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 will be reviewed every two years by the Chair.

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.

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