

THE NOC ASSOCIATION – TERMS OF REFERENCE

The overarching objective for the NOC Association is to enable those engaged in the NERC-funded marine science community (HEIs, institutes and centres) to work together to advance UK marine science.

The Association comprises a network of institutional representatives of universities and research centres. The annual meetings will focus on strategic matters affecting UK marine science in the national and international context, and will include the development and review of strategy.

The NOC Association represents a strong voice to NERC, to Government (directly and through the UK Government's Marine Science Co-ordination Committee (MSCC)), as well as internationally on issues affecting marine science and its delivery in a UK and wider context.

The NOC engages in a number of UK, European and international fora on behalf of the NERC marine science community. In so doing, we would like to seek input and share outputs and other information with the wider community through a recognised networking mechanism. This builds further on the arrangements already put in place by the International and Strategic Partnerships Office, for example representation on the European Science Foundation's Marine Board, facilitating UK engagement with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and interactions with a range of learned and professional societies and other relevant organisations.

The NOC Association is a focal point for the delivery of coordinated networking and strategic interactions that bring together the NERC-funded UK marine research community and its stakeholders. These include:

- An open annual meeting enabling a strategic engagement with NERC.
- An annual or biannual 'Research Forum' to show-case achievements.
- Targeted flow of web-based information with a focus on NERC marine capabilities and impacts.
- Regular 'science/policy briefing fora', exchanges, interactions or related mechanisms to highlight key issues and impacts (with MSCC).
- Targeted meetings and events around specific research related topics
- Engagement in outreach, dialogue and public engagement activities using a wide range of tools in line with the strategy (with MSCC).
- Working groups to examine specific scientific and other issues that require greater integration across the community.

We are building on existing activities and initiatives in a strategic and complementary way; we cannot afford duplication or risk fragmentation of the community.

Governance

The Association is guided by the NOC Association Steering Board, a non-executive Board, whose role is to provide advice to the Executive Director NOC, as well as to the Association in general, on the development, activities and priorities of the NOC Association to deliver its objective; to enhance its impact and to assist in optimizing its engagement and synergy with the wider UK and international marine science community. The Chair is Professor Peter Liss CBE, FRS.

The Association operates under the governance and reporting structures of NERC and NOC and does not anticipate the need for a separate legal entity; though this will be kept under review.

Criteria for Membership

Membership will be formalised at an 'institutional level' where this has meaning and relevance and a unit of activity can be readily recognised; for example, a university school or departmental sector of marine science or a NERC-supported research centre. Heads/Directors of such units will be invited to join the Association. A minimum level of active senior level participation in the forum meetings will be expected to ensure continued recognition of Association status. Associates will be acknowledged on the NOC website, in activities and publications and elsewhere as appropriate. Participation in meetings etc (time, T&S) will be at Associated organisations own cost.

How the Association will be supported.

The International and Strategic Partnerships Office (ISPO), at NOC Southampton, will underpin the operation of the NOC Association and provide an Executive Secretariat. ISPO will also continue to provide the NERC contribution to the Secretariat for the UK Government's and Devolved Administrations' Marine Science Co-ordination Committee (MSCC), ensuring a close linkage between Association activities and those being developed in the context of the MSCC.

The ISPO activity is defined as part of NERC's National Capability and currently, we do not charge a fee for Association membership, though this will have to be kept under review in consultation with members.

Specific activities that the Association may collectively chose to engage in, e.g. conferences, bespoke events or perhaps representation at international meetings may require additional funding mechanisms. A methodology for funding and attributing costs will be agreed with Associates. The ISPO may, in consultation with and on behalf of the Association seek funding from elsewhere to support specific activities, for example, participation in EU and international projects and support actions on behalf of the community.

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