

9th Meeting of the UK National Decade Committee

Meeting Minutes

19th June 2024, Online

Attendees

Members Present: Matt Frost (Chair), Aline da Silva Cerqueira, Antony Firth, Emma McKinley, Francesca Ginley, Hayley Roberts, Lydia Bach, Michelle Frost, Natalie Fox, Richard Hixson, Sien van der Plank.

Ex-Officio: Anamul Islam (Secretariat), Caroline Culshaw (Defra), Dave Carlin (Defra), David Hughes (Secretariat), Edward Atcherley-Symes (FCDO), Frances Bird (Defra), Lowri Griffiths (FCDO), Suzanne Painting (Secretariat).

Apologies: Amy Bray, Donal Griffin, Gina Reinhardt, Natasha Simmonds, Victoria Chinery.

Ex-Officio Apologies: Alan Evans (NOC), Barbara Berx (Scottish Government), Bekah Cioffi (Welsh Government), Colin Armstrong (Daera).

Item 1: Welcome & Introductions

Purpose

To provide updates from the Secretariat and UK Delegates to the IOC on UN Ocean Decade activity since March meeting, and for Sub-Committees to discuss / refine workplans based on the Barcelona Conference and engagement with other National Decade Committees (NDCs).

Introductions

The Chair extended thanks to Professor Ed Hill CBE, former Chief Executive of the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) and UK Representative to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and welcomed the appointment of Dr John Siddorn in his place. The UK NDC look forward to welcoming John to future Committee meetings and events.

Highlights

Committee members were reminded that their three-year membership terms will come to an end in December 2024. Members were encouraged to contact the Chair and Secretariat to provide notice of intentions to continue memberships for a second term, or of considerations to withdraw. It was also suggested that additional members could be recruited by highlighting current gaps in representation.

It was highlighted that the UK NDC Terms of Reference document is due for renewal and will take into consideration a review of the current membership structure (recruitment and responsibilities of appointed vs ex-officio members). The Committee may also consider appointing ambassadors and further representatives to help promote the work of the UK NDC.

Actions:

- Members to notify Chair / Secretariat of intention to extend/withdraw membership for second term (confirmations required ASAP but well ahead of next NDC meeting in September).

Item 2. Minutes and Actions

Minutes from the March meeting were agreed, and actions were reviewed. It was highlighted that delivery of the Communications Strategy will be extended to incorporate content of the newly published Vision 2030 White Papers, and that discussions around a student strategy will require further input from the full Committee. The Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee requested that all members review the document on the shared drive.

Continuing Actions:

- Share links to the UK NDC website and LinkedIn profile throughout networks: [UK NDC Website](#), [UK NDC LinkedIn](#).
- Update internal spreadsheet of upcoming events and conference.

Item 3. Secretariat Updates

The Secretariat provided Committee members with the following updates:

- Further enquiries have been received by the Secretariat regarding funding for conference attendance. It was suggested that a standard email response is required for future funding enquiries from non NDC members to explain that the UK NDC does not have the financial resources to provide financial support for Decade-related activities.
- Committee members are required to submit their annual conflict of interest declarations by 28th June 2024.
- The UK NDC's Annual Report to the IOC has been submitted and members were thanked for their contributions.
- The Vision 2030 White Papers have been published following the final consultation and review period. Members are encouraged to review the documents (link provided here: [Vision 2030 White Papers | UN Ocean Decade](#)).
- Whilst no official Focal Points meetings have taken place since the Ocean Decade Conference, representatives of international NDCs will continue to meet regularly as agreed during the NDC Satellite Event hosted in Barcelona.
- Another collaborative NDC event will be hosted alongside the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC), to be held in Nice, France in June 2025.

Actions:

- Secretariat to develop a standard email response to external funding enquiries.
- Committee members to submit Conflict of Interest forms by 28th June.

Item 4. UK Delegates to IOC Updates

The 57th Session of the Executive Council of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) will be taking place from 25-28th June in Paris, France. Despite a wider focus than that of the Ocean Decade, agenda item 4.7 of the session considers the framework for the mid-term evaluation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Members will be provided with outcomes of the meetings at the next NDC meeting.

Committee members were informed that the Decade Working Group (led by the NOC Association) has formally disbanded. Despite this, the Chair will meet with former members in the coming weeks to discuss opportunities for the UK NDC to support any of the DWG's objectives. It was clarified that

the NDC will not endeavour to become involved directly with influencing research funding allocation (as was within the intended remit of the Decade Working Group).

Actions:

- UK delegates to the IOC to share outcomes of 57th Session of the Executive Council.

Item 5. Social Media Updates

The [Ocean Decade UK | LinkedIn](#) profile was activated prior to the Ocean Decade Conference in April. The platform is being used primarily to promote the UK NDC website and direct stakeholders to relevant pages. Campaigns developed by the Barcelona Task & Finish Group and the Action Calls Sub-Committee have been successful in engaging stakeholders with the Decade, reaching approximately 6000 news feeds in the last quarter. Visitor demographics identify that there is an even distribution of interest across industry (air, water, energy, renewables), higher education and research institutions. Committee members are welcomed to contact the Secretariat and Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee if they wish to develop further content for social media.

Recent updates to the UK NDC website include:

- Inclusion of maps developed by Defra to visualise UK Endorsed Actions.
- Information regarding the newly endorsed UK project 'Solent Seascape Project'.
- Publication of the Call for Decade Action FAQs document developed by the Action Calls Sub-Committee.
- Promotion of the 'Co-Design for the Decade' online course developed by IOC-UNESCO, to equip scientists and the broader ocean science community with the skills needed to co-design the science we need for the ocean we want. Committee members are encouraged to enrol here: [Co-Design | UN Ocean Decade](#).
- Publication of a news item to promote the endorsement of the Decade Activity 'Turning the Tide', led by the Institution of Environmental Sciences.

Committee members were reminded that the Ocean Decade UK Stakeholder Map requires updating, with a suggestion that a task group be initiated to provide updates periodically. It was also noted that a group may be required to take on the task of mapping UK Endorsed Actions, following the initial development by Defra colleagues.

Actions:

- Secretariat to arrange meetings with Committee members interested in contributing to the Stakeholder Mapping and Endorsed Actions Mapping tasks.

Item 6. Takeaways from Barcelona Conference: Impacts on workplans

The UK NDC was represented at the Ocean Decade Conference by Matt Frost, Emma McKinley, Victoria Chinery, Natalie Fox, Alan Evans, Caroline Culshaw and Frances Bird. Most were attending in multiple capacities, representing their organisations and Decade Actions as well as the UK NDC, and participated in numerous panels and events. The Task & Finish Group shared reflections from the conference, summarised in a paper shared on the internal drive.

Key UK NDC Outcomes

- Co-leading the NDC best practice satellite event. This brought together representatives from over 20 NDCs to share experiences in how NDCs operate in different contexts. The event received positive feedback and calls to repeat it at future ocean events.
- Co-leading the 'What can your NDC do for you?' stakeholder event provided an opportunity for attendees to learn more about NDCs and how they can support national implementation. New

contacts were made with UK Decade Actions at this event (more than 34 countries were represented across the two events).

- Presenting the UK NDC poster, which led to discussions with interested parties about the role of the UK NDC. A pdf of the poster is available on the UK NDC shared drive.
- Attending sessions and contributing to discussions about future priorities through the Vision 2030 process.
- Delivering a LinkedIn social media campaign in the form of a daily 'takeover' where different UK NDC members shared their reflections of sessions attended, highlighted UK contributions, and a final summary reflections post.

Lessons Learned

The Conference highlighted the important role for NDCs in supporting national implementation of the Ocean Decade through understanding the national context of the 'ocean we want'. A potential role for the UK NDC is to enable connections between ocean science and knowledge with decision making, raising awareness of opportunities among national stakeholders. UK NDC representatives made the following recommendations:

- Members should consider how the 10 Decade Challenges are split across sessions and ensure time for networking when organising Ocean Decade events.
- Consider sending a larger UK NDC delegation to future events in order to promote engagement with stakeholders.
- Continue to use the Task & Finish group format for time-limited cross-subcommittee activities.

Discussions highlighted that due to an overwhelming Conference schedule, it was difficult for those in-country to make time for any networking opportunities. Furthermore, those unable to attend in person emphasised a lack of hybrid meeting options for many of the satellite events, which restricted the ability of members to engage properly with activities during Ocean Decade week. It was confirmed that feedback had been delivered to the Decade Coordination Unit as lessons learned ahead of future international events.

Potential Next Steps

Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee:

- Finalise the Communications (and events) Strategy based on protocols used during this event.
- Scope a UK community meeting to identify how the UK can contribute and benefit from the second half of the Decade. Include national implementation of the Vision 2030 outcomes.
- Explore opportunities for engagement campaigns with contacts made during the Conference.
- Consider how to integrate UK-centric local knowledge systems into the Ocean Decade.

Call for Actions Sub-Committee:

- Consider routes to encourage/facilitate Decade Contributions of funding/resources to respond to the needs of endorsed Decade Programmes/Projects

Policy Sub-Committee:

- Consider learnings from other NDCs on engaging with policy, e.g. Portugal held a series of bilateral meetings with government departments to understand their needs and interests.

International Engagement Sub-Committee:

- Continue to build on existing relationships with India and Brazil NDCs.
- Consider co-hosting a follow-up NDC sharing session at a future ocean science/policy event.
- Consider the role of the UK NDC in the next major Ocean Decade milestone, the third UN Ocean Conference, to be co-hosted by France and Costa Rica in Nice, June 2025.

Item 7. Call for Decade Actions No. 07/2024

The Decade Action Calls Sub-Committee provided an update on the delivery of a work campaign for UK NDC engagement with the Call for Decade Actions No. 07/2024, which launched following the Barcelona Conference in April. The announcement has been shared via social media on both the UK NDC LinkedIn profile and via the website, with links provided to the guidance notes and application forms. The Sub-Committee has completed and published an endorsement FAQs document on the NDC website to provide information for prospective applicants.

The Sub-Committee has also developed a LinkedIn campaign, producing fortnightly posts aimed to de-mystify the endorsement process. Three posts have been published so far, featuring submission advice from successful UK applicants of Decade Projects (Ocean Generation), Programmes (JETZON) and Activities (AMEMR, PML). The campaign will continue until the application deadline on 31st August.

It was suggested that a simplified application form could be developed by the Sub-Committee, due to the formatting issues of the current documents provided on the Ocean Expert platform. It was noted that this could only be achieved if the application form/process remains the same across all Calls for Action.

Item 8. Plenary and Breakout Groups to refine workplans

Sub-Committees were provided time to work in breakout groups to discuss opportunities and refine workplans following suggestions for next steps raised in Agenda Item 6. Key activities and actions were reported back to the full Committee in plenary.

Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee

It was reported in plenary that the Communications Strategy will be renamed as the Strategic Communications Plan, and has been updated to include content in the Vision 2030 White Papers, lessons learned from the Barcelona Conference and more support for transformative ocean science, following the recent report on [EDI in the UK Marine Sector](#) by Ocean and Coastal Futures. Key messages in the Communications Strategy will be used to inform future campaigns and Ocean Decade UK events in order to maintain focus and direction. An EOI application for EA funding to work with coastal communities was submitted during the breakout session.

Call for Actions Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee highlighted their ongoing work in managing the Call for Decade Action social media campaign (Agenda Item 7) and shared the intention to create a reflection on the work once completed in August. The reflection will inform how the Sub-Committee plan to engage with the next Call for Decade Action, expected in October. The Sub-Committee also expressed an interest in developing ways of facilitating funding, which could be a focus for later in the year.

Policy Sub-Committee

The Policy Sub-Committee highlighted the need to pick up on the Policy Briefing task, noting that capacity and workplace commitments have made it difficult for the team to come together and deliver the first iteration. It was also suggested that directly interacting with government departments to identify needs and interests would help to promote the Ocean Decade, noting that a meeting with the Climate and Ocean Adaptation and Sustainable Transition (COAST) programme partners could be a suitable starting point. The Chair agreed to discuss the issue with Gideon Henderson, Defra Chief Scientist.

International Engagement Sub-Committee

The International Engagement Sub-Committee highlighted a need to continue to build relationships with other NDCs, particularly with France in the lead up to the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) in 2025. For the UK NDC September meeting, suggestions were made to invite the French NDC, to discuss plans for engagement with UNOC, and NDCs with good practice, e.g. on policy (Portugal) and communication. The Committee are to decide if they would like to have a role at UNOC 2025 following feedback from a planning meeting in July and publication of the agenda; the Sub-Committee will consider how the UK NDC can engage with the conference and satellite events. Other upcoming meetings were discussed briefly; Committee Members were asked to identify which meetings they will be attending and which meetings we want to promote. All relevant upcoming events have been mapped by Defra.

Actions:

- Sub-Committee actions to be progressed.
- All Committee Members to provide feedback on the Strategic Communications Plan.
- Chair to discuss COAST with Defra Chief Scientist.
- Chair to contact French NDC re September meeting.
- Defra representatives to share map of all upcoming events and forward planner.
- Secretariat to see how this can be incorporated into the NDC planner.
- LG/Management Group to feedback after a UNOC planning meeting in July.

Item 9. Forward Agenda

The Committee had previously discussed the intention to host a UK stakeholder reception, originally to coincide with the Ocean Decade Conference in 2024. It was agreed that the reception would now be best placed for 2025, to coincide with an existing ocean science conference/event to maximise participation and engagement. It was highlighted that the Ocean and Coastal Futures Conference is confirmed for January 2025 in London and could provide an opportunity for co-sponsorship, however further discussion will be required around funding. Members also drew attention to the Anglo-centric bias previously identified in the UK Endorsement mapping, suggesting that other regions should be considered for hosting stakeholder events to promote further inclusivity across the UK.

Members agreed upon dates for the next in-person meeting, to be held in York on 18-19th September. The Secretariat will liaise with Historic England, who have offered to host the next event.

Actions:

- Secretariat and EM to scope potential ocean science events to align a UK NDC stakeholder reception with.
- Secretariat to confirm venue for September meeting and send out calendar invite preferably within two weeks so people can begin to arrange travel.

Item 10. Any Other Business

No further business was raised for discussion.

Item 11. Summary and Close

All actions were summarised and agreed by the Committee.

Actions

No.	Action	Deadline	Owner
1	Members to notify Chair / Secretariat of intention to extend / withdraw membership for second term.	12 th July	All Committee Members
2	Share links to the UK NDC website and LinkedIn profile through networks: UK NDC Website , UK NDC LinkedIn .	Ongoing	All Committee Members
3	Update internal spreadsheet of upcoming events and conferences.	Ongoing	All Committee Members
4	Secretariat to develop a standard email response to funding enquiries.	5 th July	Secretariat
5	All Committee members to submit Conflict of Interest declaration forms to Secretariat.	28 th June	All Committee Members
6	UK delegates to the IOC to share outcomes of the 57 th Session of the Executive Council.	When publicly available	IOC Reps
7	Secretariat to arrange meetings with Committee members interested in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Endorsed actions mapping · Stakeholder mapping 	19 th July	Secretariat
8	All Committee members to provide feedback on the Strategic Communications Plan.	5 th July	All Committee Members
9	Chair to explore engagement with COAST through discussion with Defra Chief Scientist.	26 th July	Chair
10	Chair to contact French NDC re: September meeting.	26 th July	Chair
11	Defra to share map of upcoming events, Secretariat to incorporate into NDC planner.	12 th July	Defra Reps, Secretariat
12	Management Group to provide Committee with feedback on UNOC planning / agenda.	Post-planning meeting, TBC	LG, Management Group
13	Secretariat and EM to scope potential ocean science events to align a UK NDC stakeholder reception with.	2 nd August	Secretariat, EM
14	Secretariat to confirm venue and timings for September meeting and send calendar invite.	5 th July	Secretariat

Agenda

Time	Item		
09:30-09:35	1	Welcome & Introductions	Verbal – Chair
09:35-09:55	2	Minutes and Actions	Verbal – Secretariat
09:55-10:00	3	Secretariat updates	Verbal – Secretariat
10:00-10:05	4	UK delegates to IOC: update	Verbal – IOC Rep
10:05-10:10	5	Social Media: updates, analytics	Verbal – Secretariat
10:10-10:50	6	Takeaways from Barcelona Conference: Impacts on Sub-Committee Workplans	Paper – Task & Finish Group
10:50-11:00	Break		
11:00-11:10	7	Call for Decade Actions No. 07/2024	Verbal – Action Calls SC
11:10-12:10	8	Plenary and Breakout Groups to refine workplans	Chair
12:10-12:15	9	Forward agenda	Verbal – Chair
12:15-12:20	10	Any other business	Verbal – Chair
12:20-12:30	11	Summary and Close	Verbal – Chair