

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

24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026, University of Exeter, Penryn Campus, Cornwall.

### Attendees

**Members Present:** Matt Frost (Chair), Aline Da Silva Cerqueira (online), Amy Bray, Antony Firth, Conor Savage (online), David Tudor (online), Elvira Poloczanska, Gareth Cunningham (online), Gina Reinhardt (online), Michelle Frost (online), Natalie Fox (online), Sien van der Plank (online).

**Ex-Officio:** Caroline Culshaw (Defra), David Hughes (Secretariat), Humaira Hussain (FCDO, online), Paul Buckley (Secretariat), Suzanne Painting (Secretariat).

**Apologies:** Emma McKinley, Hayley Roberts, Katrina Ryan, Lydia Bach, Victoria Chinery.

**Ex-Officio Apologies:** Alan Evans (NOC), Amanda Hennedy-Globe (FCDO), Bekah Cioffi (Welsh Government), Bee Berx (Scottish Government), Colin Armstrong (Northern Ireland Executive), Dave Carlin (Defra), John Siddorn (NOC).

**External presenters:** Professor Brendan Godley (University of Exeter), Professor Camille Bonneaud (University of Exeter), Dr Lucy Buxton (NDC Australia), Nicola Bridge (Ocean Conservation Trust, online).

**Observers:** Nancy Cross (C-Marine).

### Item 1: Welcome & Chair Updates

Professor Camille Bonneaud, Director of the Environment and Sustainability Institute (ESI), welcomed the Committee to the University of Exeter Penryn Campus and provided some background on the work of the department.

The Chair gave several updates on ex-officio Committee members:

- Frances Bird (Defra) has moved into a new role within Defra, and was thanked for her contributions to the work of the Committee and her commitment to raising the profile of the Ocean Decade within the UK and internationally.
- Suzanne Painting (Cefas) will move on from her role on the Secretariat at the end of the financial year, with great thanks extended from the Committee for providing consistent support throughout the development and ongoing operation of the UK NDC.
- Paul Buckley (Cefas) was introduced to the Committee, and will be joining the NDC Secretariat team at Cefas.
- Humaira Hussain (FCDO), attending on behalf of Amanda Hennedy-Globe and the FCDO's Ocean Policy Unit, was introduced and welcomed to the meeting.

Further updates included:

- Katherine Garrett Cox MBE, CEO of the Gulf International Bank UK Limited, was recently appointed as a member of the Decade Advisory Board. The Chair will seek to liaise further with Katherine and the Decade Advisory Board to promote links with the UK NDC.
- With the Decade now just past the mid-way point, and the lead-up to the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference in Rio, the focus has begun to shift towards building a legacy and thinking beyond 2030. Considering the legacy of the Decade within the UK will be a priority focus for UK NDC workplans moving forward.

## **Item 2. Minutes and Actions**

The Secretariat provided an update on actions from the previous meeting and highlighted a number of tasks to be addressed in following agenda items, including feedback on Guidance for Funding Requests (see Agenda Item 18) and identifying resources in preparation for the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference (Agenda Item 10). It was also noted that content has been finalised for the Policy Brief and Vision 2030 White Paper LinkedIn campaign, which will be published in due course.

Discussion was held around Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) plans to shift towards 'Ocean Decade Solutions', which will be a strong focus of the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference. A series of 'blueprints' are currently in development by the DCU and were announced at the latest NDC Focal Points meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026. These solutions will be developed by identifying the main areas of science and knowledge, the key measures that need to be put in place to ensure that science and knowledge can be used, and other enabling conditions, such as financing partnerships and infrastructure. Some confusion was noted amongst the Committee as to how these solutions will relate to the 10 Decade Challenges and 7 Decade Outcomes, and it was agreed that the DCU will be contacted for further clarity.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Share March 2026 Focal Points meeting report and slides with Committee members (Secretariat).
- Contact DCU for clarity on 'Ocean Decade Solutions' raised at Focal Points meeting. (Chair to contact DCU and inform Secretariat).

## **Item 3. Secretariat & Social Media Updates**

### **Secretariat Updates**

The Secretariat highlighted the need for Committee input into two Reports due in April:

- The UK NDC Annual Progress Report to Defra/FCDO is due on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026. The report is to include details of Committee meetings, hosted and attended events (including conferences, seminars, webinars) as well as details of communications activities, highlighting specific achievements and outcomes throughout the year. Committee members are asked to provide the Secretariat with content and feedback by 9<sup>th</sup> April.
- The Ocean Decade's annual Monitoring Report to the DCU is due on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Content can be drawn from the progress report, but also requires estimated numbers of people the committee has engaged with and/or reached, and Committee diversity metrics. Committee members are asked to provide input by 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

Discussion was held around how best to frame the work of the Committee for the reports, noting that five potential outcomes could be highlighted through events the UK NDC has contributed to this year. Suggested outcomes, and examples, included:

- Mobilising the UK marine science community (EU Horizon Funding Webinar, Call for Decade Actions LinkedIn campaign, invited speakers at Committee meetings, UK NDC website)
- Inspiring future generations and engaging with higher education (Ocean Advocate Summit, University of Bristol post-graduate student engagement)
- International engagement and engagement with the health sector (EU Horizon Funding Webinar, Ocean and Human Health Conference, inviting global NDC speakers to UK NDC meetings, and vice versa)
- Providing a forum/framework for networking (UK NDC LinkedIn campaigns, EU Horizon Funding Webinar, Ocean Advocate Summit)
- Highlighting UK community engagement (Ocean Advocate Summit, LinkedIn campaigns, UK NDC website)

Committee members were reminded to continue adding to the Stakeholder Networks and Upcoming events calendar spreadsheets on the UK NDC Google Drive to inform annual reporting.

### **Social Media Updates**

Updates to the UK NDC website and LinkedIn pages have included the announcement of four new UK project endorsements from Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML), National Oceanography Centre (NOC), Historic England and The Real Ice Company. The Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) have been formally announced as a Decade Implementing Partner, and the Nekton Foundation have a new endorsed contribution titled 'Yachts for Science'.

The UK NDC video trailer has now been added to the website homepage, and the recorded session of the Webinar on EU Horizon Funding for the Decade has been published under the relevant news item. The website has received 600 new visitors over the last quarter, whilst the LinkedIn page has gained a further 136 followers (new total of 980) and 7000+ post impressions.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Contribute to Annual Progress Report, submit to Defra/FCDO and share on website (All Committee members, Secretariat)
- Contribute to Ocean Decade Monitoring Report, share with Management Group and submit to DCU (All Committee members, Secretariat, Management Group)
- Add updates to relevant Google Drive folders: Stakeholder Networks and Upcoming events calendar (All Committee Members).

## **Item 4. UK NDC ToR Updates**

The Secretariat noted some minor changes to the Committee Terms of Reference following the annual review in 2025, which included minor changes in terminology under the ex-officio memberships section, minor amendments to wording related to UK NDC communication with Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA), and the addition of finance reports. Updates to the ToR were approved by all members and signed off in plenary.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Publish 2025 Terms of Reference to the UK NDC Website (Secretariat).

## **Item 5. IOC-delegate updates**

The Chair delivered an update on behalf of the UK delegates to the IOC including an upcoming budget cut for the DCU due to broader issues within UNESCO. As a result, a number of strategic actions will be taken by the DCU to shift focus from the 10 Decade Challenges towards a series of cross-cutting solutions (see Agenda Item 2). It is currently unclear as to how this may affect future Calls for Decade

Action, but it is likely that future Decade calls will be solutions-focused rather than promoting challenge-based criteria.

## **Item 6. Concept Note for Regional Dialogues**

In this item, discussion was held around the DCU's plans for 'Regional Dialogues', to draw together global NDCs, Decade Collaborative Centres (DCCs), Decade Coordination Offices (DCOs) and Decade Implementing Partners (DIPs) within a regional setting, to focus on shared objectives and solutions. Members are encouraged to self-define the region(s) in which they will sit, with the UK NDC preliminarily agreeing to sit within the 'North Atlantic and Europe' and 'High Seas' regional dialogues. There has not yet been much uptake from other NDCs/Decade structures, so there is currently some uncertainty around interest across the region.

It was highlighted that potential themes for collaborative discussion would include funding pathways and partnerships, science policy uptake, science priorities and knowledge exchange. The DCU intend to evaluate the outcomes of these regional dialogues to contribute to the global Decade process, and to inform part of the roadmap to the 2027 conference in Rio.

It was agreed that support and attendance of online Regional Dialogue meetings should be shared across the Committee, to maximise inclusion and reduce the need for further dissemination between members. Meeting details will be shared with all Committee members once received from the DCU/regional dialogue group, to allow members to listen in to discussions.

## **Item 7. National implementation of the UN Ocean Decade Strategy**

The DCU initially intended for NDCs to develop national implementation plans, acting as a 'national ocean strategy' for the Ocean Decade. However, many NDCs highlighted overlap with existing national strategies and frameworks, noting a potential duplication of efforts and a lack of capacity and resource for many Committees to complete the task. In response, the DCU recently published Guidance to implement the Ocean Decade at the national level, a non-prescriptive guide for NDCs to consider how best to align the Decade with existing strategies and policies in each their nations. The Chair suggested that the Committee could develop a one-pager, to outline recommendations for the legacy of the UK NDC and the Ocean Decade in the UK. This would detail the Committee's hopes for what the UK ocean science landscape would look like beyond 2030, including the networks developed, science delivered and a focus on Decade outcomes and solutions.

Discussions highlighted that a suitable approach could utilise the Decade framework and Vision 2030 outcomes to identify policy areas where science could be better utilised to inform policy. The UK NDC would play a convening role to facilitate conversation between policymakers and endorsed Decade Actions in the UK to encourage ongoing implementation of the Decade vision beyond 2030. This could be achieved through ongoing publication of Policy Briefs, targeting specific policy areas and promoting key messages from relevant stakeholders and research outputs through the lens of the 'Decade solutions' currently in development. It was suggested that the next Policy Brief could focus on the legacy of the Decade in the UK, and would be discussed by the Policy Sub-Committee in Agenda Item 15.

It was further noted that the UK is now a member of the High-Level Panel for Sustainable Ocean Economy, and has committed to developing and publishing a sustainable ocean plan by 2027. This provides an opportunity for further engagement from the UK NDC to continue to drive the vision of the Ocean Decade into national planning, which could be achieved through developing a response to a draft sustainable ocean plan once it is open to consultation.

## Item 8. Feedback on the Ocean Advocacy Summit UK NDC event

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2026, Committee members Natalie Fox, Michelle Frost and Aline Da Silva Cerqueira facilitated a UK NDC workshop session at the Ocean Advocate Summit, co-organised by Katrina Ryan on behalf of Mindfully Wired. The workshop was titled 'Imagining the Ocean We want' which aimed to explore public perceptions of the Ocean Decade, identify which outcomes and challenges resonate most with UK communities, uncover barriers and opportunities for engagement, and pilot a workshop format for future use.

The workshop was attended by 31 participants engaged in ocean conservation, science and policy. The Chair welcomed participant Nicola Bridge, Head of Ocean Advocacy and Engagement at the Ocean Conservation Trust, to provide feedback and reflections on the activity. Workshop activities included a briefing on key aspects of the Ocean Decade (including the 10 challenges and 7 outcomes), sharing circles, small group discussions, and voting exercises, supported by ocean soundscapes to encourage sensory connections.

The task group presented the key findings of the workshop, based around three questions:

### Which Ocean Decade outcomes matter most?

A healthy and resilient ocean was highlighted as the most important among attendees, however it was recognised that all outcomes are interdependent. Inclusion and protection were frequently mentioned as essential components for a healthy and resilient ocean.

### Who is included in the “we” of the ocean?

Participants challenged the assumption that all people want the same ocean, noting that community needs will vary by cultural background, resource dependence, and societal values. It was also highlighted that needs of future generations, non-human species, and the global community should be considered when considering 'the ocean we want'. Equity, justice, and representation were recurring themes across the small group discussions.

### What does a thriving ocean look, sound, or feel like?

Participants imagined a clean, colourful, and biodiverse ocean, and it was noted that natural sounds like animals and coral were preferred over sounds related to human activity. It was also highlighted that many ocean users may lack an understanding of a truly healthy ocean due to shifting baselines over time.

Feedback from participants highlighted the value of the inclusive facilitation and open discussion led by the task group, but noted some challenges such as accessibility and language barriers. Suggestions for improvement included clearer materials, more focused feedback, and increased discussion time. Attendee Nicola Bridge emphasized that the audience was already highly engaged in UK marine science and suggested adapting the workshop for broader public audiences, possibly through venues like aquariums. Nicola also suggested simplifying the language around the Ocean Decade's challenges and outcomes to make them more accessible, and a stronger focus on forward-looking solutions rather than retrospective content. She highlighted the importance of connecting scientific data with the needs of communities, encouraging participatory forums to bridge gaps between science, policy and ocean users.

A discussion was held around how to build on the success of the workshop, highlighting opportunities to adapt the format for future events. It was suggested that the workshop could be expanded by supporting existing NGOs and community groups, facilitating connections to policy, and amplifying local actions on a national scale. It was suggested that Challenge 10 should be a key focus of future workshops to illustrate how local actions contribute to the Decade, inspiring engagement and promoting volunteer involvement across communities, councils and local groups.

## Item 9. Engagement with the Ocean Decade

In this session, speakers were invited to present on Decade-related topics, followed by a brief plenary discussion.

### **Marine Science UK** - Guest speaker: Professor Brendan Godley (University of Exeter)

Professor Brendan Godley provided an introduction to Exeter Marine, a multi-disciplinary research network across the University of Exeter with collaborative partners across the UK. Many partners within the network are involved in UK Ocean Decade Actions, including Ocean Census and Yachts for Science (led by the Nekton Foundation), Challenger 150 (led by PML) and the Convex Seascape Survey (led by Blue Marine Foundation).

The main focus of this session was to introduce the Committee to the newly formed 'Marine Science UK' (MSUK) an umbrella organisation designed to unify and represent the interests of marine science across the UK. The organisation's vision and mission is to act as a collective voice championing robust and coherent science evidence across UK universities, research organisations, government, industry, and the wider community. This will be achieved through being a trusted and impactful voice, informing policy nationally and internationally, and bringing scientists together to achieve collective action. The work of the organisation will be supported through memberships, with a rotating head to ensure equal opportunities for all partners.

So far, the main priorities of the steering committee have been to implement organisational structures and build a network of interested parties, development of communications materials and horizon scanning to consider how marine observations may look in the future. It was noted that there are many shared objectives between MSUK and the UK NDC, and engagement between the two could help to secure the legacy of the Ocean Decade within the UK. Collaboration and connectivity will also help to demonstrate the strength of UK marine science on the international stage, and it was highlighted that the UN Ocean Decade Conference in 2027 could provide an opportunity for MSUK and the UK NDC to work together as a collective voice for the UK.

### **EU Horizon Funding Webinar** – Speaker: Caroline Culshaw (Defra, UK NDC)

On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026, the UK NDC ran an online webinar titled "Empowering the Decade: Webinar on Horizon Europe Funding", chaired by Matt Frost and featuring guest speakers Nicolas Segebarth (European Commission), Alison Clausen (IOC-UNESCO) and Sofia Cordeiro (DGEPA, MECI). The event, organised by Defra representatives and in partnership with the Canadian and Portuguese NDCs, focused on providing advice to parties interested in applying for funding under the Horizon Europe funding call 'Empowering the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development', closing on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026. The event was promoted through the UK NDC website and LinkedIn page, shared by partner NDCs and the DCU's main Ocean Decade social media platforms, and had 175 attendees from multiple nations.

The objectives of the webinar were to:

- raise awareness of the call and increase the reach of the funding opportunity.
- share information from different institutions and states about how to work collaboratively.
- provide a space for people to network and discuss ideas for submission (via the chat function).

It was highlighted that key funding priorities for IOC-UNESCO included providing a post-2030 longevity to existing Decade coordination structures, as well as a focus on small island developing states (SIDS). A feedback form highlighted that over 50% of attendees intended to submit to the funding call, whilst 38% highlighted a 'maybe'. Attendees noted that the feedback session felt lightly

rushed, and would appreciate more time for discussion at a future virtual event. It was highlighted in discussion that UK NDC members have been approached with questions regarding the funding call, and online materials and recording of the webinar have proved useful in helping with queries, with 77 unique views.

Further discussion was held around European collaboration, and it was noted that UK NDC member Conor Savage will be representing ECOP Europe on the European Ocean Board, recently developed by the European Commission in order to pursue the European Ocean Pact 2027. It was suggested that further information and a presentation on this newly formed Board could be included as an agenda item at the next UK NDC meeting.

### **Ocean Decade MSc Projects – Speaker: Gareth Cunningham (MBA, UK NDC)**

In January 2026, UK NDC member Gareth Cunningham engaged with staff and students at the University of Bristol's Centre for Entrepreneurship to discuss a master's project in Digital Innovation, with a focus on developing solutions to real-world challenges such as those addressed in the UN Ocean Decade. These projects are unique in that they introduce ocean-related themes into programmes which span numerous disciplines, including anthropology, accounting, business and management, computer science, economics, electronic engineering, finance, film and TV, geography, history, music, physics, psychology and theatre. The project brief included consideration of five key questions:

- 1) What specific ocean-related problem or opportunity does the project address (and which Ocean Decade challenge does it respond to)?
- 2) Who is the primary audience or stakeholder and What are their needs, motivations, barriers, and behaviours?
- 3) What change should the project create (awareness, behaviour change, participation, policy influence, data contribution, etc.)?
- 4) What role does data play in the solution (collection, visualisation, interpretation, sharing) and is citizen science involved?
- 5) How does the project encourage responsible ocean-related behaviours, ethics and responsibility?

The project objective was to design a digital user experience that empowers one of three personas (varying by age, behaviours, etc) to understand, reduce, or transform their ocean impact through more sustainable consumer behaviour. Gareth provided students with an overview of the Decade, including the overarching structure, vision, mission and 10 Decade challenges. He also presented examples of real-world scenarios which could be considered as a focus for projects, such as marine litter, forever chemicals, ocean-based solutions to climate impacts, protection and monitoring, and sustainable seafood. Prototypes developed by the students will be submitted by mid-April, and Gareth has been invited to help with the review process by the University.

It was suggested that staff and students could be invited to a future UK NDC meeting to present their work to maintain the link with the University and promote further collaborative opportunities and engagement with students. It could also provide an opportunity to link students with relevant marine industry experts to showcase their work and ideas. Gareth agreed to provide feedback on the project review process once completed.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Include agenda item on the European Ocean Board at the next UK NDC meeting (Secretariat, CS).

## **Item 10. UK NDC Engagement: The Road to Rio**

In this item, discussion was held around preparations for the next UN Ocean Decade Conference, scheduled to take place in Rio de Janeiro from April 7th to 9th, 2027. The DCU's aims for the conference will be to showcase achievements towards the priorities outlined in the Barcelona statement, agree on urgent actions to accelerate ocean science policy impact, and secure commitments from partners to establish a Decade legacy beyond 2030. Outcomes of the Decade Conference will also be used to inform discussion at the next UN Oceans Conference (UNOC) in 2028, particularly around Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water.

It was highlighted that satellite events will be held on April 5th and 6th, with a focus on fewer but more targeted events than last time to improve overall attendance at plenaries. The first round of applications for satellite events is due in late May or early June 2026, with a second round in autumn. Conference attendance will increase to 3500 participants (up from 2500 in Barcelona), with registration planned to open in late September 2026. A series of 'Road to Rio' events will take place in the lead up to the conference, providing opportunities for UK NDC engagement. Several Committee members expressed interest in attending the conference (including representatives from Defra and other agencies), but budget constraints and travel approvals will need to be considered. As with Barcelona, it is likely that the NDC will receive a few allocated registration slots for members, however members were also encouraged to apply independently to maximise Committee attendance. It was agreed that FCDO would look into funding options to potentially support the attendance of a small number of ECOPs from the Committee.

Discussions are ongoing about the UK NDC's presence and activities at the conference, including whether to hold side events or collaborate with other NDCs. The Chair will liaise with the DCU on potential plans for a collaborative NDC event in due course. It was also suggested that a stakeholder event or workshop could be held in the UK in late 2026 or early 2027, to engage national Decade actors. The workshop would aim to develop UK positions on urgent actions, post-2030 legacy themes, and contributions to the conference, but it was noted that the timing must balance preparation needs for the Rio conference in April and the closing of the regional dialogue processes. It was agreed that Defra and FCDO would explore funding options for a UK stakeholder event, and discussions would continue within the Engagement Sub-Committee breakout group in Agenda items 11 and 15.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Investigate funding options for Committee member participation at the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference in Rio (FCDO).
- Investigate funding options for a UK stakeholder workshop prior to the Rio Decade Conference (Defra, FCDO).

## **Item 11. Sub-Committee Breakout Groups**

In this breakout item, Sub-Committees met to develop workplans and activities. These were continued under Agenda Item 15 and reported back in Agenda Item 16.

## **Item 12. Summary and Close of Day 1**

The Chair provided a summary of outputs from the session and encouraged Committee members to consider how discussions may influence or impact Sub-Committee workplans.

## **Item 13. Recap of Day 1 and Aims for Day 2**

The Chair introduced the aims for day 2, to engage with international Ocean Decade actors and to consider the UK NDC's ongoing strategy and legacy when developing Sub-Committee workplans.



## **Item 14. Engagement with the Ocean Decade**

**Australia NDC** – Guest speaker: Dr Lucy Buxton (Ocean Decade Australia)

The Chair welcomed Dr Lucy Buxton, co-founder of Ocean Decade Australia (ODA) and Secretariat of Australia's National Decade Committee, to discuss the formation and action of the NDC. In 2021, a number of ocean experts formed Ocean Decade Australia, a national not-for-profit leadership organisation dedicated to advancing ocean knowledge, collaboration, and action, in response to the UN Ocean Decade. ODA is not formally considered an NDC as it was formed independently of government or IOC-UNESCO endorsement, but aimed to address the critical gaps identified in ocean governance and activity coordination across the country. The success of the work produced by ODA, including development of stakeholder reports, driving cross-sectoral collaboration and inspiring national dialogues, demonstrated the need for an Australian NDC, which was formally established in 2025. The NDC is funded through government and philanthropy, with membership formed through an expert matrix spanning all of Australia's adjacent ocean basins, sectors and disciplines. The NDC holds a strong focus toward engagement with the Decade, both through endorsed actions within the ocean science community, and with citizens through ocean literacy to support inclusive participation and long-term impacts.

Discussion between NDCs highlighted that challenges in data sharing were a key priority for Australia, with hopes that the NDC could facilitate future mechanisms for better data integration across various stakeholders. In the UK, existing data governance structures mean that this is less of a focus for the UK NDC, whose role is focused more on awareness than direct management. However, it was noted that integration of industry, public, and scientific data is an issue in both countries, with members highlighting that the recent endorsement of the Marine Data Exchange: Heritage Accelerator aims to tackle this issue in the UK, and could provide a good mechanism for other countries. It was suggested that the UK NDC revisits its stakeholder map at the next meeting to be more strategic about where to draw focus in the next five years, to encourage interaction with specific sectors to ensure a strong legacy for the Decade.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Include agenda item on stakeholder mapping at the next meeting (Secretariat, MG).

## **Item 15. 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 16.

## **Item 16. Feedback session on Sub-Committee work plans**

Sub-Committees each delivered a series of updates on development of activities and workplans.

### **Policy**

The Policy Sub-Committee is in the final stages of completing the first Policy Brief, with minor text amendments to be made by the Secretariat. An image will be added to the front page; Committee members were asked to add relevant images for future use to the Google Drive folder. The final brief will be sent to the management group for sign-off before publishing on the UK NDC website and LinkedIn page. The Sub-Committee will then begin developing subsequent policy briefs framed around the legacy of the Decade, national implementation, and solutions-based approaches, to guide future policy towards actionable outcomes.

The Sub-Committee will develop a Miro board to highlight a sequence of future topics for Policy Briefs. Sub-headings will sit under each topic for Committee members to feed into, including: what is the

stance of the Decade on the topic, what is the relevance to UK policy, what are the relevant UK based actions, and what does the future landscape look like? The Sub-Committee hopes to develop the Miro board by May 2026 and will share with the Committee in due course.

### **Communications & Engagement**

The Communication and Engagement Sub-Committee highlighted the feedback received from the Ocean Advocate Summit and considered options for running similar events in future with other partners, such as Another Way or Rise Up. The Communications Plan is also being utilised to consider which other audiences may benefit from this type of activity. Opportunities to support the work of other Sub-Committees were also welcomed, requesting notice to be able to plan accordingly and consider resource and availability. It was noted that the proposed UK stakeholder workshop would require strong assistance from the Sub-Committee in the lead up to the event.

### **Action Calls**

the Actions Calls Sub-Committee will support the continued championing of Decade actions through to 2030, and highlighted a need to begin reflecting on the long-term legacy of the Decade. Throughout the next few months, the Sub-Committee will meet to reflect on achievements, discuss new goals, and draft a proposal which consider ways in which the UK NDC can ensure a legacy for the future. It was noted that workplans will need to outline achievable legacy ambitions within a realistic geographic and operational scope.

It was also noted that links could be drawn between the Action Calls and Policy Sub-Committees, to promote endorsed Decade Actions in future Policy Brief case studies, following on from the work the Action Calls Sub-Committee have produced for LinkedIn campaigns. A future LinkedIn campaign will also be considered once the next Call for Decade Action is announced, expected in April 2026.

### **Engagement**

The Engagement Sub-Committee highlighted several potential opportunities for UK NDC engagement including:

#### UK Stakeholder Event

Following discussions earlier in the agenda, it was agreed that the Engagement Sub-Committee will put together a concept note for an upcoming UK Stakeholder Event, highlighting the purpose of bringing people together and identifying what resources are needed. Committee members were encouraged to consider their own skills and networks to support the planning and delivery of this event. The Sub-Committee will use the concept note to attract potential funders and third-party organisations to support events planning.

#### Post-Rio 2027 feedback session

Many UK Decade actors will likely be unable to attend the 2027 Decade Conference in Rio, due to time and financial constraints. Within three to four weeks following the conference, the UK community could come together online to feed back the main messages, reflect on the event and consider what the implications might be for the UK and its endorsed actions.

#### Engagement with NDCs

A number of options were highlighted for other NDCs to present at future Committee meetings. The first suggestion was to engage with Türkiye, to discuss ideas for potential future collaboration ahead of their hosting of the next COP. Further suggestions were to invite representatives from Chile and South Korea's NDCs, who will be hosting the next UNOC conferences, and finally with NDC Ireland to encourage collaboration in support of regional dialogues.

#### Other highlighted events:

- Ocean and Coastal Futures meeting in January 2027, which many Committee members attend in a professional capacity.
- The World Conference on Marine Biodiversity in Bruges, Belgium in November 2026, which will include a National Decade Day with the DCU, co-chaired by the UK and Belgian NDCs.
- The World Congress of Marine Stations in Canada in September 2026, chaired by Matt Frost and attended by IOC delegates.
- The UN General Assembly high level panel in New York in December 2026.
- Our Oceans Conference in Kenya in June 2026, which will be attended by two Committee members.

It was noted that continued engagement with Marine Science UK would be beneficial for the Committee, and it was requested that regular updates be added as a standing item to future meeting agendas.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- Finalise Policy Brief and sign-off for publication to the UK NDC website (Secretariat, MG)
- Develop a concept note for a UK Stakeholder Event ahead of the 2027 Decade Conference (MF to develop initial draft)
- Add updates from Marine Science UK as a standing agenda item to future meetings (Secretariat).

### **Item 17. Forward Look**

The date and time for the next virtual meeting of the UK NDC was discussed, alongside potential locations for the next in-person meeting. Offers included a return to London, Plymouth or Edinburgh in September 2026, with members agreeing on Edinburgh as the most favourable option. Prospective dates will be determined by the Management Group, and Doodle Polls will be sent to Committee members in due course.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- Share Doodle Polls with prospective dates for the June virtual meeting and September in-person meeting (Secretariat).

### **Item 18. AOB**

A brief discussion was held around the recently developed guidance for funding requests, which outlines the process for requesting funds to support UK NDC activities. Committee members were advised that any funding requests should be outlined in a brief proposal, providing a breakdown of required budgets, timelines and supporting documentation. Should timelines allow, proposals are to be presented in plenary to promote transparency and agreement from all members that the proposed event aligns with the UK NDC strategy. Once approved by Committee members proposals can then be submitted to the Secretariat as a formal ask. All members approved of the suggested process.

### **Item 19. Close**

The Chair's closing remarks highlighted the need for prioritisation in the second half of the Decade. The UK NDC stakeholder map will be a central point of focus for the next meeting to determine key sectors for engagement, and ongoing activities across Sub-Committees will be reviewed to help guide future tasks and actions.

## Meeting 16 Actions

| No. | Action   | Deadline                                | Owner  |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 1   | Share March 2026 Focal Points meeting report and slides with Committee members.  | 3 April                                 | Secretariat  |
| 2   | Contact DCU for clarity and context on 'Ocean Decade Solutions' and 'blueprints' raised at Focal Points meeting. Chair to contact DCU and inform Secretariat.              | 22 April                                | Chair  |
| 3   | Contribute to Annual Progress Report (Defra/FCDO):<br>a) Provide content and feedback<br>b) Submit to Defra/FCDO<br>c) Add to UK NDC website                               | a) 9 April<br>b) 16 April<br>c) 7 May   | a) All members<br>b) Secretariat<br>c) Secretariat     |
| 4   | Contribute to Ocean Decade Monitoring Report (DCU):<br>a) Provide content and feedback<br>b) Submit to Management Group for sign-off<br>c) Submit to DCU via survey monkey | a) 2 April<br>b) 9 April<br>c) 30 April | a) All members<br>b) Secretariat, MG<br>c) Secretariat |
| 5   | Add updates to relevant Google Drive folders:<br>· Stakeholder Networks<br>· Upcoming events calendar  | Ongoing                                 | All Committee members                                  |
| 6   | Publish 2025 Terms of Reference to the UK NDC Website.   | 3 April                                 | Secretariat  |
| 7   | Include agenda item on the European Ocean Board at the next UK NDC meeting.  | 15 May                                  | Secretariat, CS  |
| 8   | Investigate funding options for committee member participation at the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference in Rio.   | 10 June                                 | FCDO   |
| 9   | Investigate funding options for a UK stakeholder workshop prior to the Rio Decade Conference.  | 10 June                                 | Defra, FCDO  |
| 10  | Include agenda item on stakeholder mapping at the next meeting.  | 15 May                                  | Secretariat, MG  |
| 11  | Finalise Policy Brief and sign-off for publication to the UK NDC website.  | 30 April                                | Secretariat, MG  |
| 12  | Develop a concept note for a UK Stakeholder Event ahead of the 2027 Decade Conference.   | 15 May                                  | MF to develop initial draft                            |
| 13  | Add updates from Marine Science UK as a standing agenda item to future meetings.   | 15 May                                  | Secretariat  |
| 14  | Share Doodle Polls with suggested dates for the June (virtual) and September (in-person) meetings.   | 15 April                                | Secretariat  |

## Meeting Agenda

### Day 1: Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026

| Time                 | Item         |   |                              |
|----------------------|--------------|---|------------------------------|
| 10:00-10:35 (35 min) | 1            | Welcome & Chair Updates                                     | Verbal: MF                   |
| 10:35-10:45 (10 min) | 2            | Minutes and Actions   | Verbal: SP; Paper 2.1        |
| 10:45-10:55 (10 min) | 3            | Secretariat & social media updates                          | Verbal: DH; Papers 3.1, 3.2  |
| 10:55-11:05 (10 min) | 4            | UK NDC ToR updates  | Verbal: DH; Paper 4.1        |
| 11:05-11:10 (5 min)  | 5            | IOC-delegate updates  | Verbal: MF                   |
| 11:10-11:30 (20 min) | 6            | Concept note for Regional Dialogues                         | Verbal: MF; Paper 6.1        |
| 11:30-12:00 (30 min) | 7            | National implementation of the UN Ocean Decade Strategy     | Verbal: MF, CC               |
| 12:00-12:30 (30 min) | 8            | Feedback on the Ocean Advocate Summit UK NDC event (Feb 26) | Slides: NF, NB               |
| 12:30-13:30 (60 min) | Lunch        |   |                              |
| 13:30-15:00 (90 min) | 9            | Engagement with the Ocean Decade                            | Verbal: MF; invited speakers |
| 15:00-15:30 (30 min) | Refreshments |   |                              |
| 15:30-16:00 (30 min) | 10           | UK NDC engagement: Road to Rio                              | Verbal: Engagement SC        |
| 16:00-16:50 (50 min) | 11           | Sub-Committee Breakout Groups                               | Verbal: MF                   |
| 16:50-17:00 (10 min) | 12           | Summary and Close of Day 1                                  | Verbal: MF                   |

### Day 2: Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026

| Time                 | Item  |                                     |                              |
|----------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 09:30-09:40 (10 min) | 13    | Recap of Day 1 and aims for Day 2   | Verbal: MF                   |
| 09:40-10:00 (20 min) | 14    | Engagement with the Ocean Decade    | Verbal: MF; invited speakers |
| 10:00-11:00 (60 min) | 15    | Sub Committee Breakout Groups       | Verbal: MF                   |
| 11:00-11:15 (15 min) | Break |                                     |                              |
| 11:15-11:50 (35 min) | 16    | Feedback on sub-committee workplans | Verbal: MF; SC reps          |
| 11:50-12:00 (10 min) | 17    | Forward Look                        | Verbal: MF                   |
| 12:00-12:15 (15 min) | 18    | AOB                                 | Verbal: MF                   |
| 12:15-12:30 (15 min) | 19    | Close                               | Verbal: MF                   |