

UK MAB Terms of Reference



Purpose of UK MAB

1. General statement

The UK MAB National Committee (UK MAB) is the National Committee that oversees and manages the application of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme in the UK, its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. The MAB Programme is an intergovernmental science programme which proposes an interdisciplinary research agenda and capacity building aiming to improve the relationship of people with their environment globally. Biosphere Reserves are the principal focus for the implementation of the MAB Programme.

2. The Committee will specifically:

- 2.1. Provide a UK focal point for the UNESCO MAB programme, maintaining liaison with the UK National Commission for UNESCO, the MAB Secretariat in Paris, regional and thematic networks, and, as appropriate, MAB national committees in other countries;
- 2.2. Through the MAB Secretariat in Paris, and in consultation with the UK National Commission for UNESCO, ensure wider awareness of and interest in current UK approaches to enhancing biodiversity and sustainable development;
- 2.3. Establish and maintain links with other relevant UK structures relating to sustainable development both nationally and internationally;
- 2.4. Promote in the UK and more widely the three functions of Biosphere Reserves:
 - 2.4.1. the conservation of biological diversity;
 - 2.4.2. sustainable development;
 - 2.4.3. the development of human and institutional capacity to cope with environment/development issues;
- 2.5. Identify where UK MAB can undertake its own programmes and can influence and add value to other relevant UK initiatives and programmes;
- 2.6. Guide and support the work of the UK Biosphere Reserves and facilitate links between them and with Biosphere Reserves in other countries;
- 2.7. Maintain oversight of UK Biosphere Reserves and the Biosphere Reserve periodic review process, providing a high-level stakeholder forum for considering BR nominations and adaptations to inform ministerial decisions;
- 2.8. Develop, implement and monitor a rolling work programme guided by strategies and action plans of UNESCO and the MAB Programme.

3. Structure of Committee

- 3.1. The Committee shall comprise key stakeholders, and include:
 - 3.1.1. one representative from Defra and from each of the devolved administrations;
 - 3.1.2. membership from institutions that represent the inter-disciplinary nature of

the MAB Programme. This will include: conservation, economic sector, social/cultural sector, education sector, and urban issues;

3.1.3. one representative from each established Biosphere Reserve in the UK and its Crown Dependencies;

3.2. The Committee may appoint independent experts as either corresponding members or full members. Such positions are for two years, renewable once.

3.3. The Committee may invite Observers to attend its meetings. These may include:

3.3.1. a representative of the UK National Commission for UNESCO;

3.3.2. a representative from each part of the UK and Crown Dependencies where the Committee has formally recognised the potential of establishing a new Biosphere Reserve ('candidate Biosphere Reserve');

3.3.3. representatives from government departments and agencies in the UK and devolved administrations;

3.3.4. representatives of Biosphere Reserves in other countries.

4. Linkage to UK National Commission for UNESCO

4.1. The Committee will maintain a collaborative arrangement with the UK National Commission to UNESCO. The Committee will advise the National Commission on issues relevant to UNESCO General Conferences and Executive Boards and UNESCO programmes that interact with the MAB Programme.

5. Frequency of Meetings

5.1. The Committee shall meet at least twice a year. Meetings shall be coordinated with meetings of the UK National Commission for UNESCO, the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC), and EuroMAB.

6. Conduct of meetings

6.1. The decisions of the Committee will be by consensus.

7. Officers

7.1. The officers of the Committee will include a Chair and Vice-Chair. The offices will be held for two years, and may be renewed twice. Appointment and re-appointment will be by consensus of the Committee.

7.2. Chair: The office of chair will be filled by a person who is independent of national government and the devolved administrations when possible. The position does not benefit from an honorarium or salary. The key roles will be to:

7.2.1. preside over meetings;

7.2.2. champion the MAB Programme within the domain as described in article 1;

7.2.3. represent the UK on the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC), subject to agreement with the UK Permanent Delegation to UNESCO; such representation may be delegated to another member of the Committee.

7.3. Vice Chair: The position does not benefit from an honorarium or salary. This role will principally be to:

7.3.1. deputise for the Chair in all of the functions where necessary.

8. Working Groups

8.1. To further the work of the MAB Programme in the UK and abroad, the Committee may establish Working Groups. The function of Working Groups will be

reviewed on a two yearly basis;

8.2. The terms of reference for each Working Group will be agreed by the Committee;

8.3. The Committee will appoint a Chair for each Working Group. Working Group Chairs will be members of the Committee and will be responsible for reporting at regular intervals to the Committee;

8.4. Working Group membership may include members from outside of the Committee who are co-opted for their particular expertise;

8.5. Working Groups may raise and develop their own operational budgets in agreement with the Chair of the Committee, to ensure no conflicting or competing efforts within the MAB Programme. Such funding should be hosted within an appropriate accountable body.

8.6. The Working Groups will cooperate with one another and will be encouraged to work with other thematic networks, national committees or other structures within the MAB Programme.

9. Review of Terms of Reference

9.1. These terms will be reviewed every two years after the appointment/reappointment of a Chair.

Final Approved: 19 November 2009/Revised after meeting on 23 June 2014/Revised after meeting on 14 October 2016 and adopted at meeting on 26 May 2017/Revised and adopted at meeting on 8 January 2018/Reviewed and adopted at meeting on 10 November 2020.