



**UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting
Monday 8 July 2024, 11:00-13:00**

Item: 6

Short title: Delivery report

Discussion led by: Jacqui Keenan, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Project Officer

Note this report covers delivery during the period 1/1/2024 to 14/06/2024

Headlines

Main:

The outgoing UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man (UBIOM) Project Officer, Jo Overty, was introduced to Her Majesty the Queen during her visit to the Isle of Man on 20 March in recognition of Biosphere's achievements.

The new UBIOM Project Officer, Jacqui Keenan, assumed the role full-time on 11 June 2024. Over the coming months, the team of Jacqui and Breeshey Kermodé, UBIOM Project Assistant, plan to conduct a review of the UBIOM project and activities, including assessing:

- Resource use (staff time, budget);
- Workstreams and projects -
 - Impact and effectiveness of current work;
 - Opportunities for development;
- Engagement and opportunities (including awareness and understanding of UBIOM and what it means) among:
 - Stakeholders
 - Partners
 - Community

The first steps will be to review the findings and recommendations of the Technical Sub Groups which have previously covered these topics. Stakeholders and Partners will be key to this review process, and the team welcomes any feedback throughout.

UNESCO:

Jacqui will attend the first meeting of a new regional geographic cluster of UNESCO UK designated sites, Northern Ireland and Isle of Man, in Belfast on 22 July. The clusters are formed under the UK National Commission for UNESCO's 'Local to Global' campaign and encourage a 'stronger together' collaborative approach.

UBIOM continues to be an active participant in all Local to Global activities and workstreams and has been involved in compiling/expects to have a case study around its public

1 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future'

engagement included in a new toolkit about audience engagement, due for publication shortly.

Manx Wildlife Trust CEO, Leigh Morris, and UBIOM Youth Rep, Rachel Smith, represented UBIOM at EuroMAB, the biannual gathering of European and North American Biospheres, held in Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Germany, from 2-7 June 2024. See agenda item 8.

Jo presented to the UK Man and the Biosphere Committee monthly coordinators' meeting on 10 May 2024 on UBIOM achievements and challenges.

The Isle of Man hosted the annual in-person meeting of the UK Man and the Biosphere Committee from 19-21 March 2024. As well as the formal meeting, the meeting included day-long field trip to Biosphere partners and projects and a Manx produce dinner hosted by the Chief Minister. Some delegates arrived earlier/stayed longer, visiting attractions.

Tynwald:

As a follow up to the Tynwald debate on UBIOM in July 2023, the Director of Environment, DEFA, and UBIOM officers met Jason Moorhouse MHK on 4 March 2024.

Budget for 2023/24:

UBIOM has a budget of £51,319 for 2024/25. The Department is planning to allocate additional resource for the UBIOM team in order to undertake the UNESCO Biosphere periodic review.

Five Es current/planned project updates

Economy:

The global Innovation Challenge, led by the agencies of the Department for Enterprise and with Biosphere at its heart, concluded with an awards ceremony on 13 June 2024. Alongside the awards in Cleantech, Fintech, and Digital and AI, the new Biosphere Award recognised a solution which would positively impact the Biosphere. The award was judged by Sarah Mercer of Earthscope, and presented by Political Member for DEFA Mrs Clare Christian MHK, who included a message of congratulations on behalf of the UK National Commission. The winner was [4Learn](#) and their solution [topschool.ai](#), a platform to design personalised learning plans for students and teachers.

Education:

A third Schools' Biosphere Week, coordinated by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture, will take place from 24-28 June 2024.

In April, the UBIOM Project Assistant attended One World Centre's Global Teacher Training, and will receive a Level 1 Global Teacher's Award.

Engagement:

Well known TV sound recordist Chris Watson, who has worked on Sir David Attenborough's documentaries, and is associated with the Isle of Man via the Malcolm Lowry Project, gave an immersive talk on his work on 4 May 2024 as UBIOM's main event for Manx Wildlife Week.

2 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future'

Environment:

UBIOM, along with Manx Wildlife Trust, collaborated (February-May 2024) with Douglas City Council and Manx Wildlife Trust on a 'Dragonflies' Den' initiative, to encourage community groups to create space for nature.

The UBIOM website hosts the newly launched (May 2024) Biodiversity Action Plans for species pledged under the Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2025.

Other updates (alphabetical)**Awards:**

The UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Awards 2024 were launched on 6 May 2024 and run until 16 August 2024, with the awards ceremony on 2 October 2024. His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and Lady Lorimer will again present the awards and the Chief Minister will be keynote speaker if he is on Island.

Business:

Subject to securing private funding, social enterprise [Earthscope](#) is to deliver the Sustainable Mann workshops on UBIOM/Partners' behalf in 2024.

An update the complementary Sustainable Mann online toolkit for businesses, including new case studies, is being conducted by Emma Sayle who created it.

A planned celebratory nature trail among three+ UBIOM partners at the Isle of Man Business Park is not going ahead because of the need for individual planning permission for all signage and lack of resource to facilitate this, but storytelling around the good work there is planned instead.

Communications:

Four UBIOM social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, LinkedIn) are updated regularly, and the UBIOM YouTube now features 53 videos. The new team are reviewing UBIOM social media presence, impact, and engagement, to ensure the limited team resources are used in the most effective way.

A podcast was made (18 March 2024) with Manx Radio about the UBIOM Awards, and Jo participated in a further podcast (12 April 2024) about Manx Wildlife Week.

The UBIOM bimonthly newsletter featuring positive news from the Biosphere continues to go out to 1200+ subscribers.

The #MyBiosphere series curated by UBIOM and appearing in the Manx Independent, and on the UBIOM website, is up to column 67, with more banked.

Creativity/culture/art:

Ali Hodgson, Manx Wildlife Trust's Biosphere Artist in Residence, launched '[REIMAGINING our Biosphere](#)' at NetZero's Gaia exhibition in May 2024, a customisable game designed to "develop our capacity to collectively reimagine our future, while taking into account the whole human/ecological system that we are all part of."

3 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future'

Recruitment of the next artist in residence will take place over the summer.

Manx LitFest collaborated with UBIOM to hold a poetry workshop inspired by the environmental poems of Mona Douglas on 9 March 2024, which prompted a UBIOM-organised talk on same by former Manx Bard Annie Kissack on 30 April as part of Manx Wildlife Week.

The Isle of Man Art Society Easter Exhibition in April 2024 celebrated UBIOM.

A Manx language and Biosphere exhibition, in partnership with Culture Vannin, is in the early planning stages. It will recognise the sense of place given by the Manx language, and the unique culture which is an integral part of the Biosphere.

Events:

UBIOM will attend the second Douglas City Council Douglas Beach Day on 6 July 2024, offering walks/talks about the marine nature reserve.

UBIOM presence at the Southern and Royal Agricultural Shows is to be decided, as DEFA involvement in these events is currently under review.

Food and drink:

Jo presented to a Department of Enterprise-organised meeting of food and drink producers on 31 January re linking with Biosphere ahead of their attendance at the International Food Event in London, where the Manx stand had Biosphere branding.

Lecture:

The third UBIOM Lecture was held on 17 April 2024, delivered by Dr Victoria Hurth, Fellow of the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainable Leadership, who was introduced by the Chief Minister, chair of UBIOM. A pre-lecture reception was sponsored by Cayman National Bank (Isle of Man). The event has received much positive feedback, and the video can be viewed on [UBIOM YouTube channel](#). While in the Isle of Man, Dr Hurth met Visit Isle of Man and the Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce sustainability group. A lecturer for 2024 is being sought, and suggestions are welcome.

Nature:

The revamped Young Nature Champion 2024 competition was launched on 15 April 2024 and runs to 1 November 2024, in partnership with Manx Wildlife Trust, Manx Ornithological Society, Isle of Man Examiner, and Love Tech Isle of Man. The entries of the winners and runners up of 2023's Young Nature Writer competition have been mounted and displayed at the Calf of Man Bird Observatory for the 2024/25 season.

Partner scheme:

Applications from organisations wishing to take the Biosphere Pledge and become Partners continue to come in healthily. There are currently 379 Partners with all applications processed, and three awaiting client response. Some positive PR has been generated by new partners.

The team plan to explore opportunities for further developing the scheme, and to engage on a deeper level with existing partners.

Refill Isle of Man:

This international scheme supports a reduction in plastic production, pollution, and consumption, by encouraging use of reusable items. Stations are encouraged to participate on World Refill Day (16 June 2024) and the UBIOM team will share this; the team changes have prevented more involvement in the day this year. Refill Stations can now once again be added to the Refill app by the UBIOM team.

Research:

The chair of the UK Man and the Biosphere Committee is continuing to develop a research strategy that will, upon agreement by the committee, be adopted by UK and Ireland Biospheres, strengthening their abilities to respond to approaches and gain benefit from research projects.

UCM Masters student Jannutal Afia is working with UBIOM on a framework to measure the value of Biosphere designation. A second UCM Masters student is, via introduction from UBIOM, working on an ICT project for DEFA.

RNLI:

UBIOM continues to work with the RNLI to mark the 200th anniversary of the institution, formed in the Isle of Man, as the anniversary is an officially endorsed UNESCO event. The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee meeting in March 2024 included a segment at Ramsey lifeboat station. The RNLI has become a partner of UBIOM. UBIOM's June #MyBiosphere column (see under communications) is by an RNLI author, and UBIOM will share anti-drowning messages on World Drowning Prevention Day, 25 July 2024.

Talks:

Since the last report, Breeshey has delivered talks to three businesses, with positive engagement from each. Officers have also had many meetings with Biosphere-curious organisations and partners.

Dawn Colley, ex Manx Wildlife Trust Education Officer, is now assisting UBIOM and has delivered workshops/assemblies to four schools and youth groups, with four more scheduled.

Tourism:

UBIOM continues to work with Visit Isle of Man on work streams and held useful meetings with Melanie Allen, new Director of Marketing and Communications, and former chair of Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Board, on 9 May and 12 June 2024. There are clear opportunities to develop the understanding of the island's Biosphere status and what it means across communities, Government, and businesses, by working with and through Government departments and their stakeholders.

The Isle of Man has 26 [Dark Sky Discovery Sites](#) and there are moves to pursue [International Dark Skies Authority \(IDA\) Dark Skies Community status](#) for the island, becoming the world's first 'Dark Skies Nation'. Community status recognises efforts to promote responsible lighting and dark sky stewardship, and set good examples for

surrounding communities. Although no decisions have yet been made, if Dark Sky Community status were to be pursued this would ideally be a collaboration between interested parties, which might include Visit IOM, UBIOM, DEFA as a whole, and other organisations.

Website:

UBIOM continues to grow the website including strengthening the 'Resources' section with advice about gulls/best practice.

Wellbeing:

The Biosphere Bee Community Picnic, which promotes connecting up, in nature, and enjoying local produce, is running for a third year in 2024. The team hope to develop Biosphere Bee in 2025, looking to work with Stakeholders, Partners, teams within DEFA and across Government, to promote local produce and businesses, and build community connections.

Youth involvement:

Georgia Untisz has submitted her resignation from the role of Youth Rep, in order to concentrate on her career in healthcare. Thanks go to Georgia for all of her work and enthusiasm in her tenure, and the team wish her the best of luck in her career.

Recruitment of a new Youth Rep will begin shortly. The UBIOM team are keen to further develop youth engagement with Biosphere, and will work with continuing Youth Rep, Rachel Smith, to identify ways of doing this.

Following her trip to EuroMAB, Rachel Smith is due to present to the UK Biosphere Coordinators on her experience and learning from the event.

This is a brief summary of the main work of UBIOM. A detailed log of all activity is maintained and can be sent to you on request.

Jacqui Keenan and Breeshey Kermod
Project Officer and Project Assistant
UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
14 June 2024.