



**UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting
Wednesday 13th July 2022, 2pm to 4pm**

Item: 6

Short title: Progress report

Discussion led by: Jo Overty, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Project Officer

Note this report covers the period 1/1/2022 to 31/5/2022

Headlines:

UNESCO attendance/involvement:

The permanent ambassador for the UK to UNESCO Laura Davies and the Secretary General of UNESCO in the UK James Bridge will be official guests at the Tynwald Day ceremony and associated programme and will meet with Biosphere/DEFA staff at the conclusion of the formal programme.

EuroMAB, the (normally) bi-annual conference of European and North American Biospheres, takes place in Austria from September 12th-16th 2022. Attendance is expected and beneficial and the Isle of Man will send appropriate officer(s) once the format is finalised and applications open.

UBIOM's 2020/21 UCM Masters student intern Nikole Cervantes represented Isle of Man, UK and Ireland Biospheres and gave a successful presentation at an inaugural UNESCO MAB conference in Germany in May 2022 exploring research being conducted by, in and for Biospheres.

The UK MAB Committee bi-annual meeting was held online on 14th April and included strategic updates. The bi-annual Biosphere Coordinators' meeting was held online on 17th May 2022 and discussed external governance, the proposal to change the name of the Man and the Biosphere Programme, the first Biospheres Day (3rd November 2022), the future of the UK MAB Committee website, as well as projects of mutual interest.

Staffing:

UBIOM continues to have two officers: a project officer and an administrative officer.

Budget for 2021/22:

UBIOM has a budget of £50,000 for 2022/23, no change on 2021/22.

Five Es current/planned project updates:

In addition to all existing projects, it is hoped that one project per E per year will be delivered (some will span multiple years).

Economy:

UBIOM, in partnership with Department of Enterprise, Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce, One World Centre and University College Isle of Man, will repeat, in September/October 2022, 'Sustainable Mann' a six-part workshop series for businesses around sustainability. A pilot series held in 2021 led to 14 businesses receiving the Sustainable Mann certificate from UBIOM.

Education:

Schools have been invited to participate in the first UNESCO Biosphere Week from 27th June to 2nd July 2022, exploring and celebrating our Biosphere status any way they choose (written work, music, video, assemblies, exhibitions, visits, etc). A menu of activities is provided and 10 education settings, plus one community group, have resurrected plots in the former Year of Our Island Garden in St John's for the week.

Engagement:

The Biosphere Bee Community Picnic 2022 is running, with 24 events registered so far. The event has been advertised via a podcast and adverts on Manx Radio and via traditional and social media. Participants who register an event receive an attractive 'how to' guide and other assets from UBIOM. We hope SPG members hold events and support this project.

Enjoyment:

Artreach Studios has secured a research and development grant from Culture Vannin to progress an art/science/education project celebrating the Island's marine life. It is working with UBIOM, DEFA, Culture Vannin and the Department of Education and Culture to progress this, possibly for 2023.

Environment:

Plans are progressing with Manx Wildlife Trust for a Nature Recovery Network. See item 8.

Other updates:

Awards:

The UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Awards 2022 were launched on 10th May 2022 and entries are open until 12th August 2022. An accompanying promotional video features the 2021 winners. SPG members have visuals and are encouraged to help promote the awards.

Business:

UBIOM's 2021/22 UCM Masters student & intern, Emma Sayle, has researched and created 'Sustainable Mann: a guide for businesses', an online toolkit to encourage businesses to become more sustainable. It will be launched in the week commencing 27th June 2022. Emma presents the toolkit to the Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce's Sustainability Group on 16th June 2022. The toolkit complements the Sustainable Mann workshops.

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Communications:

UBIOM maintains a website and has created a YouTube channel to complement its Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In and Instagram platforms.

UBIOM updates its social media channels at least six days a week, delivering its own, stakeholders' and wider Government messages and marking significant, Biosphere-related, dates in the calendar with educational content.

UBIOM produces a monthly newsletter, a curated mix of its own, Isle of Man Government and Stakeholders/Partners' news, which goes to more than 1,100 recipients globally. It welcomes SPG members' ideas and content.

The UBIOM-curated Manx Life #MyBiosphere feature continues monthly in Business 365 magazine and on its website, although the magazine is not being published in summer 2022 pending an autumn re-launch. To date there have been 46 such columns. Suggestions for new authors are welcome.

Culture/arts:

The Isle of Man Art Society's Easter exhibition at the Villa Marina Arcade celebrated UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man, and this collaboration proved successful, so it will do so again in 2023.

UBIOM continues to work with Artreach Studios, Culture Vannin and Department of Environment Food and Agriculture scientists and the Department of Education and Children to research and develop a joint art/science/community/education project, working title 'What's The Sea To Me?'

Education:

As part of Schools' Biosphere Week (see above) the Biosphere Project Officer will attend One World Centre-led Global Teacher Award training.

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man continues to purchase Sustainable Development Goals Book Club titles for 33 primary schools, building a library. UN Publishing has so far published lists of books relating to 14 of the 17 Goals, from which DESC chooses one title for local distribution.

UBIOM has provided an interviewee for, and assisted the producers of, a podcast project celebrating environmental campaigner Malcolm Lowry and his connections to the Isle of Man, which will be housed at the Liverpool Maritime Museum.

UBIOM ran on its website and social media educational articles for World Bee Day, UN Biodiversity Day and others.

Events:

On 9th February 2022, the Isle of Man delivered the concluding webinar in a year-long tri-webinar series, with the Irish Biospheres Dublin Bay and Kerry marking the 50th anniversary of the UNESCO MAB Programme. The topic was the Island's built heritage. The webinar is available on UBIOM's new YouTube channel.

On 4th May 2022, UBIOM held a talk by Dr Clem Fisher on birds and their place in culture as part of Manx Wildlife Week.

Subject to staff availability, UBIOM hopes to attend a full programme of summer events in 2022.

Health and wellbeing:

UBIOM/DEFA have held initial talks with Manx Care regarding the establishment of a Natural Health Service project via which health professionals would treat suitable people with mental and physical health conditions in natural rather than clinical settings.

Lecture:

An academic lecture was instituted in 2019 but Covid-19 meant it did not take place in 2020 or 2021. It is hoped to hold the lecture again in January 2023 and discussions are being held with a prominent expert in business sustainability over delivering it. To allow networking, it's planned to hold a sponsored reception beforehand, if a financial waiver can be obtained to permit sponsorship.

Nature:

The third UBIOM Young Nature Writer challenge was launched on 2nd May 2022 in Manx Wildlife Week and the closing date for entries is 31st August 2022. The initiative is run with existing partners Manx Wildlife Trust and Isle of Man Newspaper and, in 2022, with new partner Manx Ornithological Society. Dublin Bay Biosphere is, for the second time, also running the challenge and there are local prizes and an overall inter-Biosphere prize. SPG members have visuals and are encouraged to help promote the competition.

Partner scheme:

Applications from organisations wishing to take the Biosphere Pledge and become Partners continue to come in. However, several Partners have ceased to exist, so they have been removed. There are currently 313 Partners, with a further four applications being progressed. Government House has taken the Biosphere Pledge and become a Partner. It should be borne in mind that the majority of the Project Assistant's time is spent administering the Partnership scheme and keeping records up to date.

Refill Isle of Man:

UBIOM, with support of Manx Utilities, has made a video for broadcast on World Refill Day (June 16th 2022), featuring players from the successful FC Isle of Man (aka 'The Ravens') and the hashtag #RefillingtheRavens

After an unsettled two years for premises offering Refill, UBIOM is trying hard to promote participation in the scheme by local shops, museums, visitor attractions etc, and use of the scheme by the public.

While some new Refill Stations are recruited by email contact, it's largely a time-consuming process conducted in person and competes with other projects. An appeal for volunteers to help deliver the scheme on the ground to assist the two Biosphere officers was largely unsuccessful, although one volunteer is promoting the use of the scheme among colleagues in her large organisation.

Rubbish Group:

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The group was convened following a letter to the local newspaper from Alan Jones, Peel Commissioner, calling on a more joined up approach to solving the litter issue. Its membership comprises those charged with, or volunteering to, reduce litter. The group had a talk from the CEO of Social Change UK about choosing audience and planning and executing campaigns and from there will meet again in July 2022 to plan a campaign, education piece etc. Other actions include asking retailers to consider a message on till receipts re careful disposal, with PR planned over same, and a request to those transporting waste to ensure it does not fall from vehicles.

Talks:

As well as talks being delivered as part of the targeted strategy rollout, the Biosphere Project Officer is booked to deliver several talks to UCM staff and to community groups and societies in coming months.

Tourism:

UBIOM continues to work with Visit Isle of Man on workstreams such as Visitor First, and is on subgroups on familiarisation for visitor facing teams and visitor responsibility. It has held awareness sessions with the Guild of Manx Registered Tour Guides and trainee members of same and they are now kitted out with Biosphere hats. A similar awareness session with Welcome Centre staff is planned for July 2022.

A detailed log of all activity is maintained and can be sent to you on request.

Jo Overty
Project Officer
UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
31st May 2022.