

**THE NATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHY CENTRE  
ASSOCIATION OF MARINE SCIENCE NATIONAL CAPABILITY BENEFICIARIES**

**RATIONALE**

1. The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) obtains significant national capability funding from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) which is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), to provide long-term underpinning and enabling capabilities in UK marine science.
2. National capability (NC) funding is the element of NERC-funded activity which is directly procured by NERC because of its scale and complexity. These characteristics require a critical mass of size and budget.
3. NC comprises:
  - **NC-science** - which integrates over at least national and decadal scales and demonstrates benefit to the wider UK community of environmental scientists and users
  - **NC-large-scale research infrastructure** - to be available to the entire UK research community, and to support research from all NERC funding streams
  - **Smaller-scale NC-services, facilities and data** - to be accessible to the entire UK research community, and to support research from all NERC funding streams
  - **NC-national and public good** – through provision of independent scientific and expert advice, or other services required by government and the wider public. Scientific research is, therefore, not the primary purpose of NPG funding.

[Further information about NC](#)

4. In 2016 NERC Council tasked NOC with leadership of all Marine Science NC (responding to commissioning by leading bid preparation and delivery). This includes NC delivered by NOC and other NOC Marine Science NC Delivery Partners who are funded and accountable for performance of delivery via NOC. These are: the Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML); the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS); and the Continuous Plankton Recorder Programme delivered by the Marine Biological Association of the UK (MBA - formerly the NC programme delivered by the Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science).

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5. The NOC Association of Marine Science National Capability Beneficiaries, hereafter referred to as 'NOCA' is a body established and constituted by NOC.
6. It is the primary vehicle for NOC's engagement with the beneficiaries of NOC-led marine science NC (mainly, but not exclusively, the UK science community). In constituting this body, the following principles apply:
  - (a) NOC-led marine science NC refers to that directly delivered by NOC or funded via NOC to NOC's Marine Science National Capability Delivery Partners
  - (b) NERC commissions, evaluates and funds NC against criteria it sets and to which NOC responds and delivers within available resources provided by NERC. NOCA has an important role in advising NOC and helping shape the direction of NC programmes and providing feedback on delivery. However, NOC is ultimately accountable to NERC for delivery of the NC it has commissioned to meet NERC's requirements.
  - (c) The NOCA may consider providing advice to NOC on wider issues such as NOC's role in providing wider national and international leadership; helping convene and coordinate marine science in the UK; strategic horizon scanning. It is not the role of NOCA to influence NOC's wider non-NC activities as an independent research centre - such as in winning openly competed funding from all sources or engaging with business innovation, where NOCA would probably be conflicted.
  - (d) Where there are overlapping interests, NOCA should work in cooperation with bodies such as the Challenger Society for Marine Science, other learned societies and the UK Marine Science Coordination Committee.
  - (e) NOCA will form part of the NOC Chief Executive's (direct advice) and the NOC Board's (via the NOCA Observer) means for obtaining assurance regarding the performance of NC delivery and effectiveness of engagement with the beneficiaries. NERC has its own assurance bodies and processes regarding NC delivery.
  - (f) In line with NOC's Articles of Association, NOC will look to the Chair of NOCA to be an observer on the NOC Board subject to, for example, being able to manage any conflicts of interest.
  - (g) As required by NERC as a condition of funding:
    - the [Marine Facilities Advisory Board \(MFAB\)](#) will undertake its functions concerning provision of NC large research infrastructure (NC-LRI) but come under the umbrella of NOCA.
    - the [Climate Linked Atlantic Sector Science \(CLASS\)](#) Stakeholder Advisory Board will undertake its functions concerning provision of

NC Long Term Science Single Centre (NC-LTSS) but will come under the umbrella of NOCA.

- (h) Whilst NOCA is expected to be a body of an enduring nature, NOC, in consultation with NERC, reserves the right to re-constitute or replace NOCA in respect of the primary functions of NOCA.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Members**

7. Membership is institutional (for example, at the level of a university school) with nominated individuals representing the institution.
8. Clusters or consortia of institutions are welcome.
9. General membership is open to organisations who are part of the NERC-funded marine science community and who consider themselves beneficiaries of the NC provided by NOC and its Marine Science NC Delivery Partners.
10. General membership is open to Government Departments or Public Agencies who consider themselves beneficiaries directly or indirectly of the NC and national and public good activities provided by NOC.
11. In view of the assurance role of NOCA, NOC will not be a General Member of NOCA but will participate in its business.
12. NOC Marine Science NC Delivery Partners may be General Members if they benefit from NC provided by NOC. Delivery Partners also deliver NC, and hence are accountable, via NOC and NERC, to the beneficiaries of that NC. Consequently, there may be overlap in respect of the component of NC that Partners deliver.
13. Membership requires a willingness and commitment to engage positively.
14. Participation will help enable the NOC Association community to influence the direction of key areas of marine science national capability.
15. Members may nominate a delegate to attend a meeting if they are unavailable.

### **Chair**

16. The Chair of the NOCA will have an independent chair of stature and experience in the UK marine science community and be able to discharge the role of Observer on the NOC Board.
17. The Chair will be appointed by the Chief Executive of NOC, in consultation with the NOC Association Steering Board, for a period of three years which may be renewed up to a maximum of a further two.

## **Secretariat**

18. NOC will provide the secretariat to support the NOCA and the NOCA Steering Board.

19. NOC will provide the secretariat for following **sub-committees**, namely:

- Marine Facilities Advisory Board
- CLASS Stakeholder Advisory Board.

Chairs of these Boards may be invited to participate for the relevant item in one meeting per year to provide an update report, as required.

## **Ways of Working**

20. The activities of the NOCA will be guided by the NOCA Steering Board.

21. Costs of participation by General Members in NOCA business shall be at members' own expense.

22. There will be an Annual General Meeting of the NOC Association to which all General Members will be invited to send representatives. Other individuals and organisations may be invited depending on the business of the AGM.

23. The AGM agenda will be determined by the NOCA Steering Board.

24. General members will receive periodic updates from NOC on matters relating to NOC's national capability role. General members may opt not to receive updates by contacting the Secretariat.

## **Funding for NOCA**

25. NOC will provide resources from its NERC NC-NPG funding line to support the:

- Secretariat
- Annual General Meeting (e.g. venue hire)
- Marine Facilities Advisory Board (sub-committee)
- CLASS Stakeholder Advisory Board (sub-committee).

NOC may seek resources and sponsorship from elsewhere as appropriate.

26. To manage expectations and enable resource planning, the level of resources allocated to support these activities will be assigned in an annual budget for NOCA activities, in consultation with the Chair.

27. If the NOCA Steering Board wishes to undertake additional discretionary activities, such as establish *ad hoc* working groups, unless the NOC Chief Executive agrees to contribute resources, NOCA will need to fund this from

alternative sources. No new activities that require NOC resources will commence without a costed work plan agreed by the NOC Chief Executive.

## **NOC ASSOCIATION STEERING BOARD**

### **Purpose**

28. The NOC Association Steering Board is a non-executive body whose primary role is to provide advice to the Chief Executive of NOC on:
  - the strategic development and delivery of marine science national capability and facilitating those engaged in the NERC funded marine science community to work together to advance UK marine science for public benefit
  - the wider leadership role of NOC within UK and international marine science.
29. The Steering Board will discuss and agree the programme for the Annual General Meeting.
30. The Steering Board will provide advice and strategic guidance on overall direction, coherence and implementation of activities undertaken by and on behalf of the NOCA in accordance with its objective with a particular focus on areas where 'added value' may be realized.
31. The Steering Board will alert the NOC Chief Executive, especially in relation to marine science national capability, to opportunities to enhance national and international impact, to opportunities for outreach and wider public engagement, to changes in the needs of the marine science user community or in the current status of marine science in the UK or internationally.
32. The Steering Board will seek to ensure the NOCA acts in an impartial and open way that enables and wins the long-term engagement of the NERC marine science community.

### **Chair**

33. The Steering Board will be chaired by the Chair of NOCA.

### **Membership**

34. There will be a maximum of twelve members (including the Chair) of the NOCA Steering Board, drawn from the academic community and other stakeholders in marine NC.
35. The NOC Chief Executive (or any other employee of NOC) may not be a member of the NOCA Steering Board. The NOC Chief Executive will normally attend the NOCA Steering Board and will be consulted on the preparation of agendas and entitled to propose agenda items. Other senior NOC leaders with

responsibility for major areas of NC delivery will attend the Steering Board as required.

36. A representative from each NOC Marine Science NC Delivery Partner body (usually at Chief Executive or Director of Science level) will be invited to attend Steering Board Meetings but will not be members of the NOCA Steering Board.
37. As a rule, the following bodies, which represent broad sections of the marine science and technology community, beneficiaries of NOC and other users of the NC sector, will be invited to be members of the NOCA Steering Board in an *ex officio* capacity:

**Broadly-based representatives of the following marine science organisations:**

- The President (or their nominated representative) of the Challenger Society for Marine Science (CSMS)
- One of the co-chairs, who may alternate between them, of the UK Marine Science Coordination Committee (MSCC) – or their nominated representative
- The Director (or their nominated representative) of the Marine Alliance for Science & Technology for Scotland (MASTS).

**Other Stakeholders in use of NC (Optional):**

- The Chief Executive (or their nominated representative) of the Society for Maritime Industries (SMI)
- The Chief Executive (or their nominated representative) of the Institute for Marine Engineering Science & Technology (IMarEST).

***Ad Hominem* members drawn from the General Members**

- The remaining six members of the Steering Board (not including the Chair) will serve on an *ad hominem* basis and be invited, based on the need to engage senior expertise and experience, to cover the broad range of marine science disciplines and reflect UK regional and societal diversity.
38. The term of membership of *ad hominem* Steering Board Members will be for three years in first instance, and may be extended by a maximum of two years. If appropriate, it may be possible to negotiate a shorter term.
  39. Other third parties may be invited to attend for specific items of business.

**Subcommittees**

40. The NOCA Steering Board will have two designated sub-committees:
  - Marine Facilities Advisory Board
  - CLASS Stakeholder Advisory Board

41. The Steering Board may occasionally establish *ad hoc* time-limited working groups on matters related to the primary purpose of NOCA. Before conforming establishment of such groups, the level of resources required within the overall budget for NOCA activities should be agreed with the Chief Executive of NOC.

### **Ways of Working**

42. The Steering Board will meet at least twice per year.
43. NERC and NOC policies on conflicts of interests will apply.
44. The Steering Board will operate in an open and transparent manner. Agendas and minutes of meetings will be published on the [NOCA web page](#).
45. There will be a defined exceptions basis for business reserved as confidential.
46. Members may nominate a delegate to attend a meeting if they are unavailable.
47. If members are unable to attend more than two meetings in succession, the Chair reserves the right to appoint an alternative member.
48. Unless otherwise authorised, positions are unremunerated. Most meetings will be conducted on-line, however, if conducted in person, reasonable expenses can be claimed, such as for travel to meetings.

### **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

49. The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) provides the Secretariat for the NOCA so applies the NOC approach to GDPR. For further information, please see the [NOC Privacy Notice](#).