

## **Terms of reference**

### **Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre Independent Scientific Panel**

#### **Background to the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre**

The Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC) was established in 2014, at the University of Stirling, its aim to deliver transformational change in the relationship between the aquaculture research community and industry. The Centre brings together academic researchers and industry, galvanising knowledge exchange, collaboration and commercially-relevant innovation.

SAIC's areas of interest include fish and shellfish health and welfare; feeding, quality and nutrition; breeding and stock improvement; and engineering. To target its work effectively, it has identified four Priority Innovation Actions:

- improved sea lice control in Scottish aquaculture
- alternative sustainable feeds for finfish
- rapid detection methods for viral pathogens and diseases
- development of secure health-certified Scottish mollusc spat production systems.

All SAIC-sponsored projects must align with one of those actions, and be of potential commercial value. Project proposals must be led by an external or industry partner and include at least one academic partner. The success of projects will be measured in terms of wealth creation and a contribution to Scotland's economy. Involvement in SAIC activities can help researchers to access funding and demonstrate their impacts in future funding reviews.

#### **Purpose of the Independent Scientific Panel**

The SAIC Independent Scientific Panel (ISP) will play a vital role in guiding SAIC's work. The primary purpose of the ISP is to provide independent and informed scientific opinion on SAIC sponsored projects to the officers or board of SAIC. The activities of the ISP will be centred round the review of project proposals; however, SAIC is seeking a group of informed individuals who can not only provide an independent opinion on the scientific quality of proposals but also ensure SAIC is aware of relevant work in other scientific fields or parts of the world, thus reducing the risk of duplication of effort and helping to identify potential synergies. Members of the ISP will be expected to act as advocates for SAIC's activities to the wider scientific community, and participate in horizon scanning exercises.

#### **Operation**

The ISP will comprise a group of individuals who cover a range of areas of scientific expertise and networks. The ISP will participate in the review of Expressions of Interest (EOI) (brief concept notes) and full project proposals. Not all members of the ISP will necessarily be required to review every EOI or proposal; rather a subset of the ISP will be selected depending on the nature of the call and the work proposed. All reviews will have a deadline for response: this would normally be 1 week for EOIs and not more than 2 weeks for project proposals.

All members of the ISP will attend face-to-face meetings once a year and virtual meetings as required. Where there is divergent opinion on proposals, these meetings will provide the opportunity to produce a consensus report on proposals for the board of SAIC, with the option for minority reports. The face-to-face meetings will also result in a statement on relevant advocacy activities, potential synergies or conflicts with SAIC activities and horizon scanning. The SAIC Programme Director will chair meetings. SAIC staff will provide administrative support for the ISP's activities. When necessary, members of the ISP may be requested to attend SAIC board meetings; equally, members of the SAIC board may request to attend ISP meetings or their attendance may be requested by the ISP.

### **Expected time commitment**

Tenure on the ISP will be for 4 years. At present SAIC is in the early stages of start up and therefore the estimates below are based on preliminary assumptions.

Face to face meetings	Two days and one evening / overnight per year
Virtual meetings	Not greater than 1 day per year
EOIs	40 to 50 per year with approx. 30 minutes required per EOI (with each ISP member reviewing around half this total). Approx. two working days per year .
Project proposals	10 to 20 per year with approx. 3 hours per proposal (with each ISP member reviewing around half this total). Approx four to five days per year.

**Total 10 days per year.**

### **Compensation / remuneration**

Travel expenses including parking and a fixed mileage for travel by car (45p/mile) will be refunded in full. SAIC cannot pay for first or business class travel. Accommodation will be arranged and paid for by SAIC staff. SAIC expects to host an evening meal on the day of face-to-face meetings but members of the ISP will be able to claim for meals and other reasonable expenses. For each day away from home they will also receive a small allowance for miscellaneous personal expenses.

All members of the ISP will receive an annual retainer fee of £1,500 in recognition of their advocacy and horizon scanning efforts on behalf of SAIC.