

15th Meeting of the UK National Decade Committee

Meeting Minutes

8th December 2025, Online.

Attendees

Members Present: Matt Frost (Chair), Aline Da Silva Cerqueira, Antony Firth, Conor Savage, Elvira Poloczanska, Emma McKinley, Gareth Cunningham, Gina Reinhardt, Hayley Roberts, Lydia Bach, Michelle Frost, Natalie Fox, Sien van der Plank.

Ex-Officio: Alan Evans (NOC), Caroline Culshaw (Defra), Frances Bird (Defra), Amanda Hennedy-Globe (FCDO), Suzanne Painting (Secretariat).

Apologies: Amy Bray, David Tudor, Katrina Ryan, Victoria Chinery.

Ex-Officio Apologies: Bekah Cioffi (Welsh Government), Bee Berx (Scottish Government), Colin Armstrong (Northern Ireland Executive), Dave Carlin (Defra), David Hughes (Secretariat), John Siddorn (NOC).

External presenters: Adam Leadbetter (UNESCO) and Margarita Lopez (UNESCO).

Item 1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed Committee members and Amanda Hennedy-Globe, the new FCDO representative. He formally recorded thanks to Lowri Griffiths who supported the establishment and work of the Committee but has now left the FCDO.

Item 2. Minutes and Actions

The Actions from the September meeting were reviewed. Ongoing Actions from the September meeting were highlighted. The Management Group review of the proposal led by the Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee (Comms SC) for an event at the Ocean Advocate Summit was discussed. The Chair highlighted a need to agree a process for future funding requests and the Committee was asked to comment on draft guidance prepared by the Secretariat. AH-G confirmed that funding for the event was still available. AC indicated that she may be able to support the event as she has the time and relevant expertise. The Chair requested that any other committee members who may be able to support the event contact NF, and that the Comms SC discuss the proposed event with AH-G to come to a final decision. CC proposed looking at creating more of a long term/forward look on funding requests rather than ad-hoc requests, which should be discussed at the next Management Group meeting.

ACTIONS:

- Comment on draft guidance for funding requests. See Paper 2.5 in Meeting 15 folder (All).
- Finalise decision on NDC event at the Ocean Advocate Summit (Comms SC, AC, AH-G (FCDO)).

- Committee members interested in supporting the NDC event at the Ocean Advocate Summit to contact NF (Interested Committee members).
- Add any updates to relevant Google Drive folders: Stakeholder Networks And Upcoming events calendar (All Committee Members).
- See Table of Ongoing Actions from Meeting 14 (below).

Item 3. Secretariat & Social Media Updates

Secretariat Updates

1. Secretariat function: Defra are in discussion with Cefas to keep the secretariat function at Cefas from 2026/27 onwards.
2. Process for NDC funding requests: The Secretariat has developed a document for NDC funding requests, outlining a step-by-step process for requests, approval and sign off. See Paper 2.5.
3. Decade Call for Action #10 opened in Oct 2025, consisting of a three-part call for: Programmes (all challenges) - Deadline 5th December [Closed], Projects (all challenges) - Deadline 31st January, and Contributions - Deadline 31st January.

Social Media Updates

Committee members were notified of the latest updates and analytics for the UK NDC website and LinkedIn profile. The website has been updated to include a new page under Endorsed Actions listing all UK endorsed activities so far and news items on Ocean Decade Data Sharing, the Call for Decade Advisory Board Members [closed], and the Call for Decade Action #10. Member biographies have been updated, where provided. Analytics showed the website had 62 users in this quarter (lower interaction than the previous quarter), with visitors from UK, USA, Australia, Philippines, EU. Most visitors engaged with the UK endorsed actions pages. The LinkedIn page has gained 35 new followers (840 in total) and 2000 impressions (number of times posts have been viewed) in this quarter.

Item 4. ToR Review

Committee members were reminded that a review of the Terms of Reference (ToR) is now due. Minor changes are anticipated as a comprehensive review was undertaken in 2024. The Secretariat was asked to share a copy of the 2024 ToR highlighting areas which may require updates.

ACTIONS:

- Share ToR highlighting where updates may be required (Secretariat).

Item 5. DCU Updates

The Chair has attended meetings with the Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) and global NDCs every few months. He highlighted that regional dialogues may be established to focus on how the UN Ocean Decade can be operationalised in different regions, to set up the legacy of the Decade and link the different structures (such as Decade Commissions, Decade Coordination Offices, Decade Coordination Centres). A key question is determining the regions to be used (e.g. North Atlantic region, West Indian Ocean). The Chair suggested sharing an email with the concept note, for feedback, and will update the Committee once there is clarity. At present there is no reference to wider UN structures. The Chair also highlighted that there are ongoing activities that the Committee can engage with, such as the Decade Capacity Development matchmaker.

The Chair also highlighted that the UK NDC is partnering and speaking at the Conference on Human Health, 11-12th December in Lisbon, which he is attending.

ACTIONS:

- Share relevant DCU emails/updates (concept note) for feedback (Chair; all Committee members).

Item 6. IOC-delegate updates

Despite minimal Decade-specific updates from the IOC in recent months, AE provided an overview of relevant 'bigger picture' updates happening in the background which may have an impact on the Ocean Decade further down the line. AE highlighted that the UNESCO budget has been cut for next year, resulting in a budget cut for the IOC that has retained its 3% share of the UNESCO budget. Rationalisation after the mid-term reviews highlighted a need for the IOC and the Decade to focus on priority areas. Initially they are trying to identify which initiatives are more likely to attract external voluntary funding. He also mentioned reforms within the IOC-GOOS (Global Ocean Observing System) relationship, and that some of the GOOS programmes have been adopted by the Decade, which may further affect funding. Committee members were asked to contribute to and/or promote the Decade Capacity Development Platform (ocean connector/matchmaker).

ACTIONS:

- Contribute to and/or promote the Decade Capacity Development Platform (matchmaker); see <https://oceanconnector.oceandecade.org/> (All Committee members).

Item 7. Ex-officio memberships

CC has been exploring the potential for future ex-officio memberships and highlighted high levels of flux currently within UKRI. She has identified potential leads to approach and hopes to progress this before the meeting in March next year.

ACTION:

- Explore potential entry points for initiating conversation with UKRI for ex-officio involvement in the UK NDC (ongoing, CC).

Item 8. Engagement Opportunities

The main focus of the meeting was on the EU Horizon funding call (ca € 9 million), likely to be published in December. CC previously suggested that the UK NDC could help amplify the EU Commission call through their Horizon Europe programme and proposed this at a recent a global NDC meeting. Offers of help were received from many NDCs (e.g. Germany, Korea, Canada, Portugal) but is unclear how to involve them. The Commission is hoping to hold information sessions at the end of January; however, the UN Ocean Decade is likely to be only one item on one slide. CC suggested hosting a webinar at the end of January or start of February (the closing date may be April), with potential co-hosts from Ireland and Germany's NDCs. Defra are currently drafting a plan, which will be shared with the Committee for comments and feedback. Committee members could get involved with various tasks, such as writing text for the website and LinkedIn. The ambition would be to raise awareness of the opportunity within the UK research community to get back into the Horizon programme. European funding needs a consortium of at least three partners, so it may help to work with other NDCs, to help with coordination.

The Chair highlighted the next big Ocean Decade Conference in Rio in 2027, with the main event from 7-9th April and satellite events 5-6th April. The organisers want it to be different from the Barcelona meeting. For example, with fewer, more-focused events around key themes (e.g. resilience, deep-sea) and policy and environmental impacts. They want the regional dialogues to be a lead up to the Conference. He suggested that the Committee discuss at the March meeting what the UK NDC would like to do at the Conference, and who would like to attend, considering limited funding.

The Chair mentioned that the Ocean Sciences Meeting in Glasgow is approaching (February 2026) and will likely be attended by many Committee members. He is waiting for updates on a day focused

around the Decade. EM was thanked for offering to liaise re the Ocean and Coastal Futures Conference. However, it was too short notice for the Committee to prepare something meaningful.

The Chair highlighted that he was approached by Robert Hinchcliffe from the University of Bristol, looking at digital innovation and working with consumers on digital solutions. He would like to run a project with students to develop digital solutions to promote engagement with the UN Ocean Decade. The Chair has agreed to present on the Decade to students (on 21st January) and asked if any Committee members would be interested in participating.

The Chair reported back on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Plenary being hosted by the UK in early 2026. The IPBES Chair felt that it would not be helpful to the NDC to engage as it would be very technical. CC reported that a team in another part of Defra may be leading on the negotiation part of the meeting or organising a stakeholder day on how stakeholders can engage with the IPBES programme, but this is probably not a priority for the Decade. The Chair said that PML may be part of the IPBES meeting, but he may not attend if there is no Ocean Decade or NDC engagement.

CS reported that he is presenting at the Arctic Frontiers Conference in Tromsø, Norway, in February 2026 and will share a request if he needs Committee support.

ACTIONS:

- Share email with next steps re EU Horizon Funding Call (CC)
- Liaise with the Chair re student event at the University of Bristol (GC)

Item 9. DCO-ODS Presentation

Adam Leadbetter (UNESCO) presented an overview of the Decade Coordination Office for Ocean Data Sharing (DCO-ODS; see presentation (in meeting folder), which aims to promote data sharing (including by the private sector) to deliver the science we need to address Decade challenges and outcomes. To provide a comprehensive, dynamic digital representation of the ocean to enhance decision making, Decade programmes and projects are encouraged to share data to global systems via structures such as National Data Centres, OBIS nodes, and associated data units. Working with other DCOs and Decade Co-ordination Centres (DCCs), they hope to launch an initial version of a digital atlas around the different Decade themes at the Ocean Decade Conference in Rio, April 2027. They would like to be able to showcase UK data which inspire and help with decision-making at local levels, and provide a knowledge exchange mechanism.

Outputs include developing guidelines for best practice for data sharing (such as for socio-economic data, citizen science data, bathymetry data and marine megafauna data). Support from the UK NDC could include informing Decade Action leads about the DCO-ODS, encouraging them to share data with national structures, encouraging them to join conversations at monthly online (help desk) meetings and at the Ocean Sciences Conference in Glasgow next February, following the DCO-ODS [LinkedIn page](#), and suggesting opportunities for webinars to highlight successes. The Chair indicated that information and opportunities could be shared on the UK NDC website and LinkedIn page. The Cultural Heritage Framework Programme may be able to provide a useful local case study. AF will liaise with AL.

ACTIONS:

- Support and/or promote the Decade Coordination Office for Ocean Data Sharing (All Committee members; Secretariat).

Item 10. Sub-Committee Breakout Groups

In this breakout item, Sub-Committees met to continue the development of activities and workplans. Discussions were fed back in plenary in Agenda Item 11.

Item 11. Sub-Committee Reports

Sub-Committees each delivered a series of updates on recent and upcoming activities.

Action Calls Sub-Committee

- The mapping of endorsed Actions will be updated following announcement of recent endorsements.
- The LinkedIn campaign focusing on Call for Decade Action #10 will feature a new post on COLab and CoastPredict in December. The final post will be in January 2026.
- It was suggested that a post on the UK Stakeholder Event could be contributed to the DCU LinkedIn campaign.

Policy Sub-Committee

- The first Policy Brief, serving as an introduction to the Decade, has been completed. DH will liaise with CC to prepare for sign-off by the Management Group.
- The DCU guidance document shared by the Chair and on the Agenda for the March meeting includes mapping across national policies. CC will circulate work being done by Defra on this to the Policy Sub-Committee to target next steps, such as the next policy brief, for discussion at the March meeting. It was suggested that this could be used to map Decade Action impacts against policy. This would be useful for meeting the requirement under the monitoring, evaluation and learning from the mid-term review of impacts on policy and societal benefits.
- There was a discussion on how policy briefs could be used to give policy messages, for example how to share best practice.

Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee

- The UK NDC event at the Ocean Advocate Summit was discussed, and potential help from AC and Svdp was offered. A separate planning meeting will be arranged in due course.
- Committee members were asked to contact NF if they are interested in providing input or support.
- All slides for the LinkedIn campaign on Vision 2030 White Papers have been completed and are in the Google folder. The Secretariat is to arrange a content review.

Engagement Sub-Committee

- The road to Rio was discussed. The main events were identified as the American Geophysical Union (AGU) science meeting in Glasgow (2026) and Coastal Futures (2027). The SC discussed which other key meetings to get involved with, e.g. the regional dialogues (the Atlantic), the IOC MEL framework, the International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions (ICMB), World Conference on Marine Biodiversity (WCMB), the World Congress of Marine Stations (WCMS). and the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA) meeting in Brazil in April (CC is Defra lead), which the DCO-ODS hopes to feed into. Other options include the G20 which the UK is leading in 2027; this could be discussed in autumn 2026.
- Another UK Stakeholder event was suggested to engage and stimulate the UK community: a preparation meeting ahead of Rio was suggested for December 2026 or February 2027. Funding and resource (Defra or others?) will need to be discussed. Planning would need to start around mid- to end of 2026. The Chair noted that it would be good to be able to say what the Decade is achieving and has achieved in terms of policy, influence, etc, both nationally and globally. Defra will look into resources during business planning. Suggestions for the event included:
 - A collation of UK Endorsed Actions' benefits to Policy and Society
 - Lessons learned from UK Actions

- It was suggested that the Management Group discuss potential outcomes of a stakeholder event (for example, a statement).
- By the March meeting, the Sub-Committee hopes to have a list of upcoming events.

ACTIONS:

- Slides for the Vision 2030 White Papers LinkedIn campaign to be reviewed (Secretariat).
- Finalise Policy Brief for sign-off by the Management Group (DH, CC).

Item 12. Forward Look

AB was thanked for arranging the venue for the next in-person meeting of the UK NDC, which will be held at the Penryn Campus, Cornwall, of the University of Exeter on the 24th and 25th of March 2026. The 24th will be a full day, and the 25th a half day. The Committee was asked to suggest speakers. The Chair suggested that he contact Professor Moore at the University of Exeter's European Centre for Environment and Human Health.

ACTIONS:

- Suggest speakers for the March meeting (All)
- Chair to contact Professor Moore (Chair)
- Share recommendations and information for the in-person UK NDC meeting in March 2026 (Secretariat).

Item 13. AOB

No outstanding business was discussed under this Agenda item.

Item 14. Summary and Close

The Chair thanked Committee members for attending and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

Summary of Actions

Actions from Meeting 15 and ongoing actions from Meeting 14 are summarised in the tables below.

UK NDC Meeting 15 Actions

No.	Action	Deadline	Owner	Progress
1	Comment on draft guidance for funding requests. See Paper 2.5 in Meeting 15 folder.	11/12/25	All Committee members	
2	Finalise decision on NDC event at the Ocean Advocate Summit.	TBC	Comms SC, AC, AH-G (FCDO)	
3	Committee members interested in supporting the NDC event at the Ocean Advocate Summit to contact NF.	12/12/25	Interested Committee members	
4	Share ToR highlighting where updates may be required.	11/12/25	Secretariat	
5	Share relevant DCU emails/updates (concept note) for feedback.	22/12/25	Chair; All Committee members	
6	Contribute to and/or promote the Decade Capacity Development Platform https://oceanconnector.oceandecade.org/	n/a	All Committee members	
7	Share email with next steps re EU Horizon Funding Call.	TBC	CC	
8	Liaise with the Chair re student event at the University of Bristol.	22/12/26	GC	
9	Support and/or promote the Decade Coordination Office for Ocean Data Sharing.	n/a	All Committee members; Secretariat	
10	Discuss resources for preparing for Ocean Decade Conference in Rio in April 2027.	15/03/26	Management Group	
11	Slides for the Vision 2030 White Papers LinkedIn campaign to be reviewed	15/02/26	Secretariat	
12	Finalise Policy Brief for sign-off by the Management Group	09/01/26	DH, CC	
13	Suggest speakers for the March meeting. - Chair to contact Prof. Moore	05/01/26	All Committee members; Chair	
14	Share recommendations and information for the in-person UK NDC meeting in March 2026.	20/12/25	Secretariat	
15	Add any updates to relevant Google Drive folders: - Stakeholder Networks - Upcoming events calendar	Ongoing	All Committee members	

Ongoing Actions from UK NDC Meeting 14

No.	Action	Deadline	Owner	Progress
1	Review and provide feedback on potential UK NDC strategy for the Decade. See papers 2.2 and 2.3 in Meeting 15 folder.	30/01/26	All Committee members	
2	Consider DCU's call for NDC stories LinkedIn campaign.	30/01/26	All Committee members	
4	Explore potential entry points for initiating conversation with UKRI for ex-officio involvement in the UK NDC.	27/02/26	CC; MG	
5	Inform Secretariat of any updates to member biographies on the website.	22/12/25	All Committee members	
6	Investigate the newly developed MEL framework and how it may inform strategy & annual reporting to the IOC.	01/09/26	Secretariat	
7	Promote upcoming Horizon Europe Funding Call	TBC	Secretariat; All Committee Members	
9	Inform Secretariat if planning to attend the AGU meeting in Glasgow.	05/12/25	All Committee members	
11	Share date for Defra CSA briefing on the UN Ocean Decade.	TBC	CC	
12	Add UK NDC video trailer to website and LinkedIn.	22/12/25	Comms SC; Secretariat	
15	Finalise and publish first Policy Brief.	22/12/25	Policy SC, MG, Secr.	
16	Consider options for printing an NDC pop-up poster.	30/01/26	FCDO (AH-G) Volunteers needed.	

Meeting Agenda: Monday 8th December 2025

Time	Item	
13:00-13:10 (10 min)	1	Welcome Verbal: MF
13:10-13:15 (5 min)	2	Minutes and Actions Verbal: SP; Paper 2.1; Papers 2.2 to 2.5.
13:15-13:20 (5 min)	3	Secretariat & social media updates Verbal: DH
13:20-13:25 (5 min)	4	ToR Review Verbal: SP; Paper 4.1.
13:25-13:35 (10 min)	5	DCU updates Verbal: MF
13:35-13:45 (10 min)	6	IOC-delegate updates Verbal: AE, see Paper 6.1
13:45-13:50 (5 min)	7	Ex-officio memberships Defra, MF
13:50-14:15 (25 min)	8	Engagement Opportunities Verbal: MF
14:15-14:30 (15 min)	Break	
14:30-14:50 (20 min)	9	DCO-ODS presentation Speaker: Adam Leadbetter
14:50-15:20 (30 min)	10	Sub-Committee breakout groups Verbal: MF
15:20-15:45 (25 min)	11	Sub-Committee Reports Verbal: SC Representatives
15:45-15:50 (5 min)	12	Forward Look Verbal: MF
15:50-15:55 (5 min)	13	Any Other Business Verbal: MF
15:55-16:00 (5 min)	14	Summary and Close Verbal: MF