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United Kingdom
National Commission
for UNESCO

Non-Executive Director for Culture **Role Description & Person Specification**

February 2024

Background

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed.” UNESCO Constitution

[UNESCO](#) is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. An agency of the UN, UNESCO contributes to peace and security by promoting international cooperation in education, sciences (natural and physical, social and human), culture, communication and information. UNESCO promotes knowledge sharing and the free flow of ideas to accelerate mutual understanding and a more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives.

UNESCO acts as a laboratory of ideas, setting international normative standards, building capacity, and acting as a catalyst for international dialogue and co-operation between its Member States.

UNESCO’s programmes contribute to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015) and the attainment of the 17 [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) held within. In 2022, UNESCO published its [Medium-Term Strategy 2022-29](#) to guide the organisation for the remainder of the decade.

UNESCO is a global organisation but grounded in local designations ranging from UNESCO World Heritage sites and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, to UNESCO Global Geoparks and UNESCO Creative Cities. UNESCO also develops and manages international networks linked to education, from schools through its Associated Schools Programme Network (ASPnet) to higher education through its UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Network.

It is this grassroots nature, linked to global standards setting, which gives UNESCO its unique character and potential.

United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC)

UNESCO works towards its mission by strengthening the ties between nations and societies through an international network of 190+ national cooperating bodies known as National Commissions.

The UKNC is the focal point for all UNESCO-related matters in the UK, including overseas territories and Crown dependencies, and is a constitutional part of the UK's membership of UNESCO.

An independent company limited by guarantee, the UKNC supports the UK's contribution to UNESCO and brings the benefits of UNESCO to the UK. The UKNC is substantially funded by core grant funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The Commission is overseen by a [Board of Non-Executive Directors](#) with an expertise and skills mix covering UNESCO's programme areas. The UKNC Board provides strategic guidance and leadership to a Secretariat, led by the Chief Executive/Secretary General.

The UKNC's Core Functions are:

1. Support UK government in achieving its objectives through UNESCO
2. Support UK society and communities to maximise the benefits of UNESCO's mission and programmes
3. Support UNESCO to be a competent and relevant UN agency able to deliver its mission and fulfil its objectives

UKNC Culture Portfolio

The UKNC supports the UK's contribution to UNESCO and brings the benefits of UNESCO to the UK by raising awareness of the world's most special places and encouraging more people to discover the UK's culture, nature and heritage.

UNESCO Culture Conventions and programmes are extensive. Accordingly, since 2021, the UKNC Culture Portfolio has been split between two Non-Executive Directors. Dr Charlotte Joy is the Non-Executive Director covering cultural heritage in conflict, illicit trafficking in cultural property, and intangible cultural heritage.

This call for applications relates to the land-based UNESCO designations, i.e. UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, UNESCO Creative Cities, UNESCO Global Geoparks and UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The [UNESCO site network in the UK](#) currently includes seven Biosphere Reserves, 13 Creative Cities, nine Global Geoparks and 33 World Heritage sites. The UKNC supports the network in the UK and helps them achieve their full potential.

The new Culture Non-Executive Director will be expected to:

- Champion the benefits of UNESCO land-based designations to the UK and its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies
- Promote the intersectoral aspects of land-based UNESCO designations, and champion and showcase good practice nationally and internationally arising from research and projects in this area
- Advise/support UK Government on international opportunities to showcase and share UK research and good practice arising from these UNESCO designations
- Maintain a role in the UK's World Heritage nomination process, specifically in the forthcoming Technical Evaluations for the UK's prospective World Heritage Sites
- Take an oversight role for key current and emerging [UKNC projects](#) in the Culture programme area, such as UKNC's Local to Global project (funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund)
- Review (alongside the UKNC Chair and Chief Executive) UKNC engagement with the UK's Creative Cities Network
- (Alongside the rest of the UKNC Board) take responsibility for UKNC corporate governance.

For reference, the main fields of activity in this Culture portfolio relate to the following UNESCO Conventions and Programmes:

- **Biosphere Reserves** - [Man and the Biosphere Programme \(MAB\)](#)
- **Global Geoparks** - [International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme \(IGGP\)](#)
- **Creative Cities** - [UNESCO Creative Cities Network Programme \(UCCN\)](#)
- **World Heritage sites** - [The World Heritage Convention 1972](#)

Role Description

UKNC Non-Executive Directors will further the vision, purpose, objectives, and values of the National Commission by:

- Providing expert, independent, advice in their field of competency
 - to UK and devolved governments on UNESCO related issues
 - to individuals and institutions in the UK, its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies on accessing UNESCO accreditation
- Supporting and enhancing the value of the UK's UNESCO sites and projects
- Proposing and pursue areas for policy review and research
- Overseeing externally funded projects in their field of competency
- Advancing the UKNC's Strategy 2022-26
- Supporting the UK government's agenda in helping UNESCO become more institutionally effective
- Ensuring (with other Non-Executive Directors) that the policies and practices of UKNC are in keeping with its aims; that the organisation functions within the legal and financial requirements of a company limited by guarantee; and strives to achieve best practice.

All UKNC Non-Executive Directors are expected to:

- Understand and support the aims and objectives and procedures of UKNC as set out in its Articles of Association and Accountable Grant, and reflect the UKNC's vision and principles, strategy and major policies
- Understand and consider the organisation (including the Secretariat) as a whole, maintaining good relations with all colleagues and recognising the respective roles of Board Members and Secretariat staff
- Ensure familiarity with UNESCO programmes, policies and procedures and of the UK Government's priorities and policies towards UNESCO relevant to their policy portfolio

- Be aware of the UNESCO designations in the UK and Overseas Territories and be familiar with those in their policy portfolio
- Act in the best interests of the UKNC at all times when fulfilling role as a Non-Executive Director, or in connection with the UKNC's aims and objectives
- Prepare for, attend, and contribute to, Board and other meetings of Directors and occasionally take part in relevant training sessions
- Follow the Members' Code of Conduct & Best Practice, particularly when exercising the functions of the Directors, or any of its task or sub-groups or committees
- Additionally, fulfil such other duties and assignments within the scope of the role as may be agreed from time to time by the Board of Directors.

Time Commitment:

At least 20 days per year, including four UKNC Board Meetings per year and other task-related activities. Candidates should indicate the time they expect to be able to devote to UKNC work.

Travel Requirements:

In-person attendance at UNESCO meetings and functions in the UK (mainly London), France (usually UNESCO headquarters in Paris) and occasional other overseas countries.

Remuneration:

The role is voluntary. Reimbursement of reasonable approved expenses will be paid.

Person Specification

Essential

- Broad understanding of UNESCO and support for its objectives and activities in a UK context
- Knowledge and experience of work in the Culture sector as relevant to UNESCO and UNESCO in the UK
- Experience of strategy and policy development, and performance monitoring
- Experience of project management
- Ability to communicate clearly and succinctly in English (orally and in writing) with a wide-cross section of society.

Desirable

- Experience of working with UNESCO or other International Organisations
- Experience of awards/designation processes
- Experience in more than one field within Culture and Natural heritage designations
- Experience in International Development
- Experience of roles in advisory bodies and/or of working with Government (preferably Westminster or Devolved Administrations)
- Experience of director-level work for not-for-profit or charitable organisations, with particular reference to governance, legal, financial and audit, and business planning aspects
- Demonstrable networking skills and access to network(s) of associated experts or contacts
- Record of success in fundraising.

Application Process and Timings

Applicants should submit their application comprising a letter (of no more than two sides of A4 in 12-point text) and a CV indicating their expertise, engagement & networks in relation to the role.

Applicants should also provide the names and contact details of two referees.

Completed applications should be sent to:

James Bridge, UKNC Chief Executive/Secretary-General,
jbridge@unesco.org.uk

The closing date for applications is 17:00 GMT on Monday 4 March 2024. Interviews are scheduled to take place between 21 and 28 March 2024 and we anticipate that the selected candidate will be appointed by mid-April 2024.

Confidential informal enquiries, to arrange a telephone conversation or to submit in writing, can be addressed to either:

Kate Pugh, UKNC Non-Executive Director, Culture Portfolio,
kpugh@unesco.org.uk

James Bridge, UKNC Chief Executive/Secretary-General,
jbridge@unesco.org.uk



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Published in February 2024 (UKNC-NEDS-RD-0224)