall workplan</li> </ul>	Slides
11:30-12:00	11	Any other business	Verbal
12:00-12:15	12	Forward agenda	Paper - Sec
12:15-12:30	13	Summary and close	Verbal
12:30-13:00	Lunch		