



## SUMMARY

- **The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development** (UN Ocean Decade) is a global effort to achieve “the science we need, for the ocean we want”.
- The UN Ocean Decade is a convening framework for a wide range of stakeholders to collaborate outside their traditional communities to help achieve the **UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, including ‘**Life Below Water**’ (SDG 14) and other international commitments.
- The health of the marine environment is central to the overarching ambition of the Ocean Decade. This aligns closely to the UK’s vision for **clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse** oceans and seas.
- Ten **Ocean Decade Challenges** articulate priorities for **Decade Actions**, and collectively work towards seven societal **Decade Outcomes**. Many UN-endorsed Decade Actions are already underway, including those relevant to UK ocean policy aims. New Actions are continuously being endorsed.
- Ocean Decade UK is the **UK’s National Decade Committee**, working to support the implementation of the UN Ocean Decade in the UK.
- This is the first in a series of Policy Briefs on the UN Ocean Decade published by Ocean Decade UK.





## WHAT IS THE UN OCEAN DECADE?

Launched in 2021, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) (UN Ocean Decade) is a 10-year convening framework for a wide range of stakeholders across the world to collaborate outside their traditional communities to generate the data, information and knowledge needed for robust science-informed policies and stronger science-policy interfaces.

## TEN DECADE CHALLENGES

The Ocean Decade has identified 10 challenges, articulating the most immediate and pressing priorities:



## SEVEN DECADE OUTCOMES

The UN Ocean Decade aims to meet seven societal outcomes:

- *A Clean Ocean* where sources of pollution are identified and reduced or removed.
- *A Healthy and Resilient Ocean* where marine ecosystems are understood, protected, restored and managed.
- *A Productive Ocean* supporting sustainable food supply and a sustainable ocean economy.
- *A Predicted Ocean* where society understands and can respond to changing ocean conditions.
- *A Safe Ocean* where life and livelihoods are protected from ocean-related hazards.
- *An Accessible Ocean* with open and equitable access to data, information and technology and innovation.
- *An Inspiring and Engaging Ocean* where society understands and values the ocean in relation to human wellbeing and sustainable development.

These outcomes align closely to the UK Marine Strategy's vision of 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas'.

## DECADE ACTIONS

The Ocean Decade endorses four types of Action, targeting specific Decade Challenges:

### Programmes

Multi-year, interdisciplinary and multi-national and typically global or regional in scale. They consist of component projects and potentially enabling activities.

### Projects

Typically a discrete and focused undertaking of a shorter duration. They may be regional, national or sub-national and will typically contribute to an identified Programme.

### Contributions

Support Actions through provision of necessary resources (e.g. funding, data, staff, infrastructure). Contributions can support either the implementation or coordination of Actions.

### Activities

One-off, standalone opportunities such as awareness-raising events, scientific workshops and training. Activities may enable Programmes or Projects, or contribute directly to Challenges.





## UK POLICY RELEVANCE

The ocean is critically important to economies and communities, globally and in the UK. It provides food security and supports the livelihoods of billions of people, plays a critical role in climate regulation, protects communities from climate impacts, and provides opportunities for recreation and cultural connections. Yet, the ocean is under threat from climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

The UK has the world's fifth-largest marine estate, with 14 Overseas Territories extending UK interests from polar oceans to tropical seas. At home, the UK Marine Policy Statement and UK Marine Strategy reflect the UK's vision for "clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas".

The UK also has international obligations and commitments to protect and preserve the marine environment, such as under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the UN Sustainable Development Goal "Life Below Water", the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic.

Supporting a resilient ocean requires policy action on a range of subjects across the land-ocean interface. Strengthening science-policy interfaces is an essential objective of the UN Ocean Decade. Ambitious levels of science are urgently needed to support decision-making in order to achieve national and international targets.

Aligning research and initiatives for science-informed policies around the common set of UN Ocean Decade challenges brings benefits such as international recognition, increased engagement with stakeholders, partnership opportunities across disciplines and geographies, and access to additional support.

## UK GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE OCEAN DECADE

The UK Government is committed to support the UN Ocean Decade and its outcomes, internationally and at home.

The UK led the development of the G7 Ocean Decade Navigation Plan (May 2021) to formalise the G7's commitments on international collaboration for the Decade. This plan commits the UK Government to mobilising resources to support the UN Ocean Decade and its societal outcomes, and aligning research strategies with the Decade vision, outcomes and challenges.

The UK Government recognises the UN Ocean Decade as a key initiative to improve the evidence base for ocean sustainability.

## COORDINATION OF UK INVOLVEMENT

A cross-society committee, **Ocean Decade UK** acts as the national focal point for the UK's participation in the UN Ocean Decade. Ocean Decade UK is the National Decade Committee recognised by the UN.

Ocean Decade UK was established by the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), who sponsor and participate in the Committee. Representatives of the Devolved Administrations also serve as members. The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) provides the Secretariat function.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The [Ocean Decade UK website](#) provides information on the UN Ocean Decade and the work of the Committee. There you will find:

- A summary of UK-led endorsed actions and International Actions with UK-partners
- Frequently Asked Questions related to the UN Ocean Decade and endorsement process
- News and updates about the Ocean Decade in the UK.

You can also connect with [Ocean Decade UK on LinkedIn](#).





## Further Information on the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development:

<https://oceandecade.org/>

### Vision

*‘The Science we need for the ocean we want’*

### Mission

*‘Transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and our ocean’*



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