



**UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting
Wednesday 31st January 2024, 2pm-4pm**

Item: 6

Short title: Delivery report

Discussion led by: Jo Overty, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Project Officer
Note this report covers delivery during the period 1/7/2023 to 31/12/2023 and known plans for 2024

Headlines:

UNESCO:

EuroMAB, the biannual gathering of European and North American Biospheres, will be held in Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Brandenburg, Germany, from 2nd-7th June 2024. Details of plenaries, workshops and cultural sessions etc, and opportunities to participate, have yet to be published. Biospheres are encouraged to attend and have the opportunity to share ideas and showcase their Biospheres' good work, produce, etc.

The Isle of Man will host the annual in-person meeting of the UK Man and the Biosphere Committee from 19th-21st March 2024. There will be a day-long field trip on 20th March, a dinner at the delegates' hotel hosted by the Chief Minister that evening and the formal meeting on 21st March. Some delegates are arriving early/staying longer and individual meetings/activities are being set up re delegates' areas of interest.

After the UBIOM Project Officer/Project Assistant participated in online meetings held in spring 2023 to shape the new five-year strategy of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves (WNICBRs), the final version of the strategy is awaited and it will be published on the new 'Our Networks' areas of our website.

A proposed (at EuroMAB 2022) World Network of Tourism Biosphere Reserves, being led by Champlain Adirondack Biosphere, USA, is not being progressed following further discussion with the UNESCO MAB Secretariat.

UBIOM is an active participant in the UK National Commission for UNESCO's Local to Global project workshops and initiatives, made possible via National Lottery Heritage Fund funding, and is on its Audience Development Advisory Group. A 'Discover UNESCO Sites' map funded as part of the project was published in July 2023 and there's a section on the UBIOM website dedicated to it.

1 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future'

UBIOM marked the second International Day of the Biosphere Reserve (3rd November 2023) by publishing a video created by the Cabinet Office Corporate Communications Service showing photos gathered from Government and SPG featuring their positive work under the agreed UK and Ireland theme, which was utilising the global hashtag #ItsAboutLife.

Tynwald:

In July 2023, Tynwald unanimously backed a motion brought by the Environment Minister and Vice-chair of UBIOM Hon Clare Barber MHK supporting our UNESCO Biosphere.

Staffing:

UBIOM continues to have two officers: a project officer (HEO) and an administrative officer (AO).

Budget for 2023/24:

UBIOM has a budget of £50,000 for 2023/24, the same as the two previous years. To date just over £40,000 is spent/committed, with some current unknowns.

Five Es current/planned project updates:

It is hoped that one headline project per E per year will be delivered (some will span multiple years).

Economy:

The global Innovation Challenge led by the agencies of the Department for Enterprise was launched in November 2023 with Biosphere at its heart and themes of cleantech, fintech and AI. UBIOM attended workshops to help shape the challenge, attended the launch and will serve as a mentor and present a Biosphere prize.

UBIOM will speak with the Food and Drink Development Group (31st January 2024) re how partnering with and promoting UNESCO Biosphere can bolster messaging to markets. An export brochure for drink products bears Biosphere branding.

Education:

UBIOM, Manx Wildlife Trust and Love Tech Isle of Man staged the Love Tech Wildlife Challenge from July to September 2023, inviting young people and their families to visit sites for nature, scan QR codes, answer questions and make pledges for nature. The creators of the winning pledges received an iPad from Manx Telecom and MWT vouchers.

Engagement:

Well known 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, will give an immersive talk on his work on 4th May 2024 as UBIOM's event for Manx Wildlife Week.

Enjoyment:

Artreach Studios has begun delivery of its multi-dimensional science/art/educational project 'The Big Blue Project' via workshops in summer/autumn 2023 linked to National Saturday Drawing Club and Biosphere-supported workshops in spring 2024. It seeks funding to expand the project further.

Environment:

UBIOM and Manx Wildlife Trust are collaborating with businesses on the Isle of Man Business Park to demonstrate what they are doing for wildlife, for a planned spring 2024 launch.

UBIOM, along with Manx Wildlife Trust, is also collaborating with Douglas City Council on a new 'Dragonfly Den' initiative to encourage community groups to wild areas and win prizes.

The UBIOM website will, from spring 2024, host the agreed Biodiversity Action Plans for specific species pledged under the Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2025.

UBIOM and Manx Wildlife Trust launched the Nature Recovery Network in July 2023. The network allows landowners, custodians and managers to plot their contribution to nature and receive a score, featuring on a map if it is above a certain score, and to receive hints on how to improve their contribution, and to view a database of growing nature commitment.

UBIOM continued to support The Manx Nature Show, organised by Manx Whale and Dolphin Watch, after its initial appearance at Cathedral Isle of Man, with further spells at Ramsey Town Hall (summer 2023) and the Erin Arts Centre (winter 2023/4). Manned 'meet the organiser' drop-ins were held. The exhibition closes for good in January 2024.

Other updates: - alphabetical:**Awards:**

The UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Awards 2023 were presented by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and Lady Lorimer to six organisations at a ceremony at the Manx Museum on October 11th 2023. The Chief Minister/Chair of UBIOM was the keynote speaker. Many positive comments were received about the event, which promoted pride and positivity. Plans are well under way for the 2024 awards.

Business:

UBIOM, in partnership with Department of Enterprise, Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce, Net Zero Isle of Man, One World Centre and University College Isle of Man, repeated, in September/October 2023, 'Sustainable Mann' a six-part workshop series for businesses around sustainability. Some 24 businesses attend in total and 11 gained the Sustainable Mann accreditation by attending all six. There were many favourable comments on the workshops, and valuable publicity. A private sector training provider is seeking to deliver these workshops on UBIOM/Partners' behalf in 2024 and that is being discussed. UBIOM also hopes to update the complementary Sustainable Mann online toolkit for businesses and hopes SPG can promote this further.

Communications:

UBIOM contributed to the One World Centre Global Education Week campaign in November 2023. The UBIOM-curated Manx Life #MyBiosphere feature, currently published in Isle of Man Today's titles following the closure of magazines, is now 62 columns old, leading to much positive publicity for the Isle of Man. UBIOM welcomes shares on social media etc. The UBIOM newsletter featuring positive news from the Biosphere continues to go out to 1200+ subscribers globally every other month. Four UBIOM social media channels are updated at least six days a week. UBIOM YouTube now features 47 videos.

Culture/arts:

On 29th June 2023, UBIOM sat on the selection panel for the second Manx Wildlife Trust Biosphere Artist in Residence, funded by Isle of Man Arts Council, and graphic artist Ali Hodgson was appointed. On 30th August 2024, UBIOM sat on the selection panel for The Manx Bard and Boakesey Closs was chosen. UBIOM is collaborating with Manx LitFest for workshops, date TBC in spring 2024, celebrating the environmental poetry of Mona Douglas. The Isle of Man Art Society Easter Exhibition in March 2024 will celebrate UBIOM. A 2024 collaboration between UBIOM and the Southern Photographic Society has fallen through. A cultural project regarding Manx place names in partnership with Culture Vannin has yet to be progressed.

Events:

UBIOM attended the inaugural Douglas Beach Day (1st July 2023), offering tours and information about Douglas Bay marine nature reserve; Tynwald Day (5th July 2023), staging a Biosphere Bee Community Picnic; Love Tech Isle of Man's summer open day (22nd July 2023), demonstrating the role technology plays in science; the Royal Manx Agricultural Show (August 11th and 12th 2023), offering general information and children's activities/competitions; the Isle of Man Food & Drink Festival (16th and 17th September 2023), offering general information and local produce-related art activities; and the STEP (investment industry) conference (19th October 2023) at which it presented and appeared on a panel about sustainability for businesses.

Global Goals:

As an extension of the SDG Book Club initiative that UBIOM participated in, it has gifted a copy of the formal Earthshot Prize children's book 'A Handbook for Dreamers and Thinkers: Solutions to Repair our Planet' to all 33 primary schools.

Lecture:

The third UBIOM Lecture will be held on 17th April 2024 and will be delivered by Dr Victoria Hurth, Fellow of the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainable Leadership. The pre-lecture reception will be sponsored by Cayman National Bank (Isle of Man). SPG members have been invited to hold the date pending tickets going on sale.

Nature:

Prizes in the fourth UBIOM Young Nature Writer challenge were presented on October 25th 2023, with two winners and four runners up. The challenge will be relaunched as Young Nature Champion in 2024, inviting video and audio as well as written entries, and running for longer. Existing partners Manx Wildlife Trust, Manx Ornithological Society and the Isle of Man Examiner will be joined by Love Tech Isle of Man.

Partner scheme:

Applications from organisations wishing to take the Biosphere Pledge and become Partners continue to come in healthily and running this scheme and the necessary record keeping forms the majority of the UBIOM Project Assistant's time and is deserving of more time to build and maintain relationships and accurate records and do more story-telling. There are currently 366 Partners, with four applications outstanding.

Refill Isle of Man:

Time to grow the Refill Isle of Man scheme continues to be a problem, and a new global app has proved problematical to use to add Stations so the scheme, which supports a reduction in plastic production and pollution, is static at present.

Research:

UBIOM stepped in at short notice to chair the 'sustainability' strand of the fifth UCM Research Festival in October 2023. UBIOM and UCM were interviewed by the UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Chair regarding research taking place within the Biosphere ahead of the preparation of a strategy that UK and Ireland Biosphere can adopt if they are able to. More under item 11. UBIOM meets/supports individual students undertaking research.

RNLI:

The 200th anniversary of the institution, formed in the Isle of Man, is declared an official UNESCO event and, at the initiation of the UK National Commission, UBIOM is working with the RNLI on initiatives to jointly celebrate this, including a photocall at a lifeboat station during the UK MAB Committee field trip in March 2024.

Rubbish Group:

UBIOM employed Freya Skillicorn as a Department for Education STEP student in summer 2023 and she produced some simple animations about litter for children and helped carry out research on vapes' sales and disposals for the wider DEFA. Her work won her one of the prizes at the STEP presentations. After a delay, UBIOM Litter Group messages finally appeared on Bus Vannin tickets from December 2023 urging travellers to dispose of tickets properly.

Talks:

A new online form captures all requests, saving time, although requests are currently few. Dawn Colley, ex Manx Wildlife Trust Education Officer, will assist on delivering UBIOM activities and assemblies in schools/youth groups in 2024.

Tourism:

UBIOM continues to work with Visit Isle of Man on work streams and it attended Destination Day (13th November 2023) to engage with those in the sector about the value of promoting UBIOM to visitors and becoming Partners.

Website:

UBIOM continues to grow the website including creating a new 'Our Networks' section and strengthening the 'Resources' section with advice about behaving responsibly in our Biosphere, bringing together existing codes in an easy to read way; bird sightings, etc.

Wellbeing:

The Biosphere Bee Community Picnic, which promotes connecting up, in nature, and enjoying local produce, will run for a third year in 2024.

Youth involvement:

A new youth representative, Rachel Smith, was recruited in October 2023 to replace Ciara Sowerby. Georgia Untisz remains the second youth representative. Despite inquiries, it is unknown when and where the next/3rd UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme Youth Conference will be held.

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

Jo Overty and Breeshey Kermode
Project Officer and Project Assistant
UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
31st December 2023.