

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

## Meeting Minutes

12<sup>th</sup> December 2024, Online

### Attendees

**Members Present:** Matt Frost (Chair), Antony Firth, Emma McKinley, Gina Reinhardt, Hayley Roberts, Michelle Frost, Victoria Chinery.

**Ex-Officio:** Alan Evans (NOC), Anamul Islam (Secretariat), Bee Berx (Scottish Government), Caroline Culshaw (Defra), David Hughes (Secretariat), Frances Bird (Defra), Lowri Griffiths (FCDO), Suzanne Painting (Secretariat).

**Apologies:** Aline Da Silva Cerqueira, Amy Bray, Donal Griffin, Francesca Ginley, Lydia Bach, Natalie Fox, Natasha Simmonds, Richard Hixson, Sien van der Plank.

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

### Item 1: Welcome

Committee members were welcomed by the Chair and provided with three key updates:

- It was acknowledged that members Donal, Francesca and Natasha will be stepping down from the Committee after completion of their three-year terms, and thanks were extended for their contributions to the UK NDC.
- The Chair provided an update on the recruitment process for new members, following the deadline for applications (4<sup>th</sup> December) and noted the high number of applications. The selection panel are to begin the sift process in early January and expect to recruit four new Committee members, in time for the next in-person meeting in spring.
- The UK NDC Terms of Reference review is almost complete, with only minor comments to address before sign-off by the Management Group. The updated ToR will be emailed to Committee members once completed.

#### ACTIONS:

- Finalised Terms of Reference to be sent to Committee members for information (Secretariat).

### Item 2. Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) Focal Points updates

The Chair provided the following updates received from the Decade Coordination Unit at the Focal Points meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024:

- A one-day Ocean Forum is to be held at the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) in 2025, likely the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The forum will include a segment for National Decade Committees to meet (details of the session to be confirmed).

- The DCU are seeking volunteers from National Decade Committees to form task groups aimed at developing resources in a variety of areas, including communications; youth and gender; Ocean Decade evaluation; bathymetry. The DCU will provide national Focal points with a full table of advertised opportunities, to be disseminated to Committee members. Members were asked to inform the Chair and Secretariat if they wish to apply.
- A Focal Points/Global NDC meeting will be held in January for NDC focal points to provide feedback and input into the Ocean Decade mid-term evaluation. It was agreed that NDCs should be able to give a unified response as opposed to answering questions as individuals, which had proven ineffective. Once received from the DCU, the Chair will provide all Committee members with an amended list of questions and collate responses.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- Share table of DCU task-group opportunities with Committee members (Chair, via Secretariat).
- Provide Committee members with list of mid-term evaluation questions for NDCs, and collate responses (Chair, Secretariat).

### **Item 3. Minutes and Actions**

Minutes from the September meeting were agreed, and actions were reviewed. It was noted that three Committee members have submitted abstracts for presentations at the Ocean and Coastal Futures Conference 2025, which could be used as an opportunity to promote the UK NDC. The Chair and Secretariat will follow up with the Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee to discuss progress on the Strategic Communications Plan.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- Follow up with Communications Sub-Committee on revisions to the Strategic Communications Plan (Chair, Secretariat).

### **Item 4. Secretariat Updates**

#### **Updates on the Ocean Decade**

The Secretariat provided the Committee with an update on the latest call announced by the Decade. The Call for Decade Action #8 opened in October 2024, comprising four distinct criteria:

1. Submission of programmes for endorsement, focusing on Challenges 6 (community resilience to ocean risks) and 10 (restore society's relationship with the ocean), and the ocean-health nexus (deadline 31 January 2025).
2. Submission of expressions of interest for Decade Programmes not covered in section 1 (deadline closed November 2024).
3. Submission of projects for endorsement in-line with a number of Decade Programmes listed in the CFDA guidance note (deadline 31 January 2025).
4. Decade Contributions aiming to support capacity building and development (deadline 31 January 2025).

#### **Social Media Updates**

Committee members were notified of the following updates to the [UK NDC website](#) and [LinkedIn](#) profile:

- A new social media guidance and governance document has been produced alongside the website guidance document, to describe best practice for the use of LinkedIn. The documents have both been saved in Website and Social Media | Google Drive.
- Website updates include new posts on Committee member recruitment and the latest Call for Decade Action.

- The NDC LinkedIn profile has seen a considerable increase in engagement following the last Committee meeting. Post impressions reached 10,400 views in the last quarter, with an increase in followers by 240.

## **Item 5. IOC Delegate Updates**

Committee members were made aware of the following updates from representatives of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC):

- The International Panel for Ocean Sustainability (IPOS), an emerging body aiming to support implementation of international commitments for a sustainable ocean, is to be approached as a Decade Collaborative Centre (DCC) with the IOC suggested as a potential host. This could result in an expansion to the IOC Secretariat.
- UN agencies, including the IOC Secretariat, are able to register Decade activities through a separate mechanism than the Call for Decade Actions. This process has been challenged within the IOC, as delegates from member states have not been approached for consultation prior to registration.
- An external assessment of the IOC governance and management processes is currently underway, with aims for completion by January 2025. This will also consider the IOC Secretariat function, which plays a role in the delivery of the Ocean Decade.
- A medium-term strategy for the IOC is in development, which sets the agenda in which the Decade sits with support from member states. A full consultation aims to identify gaps in order to help the IOC evolve into new areas.

It was suggested by the Chair that a session could be held at the next NDC in-person meeting to present and discuss the structure and function of the IOC as an introduction for new members.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Include item on IOC structure and function on next meeting agenda (Alan to present; Secretariat to liaise with Chair and IOC reps).

## **Item 6. Decade mid-term review: ToR Questions**

As discussed in Item 2, the Chair has fed back to the DCU that the Committee wish to provide a joint response on the mid-term review questions, which will be discussed in an upcoming Focal Points meeting.

It was also raised that some NDCs have participated in a trial process which sees Committees providing endorsement for national Decade Activity submissions (such as workshops, seminars, publications and events). The trial has been well received by those participating, which has provided NDCs with more clarity on which activities are happening in their respective countries. It was noted that the process may seem somewhat duplicative in its present form, as although NDCs are providing initial endorsement, the DCU is also reviewing the decisions of NDCs.

To test the interest of the UK NDC's participation in this mechanism, the Chair will liaise with the Action Calls Sub-Committee to produce a paper on the current state of the process. Members will be asked to provide feedback on the document to determine whether the NDC has the resources and capacity to undertake this extra responsibility.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Prepare a summary paper on the process for NDCs to endorse UN Decade Activities (Chair; Action Calls SC).

## **Item 7. Task & Finish Group 1: UK NDC Stakeholder Event**

The Task & Finish Group provided updates on planning for the UK NDC Stakeholder Event to be held next spring. Two members from the Royal Society have been invited to join the planning process, due to their involvement with the UN Ocean Decade. The Royal Society have also offered to host the event, and venues are being held for two provisional dates in March 2025.

The event aims to encompass a science-policy dialogue, uniting current UK-based Decade partners and UK policy makers to look at the current state of play and to form consensus on policy priorities for the next five years of the Ocean Decade and beyond. It is hoped that the event will host around 100 attendees, including scientists, ocean-users, ECOPs and policymakers, with representation of all devolved administrations. Key UK players representing Decade Programmes and Projects will be invited to speak under relevant themes to showcase their work, along with the hope for a ministerial presence from relevant UK government areas. NDC members are encouraged to volunteer help and expertise during the event, including notetaking, facilitation of breakout groups etc.

Plenary sessions, breakout groups, exhibition space and a drinks reception will be utilised to promote networking and interactivity amongst attendees. The event will address four thematic areas:

- Ecosystem impacts of climate change and from emerging human activities
- Climate-resilient Ocean management and protection
- Sustainable use of the ocean
- Human-ocean connection.

Next steps for the Task & Finish Group include producing a 'save the date' post before Christmas, once dates have been confirmed; open-registration to go live in mid-January; and to release a full programme in February.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Confirm dates for event and produce a 'save the date' note for use on the website and LinkedIn (Task & Finish Group).

## **Item 8. Task & Finish Group 2: UN Ocean Conference**

The UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) Task & Finish Group provided updates on the status of the Conference and the planned UK NDC engagement. The Conference will be held in Nice, France from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and built around 10 ocean action panels. Prior to the conference, the 'One Ocean Science (OOS) Week' will run from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> June across venues in Nice. It is not expected that the UK NDC will participate in the One Ocean Science week due to costs involved with abstract submissions. However, there will be a series of side and satellite events held during the conference with relevance to the Ocean Decade, with registration opening on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025. An off-site Ocean Forum Day is planned for the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> June (TBC), alongside an informal DCU meeting, providing an opportunity for NDCs to meet, network and collaborate.

From a UK government perspective, the main outcome of interest will be the Nice Ocean Action Plan, which will be a ministerial declaration and a compilation of voluntary contributions. The UK have also submitted nominations for panel members and moderators. Once more information is released regarding the conference, the Task & Finish Group will endeavour to meet and further discuss how the NDC can engage with activities throughout the week. It was agreed that the Secretariat will begin to compile a list of Committee members who will be attending both UNOC and OOS (and in what capacity), as well as expressions of interest for those who wish to attend but may require support.

## **ACTIONS:**

- Compile list of Committee members attending UNOC and/or OOS (Secretariat).

## **Item 9. Sub Committee breakout groups**

In this agenda item, Sub-Committees met to continue mapping activities and deliverables, with encouragement to consider the ToR objectives to determine how to best progress with workplans for the upcoming year. Discussions and considerations were delivered in plenary in Item 10.

## **Item 10. Sub-Committee Reports**

Sub-Committees provided updates to the Committee and notified members of any asks and actions which require full Committee approval for sign off. It was also noted by the Chair that there is a need to review the capacity of Sub-Committees to ensure balance between appointed and ex-officio members, as well as considering where potential new members may sit, ahead of the recruitment sift.

### **Policy Sub-Committee**

As Policy Sub-Committee members were unable to attend this session, a brief update was given to indicate that members had successfully mapped objectives alongside the Committee ToR. Given the recent change in UK government, further time will be required for the development of outputs such as policy briefs.

### **Engagement Sub-Committee**

The Engagement Sub-Committee highlighted further discussions around the Stakeholder Event, pushing to maintain a March date to ensure budget and resource is available ahead of the next financial year. It was also highlighted that the next Ocean Decade Conference is to be held in 2027, with the IOC hoping to announce the host country in June 2025. It has been suggested that there is to be a preference for the conference to be held in the Global South, with expressions of interest for hosting of the event having been delivered to member states by the DCU. Finally, it was also discussed that the UK NDC should seek to continue inviting other NDCs to future meetings, to foster connections and collaborations. It was agreed that the Chair will invite a representative of the US NDC to join the Committee meeting in March.

### **Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee**

The Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee highlighted the intention to seek out and utilise existing Ocean Decade resources where available, to avoid reproduction of effort and materials. The two main priorities for the Sub-Committee in the coming year are to provide communications support for the UK Stakeholder Event and UNOC, with a representative sitting on each respective Task & Finish Group.

The Sub-Committee have also held further discussions around a social media campaign to provide summaries of the information contained in the Vision 2030 white papers. Despite no current volunteers from the wider Committee, three Sub-Committee members will each take a White Paper to read, utilise AI software to generate a plain text summary of the document, and then conduct a check for accuracy. This approach was supported by the Committee due to similar trials of AI systems across academia, government and civil service. Summaries and simple descriptor information could be used to promote Decade initiatives through the UK NDC website with a page dedicated to fact sheets, word-busting etc.

It was also highlighted that the recent development of an Ocean Decade strategic communications group could prove a useful connection, where a common strategy document could help feed into the UK NDC strategic communications plan.

## **Action Calls Sub-Committee**

A priority task for the Action Calls Sub-Committee was to deliver a slide pack to be used for talks and conferences which provide an overview of the Decade and the work of the NDC. This was created in liaison with the Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee and is available to all Committee members in Presentations and Resources | Google Drive. The Sub-Committee have further developed the Stakeholder Networks & Newsletters | Google Sheet spreadsheet to include information on newsletters that members are either subscribed to or aware of, which could be utilised for NDC communications.

The Sub-Committee will prepare to run a social media campaign for the next Call for Decade Action (#9) which will begin in April 2025. The campaign will aim to showcase existing actions, signpost to the NDC website and FAQs pages. It was agreed that current capacity did not allow for a campaign to be progressed through the current Action Call (#8). The Sub-Committee will also continue to update the Decade Actions and FAQ sections of the website, where required.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Review Sub-Committee capacities ahead of recruitment of new members (Chair; Secretariat).
- Invite a US NDC representative to attend the next Committee meeting (Chair).
- Present an example of an AI-generated summary of Vision 2030 White Paper at next meeting (Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee).
- Support Action Calls Sub-Committee communications by contributing to Stakeholder Networks & Newsletters | Google Sheet (All Committee Members).

## **Item 11. Forward Agenda**

It was agreed that the next in-person Committee meeting will tie in with UK Stakeholder Event planned for March 2025 in London. Members agreed that a 1.5-day meeting following the event would be beneficial, allowing for reflection upon the activity. It was also noted that a separate venue will likely be required for the NDC meeting, potentially to be hosted by Defra at the Marsham Street office. However, the final meeting date will not be confirmed until the Committee receives confirmation of the date and venue for the Stakeholder Event. It was also agreed that an informal coffee-catch up is to be held online ahead of March for those who may be able to attend, to welcome the newly recruited Committee members.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Finalise date and venue for March in-person NDC meeting (Management Group).

## **Item 12. AOB**

Committee members were notified that Defra's agreement with Cefas on the provision of the Secretariat is set to expire in March 2025. At present, Defra is testing the market to gauge commercial interest in providing an NDC Secretariat function, through an openly advertised Prior Information Notice (PIN). This will be followed by a Defra consultation on the Secretariat to determine how to move forward. Depending on the outcome of the consultation, current Secretariat members will be on hand to aid a smooth transition to another service provider if required.

## **Item 13. Summary and Close**

All actions were summarised and agreed by the Committee.

## Actions

No.	Action	Deadline	Owner
1	Finalised Terms of Reference to be sent to Committee members for information.	20 Dec 2024	Management Group; Secretariat
2	Share table of DCU task-group opportunities with Committee members.	When received from DCU	Chair (via Secretariat)
3	Provide updated list of mid-term evaluation questions for NDCs and collate responses.	When received from DCU	Chair; Secretariat
4	Follow up with Communications Sub-Committee on revisions to the Strategic Communications Plan.	8 Jan 2025	Chair; Secretariat
5	Include item on IOC structure and function on next meeting agenda (Alan to present - liaise with Chair and IOC reps).	3 Feb 2025	Secretariat
6	Prepare a summary paper on the process for NDCs to endorse UN Decade Activities.	8 Jan 2025	Chair; Action Calls SC
7	Confirm dates for event and produce a 'save the date' note for use on the website and LinkedIn.	20 Dec 2024	Stakeholder Event T&F Group
8	Compile list of Committee members attending UNOC and/or OOS.	7 Mar 2025	Secretariat; All
9	Review Sub-Committee capacities ahead of recruitment of new members.	20 Dec 2024	Chair; Secretariat
10	Invite a US NDC representative to attend the next Committee meeting.	8 Jan 2025	Chair
11	Present an example of an AI-generated summary of Vision 2030 White Paper at next meeting.	7 Mar 2025	Communications & Engagement SC
12	Support Action Calls Sub-Committee communications by contributing to Stakeholder Networks & Newsletters   <a href="#">Google Sheet</a> .	8 Jan 2025	All Committee Members
13	Finalise date and venue for March in-person NDC meeting.	20 Dec 2024	Management Group

## Agenda

### Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Time	Item		
10:00-10:10	1	Welcome	Verbal: MF
10:10-10:20	2	DCU focal points updates	Verbal: MF
10:20-10:30	3	Minutes and Actions	Paper 3.1: AI
10:30-10:35	4	Secretariat & social media updates	Verbal: DH
10:35-10:45	5	IOC-delegate updates	Verbal: AE
10:45-11:00	6	Decade mid-term review: ToR questions	Paper 6.1: MF
11:00-11:20	7	T&F Group: UK NDC Stakeholder Event	Slides: FB
11:20-11:30	Break		
11:30-11:50	8	T&F Group: UNOC	Verbal: LG, MF, CC
11:50-12:20	9	Sub-Committee breakout groups	Paper 9.1: MF
12:20-12:40	10	Sub-Committee reports	SC Representatives
12:40-12:45	11	Forward Look	Verbal: MF
12:45-12:50	12	AOB	Verbal: MF
12:50-13:00	13	Summary and Close	Verbal: MF