



Advisory Group Meeting

Monday 29th June 2020

Online Meeting

In attendance:

Project Staff

Lewis Le Vay - Chair and Project Director
Esther Howie - Project Manager
Shelagh Malham - Senior Research Fellow
Ros James - Finance and Admin
Karen Tuson - Research Project Support Officer

Advisory Board Members

Bekah Cioffi – Welsh Government
Jim Evans - Welsh Fishermen's Association
Sean Evans - Natural Resources Wales
John Holmyard - Offshore Shellfish Ltd.
Trevor Jones - Extramussels
Eunice Pinn - Seafish
Andy Woolmer – Salacia Marine Ltd

Minutes

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed Andy Woolmer, Trevor Jones and Sean Evans to their first SC Advisory Group Meeting

2. Apologies

James Wilson, DeepDock Ltd

3. Minutes and actions of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on the 27th February 2020 were accepted.
All actions completed.

4. Covid-19 update

The Chair reiterated for the new members, and updated on the current situation for the SC project in relation to Covid-19 [to be noted as C-19 herein].

The team had been mindful not to put undue burden on current and prospective collaborators with frequent contact. That aside this period has proven productive with a number of potential new collaborators contacting the team direct.

Bangor University is in the process of assessing the feasibility to resume fieldwork and laboratory work. The SC are hopeful that this will be restarted in a few weeks' time.

Travel and small boat work are yet to be approved.

5. Project progress summary

The Chair presented an update on the numbers of SC collaborations to date, an overview of the active projects by workpackage. The SC is on track to meet the indicators. Wider engagement has included secondment of staff onto the University C-19 project monitoring community level prevalence of coronavirus in wastewater across Wales and the UK.

6. Future plans

The Chair confirmed that there will be a return to lab and fieldwork once the C-19 restrictions are lifted and the priority is that the SC project is able to ensure effective delivery of the current and planned research activity. A full proposal for a no cost extension will be submitted, in order to make use of an additional sampling season to mitigate the one lost this year due to C-19. It is not clear yet how long an extension may be possible – but the initial aim is for at least 6 months. In terms of workshops and wider engagement it was confirmed that the SC will be hosting online webinars in conjunction with the native oyster network and are involved in planning for an online workshop on norovirus in shellfish. This will replace the workshop in Brussels planned for May 2020 but delayed due to C-19, with the timing pending discussions at EU level.

SC conference will be rescheduled to summer 2022, if no cost extension is approved.

7. Points of discussion

There was some discussion of the SC work on razor clam fisheries and whether this could be tied in with potential Welsh Government razor clam work to provide fully coverage of stocks. This was to be taken forward in further discussions with industry, NWIFCA and Welsh Government

Action: Chair

A question was asked whether screening and selection of projects included a review by a business analyst. The Chair confirmed that all collaboration proposals are subject to a stringent review and screening to ensure that projects are viable on a number of levels. While this does not include explicit analysis of the business case, it does include assessment of the potential impact in order to prioritise allocation of resource to project with likely greatest economic benefit. It was also pointed out that many companies engaged in the sector are relatively small and scale of R&D projects may reflect this in some cases.

At the previous SAG the need for a workshop to discuss/promote the potential for expansion of shellfish production in Wales are identified but this has not been progressed yet due to C-19. All members were asked for their opinion on coordinating such a workshop to facilitate discussions between industry, regulators, government and researchers. All members agreed that such a workshop was needed. Chair will lead on this and explore options for running a workshop later in 2020.

Action: Chair

8. AOB

Going forward Colin Charman will represent NRW at further meetings. In addition for the next meeting there will also be an alternative Welsh Government representative

Next Meeting will be autumn 2020 (date to be confirmed)

END