



UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man SPG meeting

Monday 14 July 2025

Item 09: Delivery report

Discussion led by: Jacqui Keenan, Biosphere Isle of Man Coordinator

Note: Covers delivery from 07 Jan to 10 Jun 2025

Project management & Governance

Stakeholder Partnership Group

DEFA attendance: To streamline meetings, only the Biosphere Delivery Team from DEFA will attend SPG meetings. Other DEFA officers will be asked for suggested agenda items or any relevant updates to share with the SPG and may be invited to attend as required by the agenda.

Biosphere IOM Board (See also Item 08 - Board update)

Reporting and interaction with SPG: Initially, the SPG will receive written reports from the Board, and the Board will receive papers and minutes of SPG meetings once approved by SPG members.

To streamline meetings and reporting, the following changes will be made to SPG reporting:

- Verbal updates (Youth, Research, Board, member) will now be written and submitted in advance. Member updates will be kept brief and relevant, with a template provided.
- SPG members will have 2 weeks to provide amendments or feedback on SPG meeting minutes, before they will be shared with the Board (to be treated as confidential until approved for publication at the following SPG meeting).

Team

- Pierre Cherimont has joined the team for 6 months, until September, conducting a research placement as part of the Man and the Biosphere Master's degree at the University of Toulouse (see [Research](#))
- Team capacity has been focussed on the recruitment of the Biosphere Board, onboarding new team and board members, and the periodic review and development of the biosphere strategy (see separate Board and Periodic Review updates). This has resulted in strategic review of activities to enable the most efficient and impactful use of team capacity:
 - **Flagship initiatives:** The annual initiatives of UBIOM have previously all running during spring/summer, with some running into autumn. These will now be spread throughout the year, as below:
 - Jan-Mar: Biosphere IOM Awards
 - Apr-Jun: Young Nature Champion
 - Jul-Sep: Biosphere Bee (launch Tynwald Day)
 - Oct-Dec: Biosphere IOM LectureThe Biosphere Awards, Young Nature Champion, and Biosphere Bee will not run in 2025, to enable the team to properly engage with and support the review and strategy development, and to allow time to review and refresh their formats.
 - **Impact assessment:** Involvement in additional events and projects is now decided on assessment of the following factors:
 - Reach: The number of people we are likely to impact.

- Audience: Who the audience/attendees are, and their networks/spheres of influence, particularly prioritising those who may not already be engaged with Biosphere.
- Influence: If the activity or the audience has potential for wider influence e.g. through policy, education, research, or wider engagement in some other way.

UNESCO

- **World Congress of Biosphere Reserves:** The global network meets every 10 years, with the next one to take place [22-26 September 2025](#) in Hangzhou, China, where a new MAB Action Plan will be finalised. There are currently no plans for UBIOM to attend.
- **EuroMAB:** The next meeting of the network of European & North American Biospheres is expected to take place [14-18 September 2026](#), in Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region, Canada. UBIOM hope to attend, and will encourage youth representatives to do so.
- **World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves:** The annual online meeting was held in February; UBIOM were unable to attend.
- **World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserves:** The IOM has officially withdrawn from the network.

UK Man & Biosphere Committee and network

- **UK MAB Committee meeting** took place in March in the Living Coast Biosphere, in Brighton and Lewes Downs. The focus was strongly on sustainable food systems and their links with biodiversity including reducing food waste, working with local producers, and food in education – both school meals, and educating on food sustainability.
- **Biosphere-inspired Michelin-starred menu at Raffles:** Chef Mauro Colagreco, UNESCO Ambassador for Biodiversity and Michelin-starred chef, [served a menu](#) using ingredients from each of the 7 UK & IOM Biospheres, including honey from HoneyMann. Chef Colagreco is keen to link with biospheres further in future, and options are being explored.
- **Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere knowledge exchange:** Board Chair, Jason Bissell, and Biosphere Coordinator, Jacqui Keenan, visited the GSA Biosphere in February to learn from each other, particularly around their board structure and periodic review process. The trip was a success, strengthening links and collaboration with our neighbouring biosphere.

Local to Global (L2G)

- **Climate Change Risks & Opportunities:** A workshop was held for the L2G Northern Ireland cluster at the Giant's Causeway in April, showcasing a tool being developed by to identify and monitor key risks and opportunities presented by climate change to UNESCO sites across the UK and IOM, for launch later in 2025. Development involved a comprehensive assessment, which was completed for the IOM with support from Glen Geeves of the Climate Change Team.

Global aims

Conservation (culture & biodiversity)

- **Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group Silver Lapwing Awards 2025:** The awards will be hosted by FWAG IOM on 18 June, with the island welcoming judges and finalists from across the UK. They will showcase the work of local farmers, including 2024 winners the Cooil Brothers at Ballagawne farm, conservation work such as the Peatland Partnership, and Manx culture and heritage with a ceilidh and electric tram ride.
- **Biosphere Photographers and Artist in Residence:** MWT's first [Biosphere Photographers in Residence](#), in partnership with Visit IOM and Biosphere IOM, were appointed in February.

Ciara Hardisty and videographer Adam Morgan are using photography and video to connect new audiences with the rest of nature throughout the Celtic Wheel of the Year. They compliment the continued work of Amy Howse and her work on sonification of plants as the current Biosphere Artist in Residence, running public events throughout spring and summer.

- **Peel silt, leachate, and PCBs:** UNESCO and IOM Government responded to requests for comment from The Conversation, an independent news agency, regarding handling of leachate from legacy landfill and contaminated silt from Peel harbour, prior to the publication of 3 articles (1, 2, 3). The dredging of silt containing heavy metals from Peel harbour in 2014 was previously reported by IOM Today. IOM Government have put measures in place to avoid such issues happening again in future, and are putting in place measures to deal with the leachate and silt long term.

Development (human, social, economic)

- **Manx Menu:** UBIOM were asked to judge the new Sustainability and Innovation categories for 2025 in partnership with professional chef and UCM lecturer, Rob Hunter. The entries demonstrated the commitment of Manx businesses to sustainability and local produce, and willingness to be bold and take chances. The winners were exceptional, with Kiki Lounge winning Sustainability and VIBE Cafe winning Innovation.
- **Innovation Challenge:** The 2025 challenge will take place on 26 June, and this year the Biosphere Award will be awarded in association with the UK National Commission to UNESCO.
- **Sustainable Mann Workshops:** Following the success of the series in 2024, with Earthscope running the workshops, a quick quote is being issued to find a provider to run the workshops 2025-2027.
- **Biosphere Messaging:** UBIOM held a workshop on Biosphere with Department for Enterprise marketing teams and PR agency Lexington, providing a background on UBIOM, including current activities and priorities. There is now a collaboration to develop a 'messaging house', a communication toolkit which can be used across Government, and shared with stakeholders and partners for their use.
- **Biosphere Finance week:** Finance IOM are holding the next Sustainable Finance Forum on 5 November 2025, and in celebration of International Day of Biosphere Reserves on 3 November, and UNESCO's 80th Anniversary in November, they're making the whole week of 3-9 November Biosphere Finance week, with events and messaging throughout.
- **Tourism levy:** Visit IOM are investigating and consulting on the introduction of a tourism levy, which could generate funds to develop the IOM as a destination, including social, cultural, and environmental projects. The delivery team are liaising with Visit IOM.
- **Events:**
 - **Albion Wool Factory opening:** A Manx blessing was delivered to welcome the new company to the island.
 - **Gef 30 Under 30:** UBIOM is once again Sustainability partner for the awards celebrating young people – this year including youth representative, Rachel Smith, in recognition of her tireless work and achievements.

Research (monitoring, learning, education)

- **Research Strategy:** During his research placement, Pierre Cherimont will focus on producing a research strategy as part of the wider biosphere strategy, working closely with the delivery team and Gail Corrin - Research and Innovation representative on the board. The aim is to encourage a more strategic and coordinated approach to research on the island, and to draw in funding to enable further research.

- **UCM Research festival and Biosphere Lecture:** The annual biosphere lecture to be held on Thursday 16 October, as part of the 2025 Research Festival, to be themed 'Biosphere'. The lecture will be an interactive event, open to the general public, encouraging people to create their vision of the future of the Isle of Man. Information gathered will be contribute to the biosphere strategy, as well as be used to promote the 80th anniversary of UNESCO in November 2025 and International Day of Biosphere Reserves on 3rd November.
- **UCM research:** Various biosphere-related research projects are underway by UCM students, including a meta-analysis of management plans/strategies of other biospheres and how UBIOM can learn from them, and an exploration of the partnership programme and the benefits of being a Biosphere partner.
- **Biosphere IOM Schools week** will take place 30 Jun-4 Jul, encouraging schools to produce their own 'biosphere book', including sections on topics such as culture and heritage, sustainable development, and nature and conservation. MWT are also offering 'Let's Get Wild' sessions to schools throughout the week.
- **Castle Rushen High School Biosphere week:** CRHS approached Biosphere to support a 'biosphere week' in the last week of term, where all subjects will be taught through a biosphere lens. Dawn Colley is working with the team to develop suggestions and resources for teachers to create their biosphere-related lessons. If a success, in 2026 all high schools will be invited to take part.
- **Education sessions:** During 2024/25 school year, Dawn Colley will have delivered 11 biosphere sessions (including to 8 primary schools, 2 high schools, and UCM), not including Biosphere IOM school week or the CRHS week, reaching nearly 1000 pupils.

Partner programme

- **Partner network:** A marketing workshop was held in February, attended by 25 biosphere partners. Regional partner forums will be held in July, to gather partners' contributions for the review and strategy.
- **Partner programme:** There is a suggestion to rename Biosphere Partners as Biosphere Supporters, to more accurately reflect the level of engagement and commitment currently required by the programme.
- **Certification programme:** There is an aim to develop a partner certification programme, similar to that developed by [Galloway and Southen Ayrshire Biosphere](#), which takes businesses and organisations through a rigorous certification process to demonstrate and further develop their sustainability efforts, recognising them for their achievements with the certification mark. The process of developing and running the programme will take significant resource, so additional resource would need to be found for this.

Engagement & comms (other)

- **Website:** The website is currently undergoing a refresh, including automation of some of the administration of the partner programme, and reorganising existing areas for clarity.
- **Newsletter:** Articles and news are welcome for the monthly newsletter, to be received by 2nd Tuesday monthly (notified earlier if possible) – contact the biosphere inbox.