

UHI Shetland – Centre for Sustainable Seafood

Update for Finance and General Purposes Committee

June 2022

Progress

UHI Shetland have been engaging with industry stakeholders and the wider UHI to progress the Business Case for the Centre for Sustainable Seafood. Recent highlights from this activity:

- UHI Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, Academic Council and Partnership Council have approved the establishment of the Centre
- There was positive feedback regarding the quality of plans and stakeholder engagement. Some work to be done on alignment with Faculties for HE teaching.
- UHI Shetland had a visit from Professor Ray Hilborn (University of Washington, USA) in April 2022. The visit was a great success and Prof. Hilborn provided some very helpful input on the development of the Centre and spent some time with local industry reps. It is hope there will be opportunities for future collaboration and Prof Hilborn’s enthusiasm for the concept is greatly encouraging.
- Close working relationships are being explored with colleagues in Humberside, where a Centre for Seafood focusing on processing and getting products to market is being set up.
- The industry stakeholder group met on 13 June 2022.
- The Membership and Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group are close to being agreed.
- Stakeholders have committed some pump-priming funding to help get the Centre off the ground

Organisation	Funding amount	Approval status
National Federation of Fisherman’s Organisations	£30k	Subject to application to NFFO Trust
Scottish Fishermen’s Federation	£30k	Subject to application to Scottish Fishermen’s Trust
The Fishmonger’s Company	£20k (£10k 2022 & £10k in 2023)	Approved
Salmon Scotland	£30k	Subject to Board approval (expected July 2022)
Marine Stewardship Council	£15k	Approved
Aquaculture Stewardship Council	TBD	Budget position for coming financial year under review, support in name for now
Total	£95k of approved funding	

- A 'soft launch' is planned for the Centre once all of the industry funding is approved. This will include the website and social media going live. More publicity is planned upon appointment of the Director.

Next steps

With the level of pump-priming funds available now all but confirmed, UHI Shetland will need to decide whether and how to proceed with recruiting a Director or Professorial Chair in Sustainable Seafood, in line with the Business Plan.

The tables below set out a high-level summary of indicative start-up costs for the Centre for Sustainable Seafood in the first 5 years of operation. In Year 1, these costs primarily relate to the appointment of the Chair in Sustainable Seafood. It is anticipated that training and project income will increase over time, as the Chair becomes established, leading to a fully self-sufficient centre within 5 years.

Some posts that are likely to be recruited to in the early years of the centre, such as a Postdoctoral Researcher, Research Technician and PhD students, are included in the table to show the level of income required from Year 2 (see lines 14 and 15 of the table). These appointments will augment the existing resources within UHI Shetland to facilitate the establishment of the Centre for Sustainable Seafood.

Shetland UHI will provide support for the Centre through existing resources in key business areas such as finance, administration, marketing, facilities management and ICT.

Lifespan		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Capital Expenditure							
1	ICT equipment	£10k	£10k	£1k	£1k	£1k	£23k
2	Software	£3k	£3k	£3k	£3k	£3k	£15k
3	Total Capital costs (CAPEX)	£13k	£13k	£4k	£4k	£4k	£38k
Operating Expenditure							
4	Recruitment of Chair/Director – recruitment agency (£7.5k), advertising (£3k), interview expenses/visit(s) (£3k)	£13.5k	£0	£0	£0	£0	£13.5k
5	Recruitment of Chair/Director – relocation	£8k	£0	£0	£0	£0	£8k
6	Personnel – Chair/Director (indicative – based on £90k starting salary, 50% employment costs and 40% overhead)	£171k	£173k	£175k	£177k	£180k	£876k
7	Personnel – PhD students (indicative – based on £17k)	£0	£37.3k	£74.6k	£111.9k	£111.9k	£223.8k

Lifespan		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	stipend, £5k fees, 50% employment costs, 40% overhead)						
8	Personnel – Research Technician (indicative – based on £28k starting salary, 50% employment costs and 40% overhead)	£0	£53.2k	£55k	£57.5k	£59k	£224.7k
9	Travel and Subsistence (Chair)	£10k	£10k	£0	£0	£0	£20k
10	Total Operating costs (OPEX)	£202.5k	£273.5k	£304.6	£346.6k	£350.9k	£1,478.1k
Total Expenditure							
11	Total Project Costs (CAPEX + OPEX)	£215.5k	£286.5k	£310.6	£350.4k	£354.9k	£1,517.9k
Funding/Income Generation							
12	CAPEX funding	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
13	OPEX funding	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
14	Project Income (projected)	£0	£85k	£110k	£150k	£250k	£595k
15	Teaching and Training Income – e.g. UK Seafood Fund (projected)	£50k	£70k	£75k	£100k	£120k	£415k
16	Total funding/income	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

As can be seen from row 6 of the table above, the indicative salary costs of the prospective Chair/Director of the Centre is covered by the funding already identified from the industry stakeholder group. This puts UHI Shetland in a position to potentially proceed with recruitment, with the proviso that additional employment costs and overheads will need to be found from within existing resources.

A funding bid is planned to the UK Government’s UK Seafood Fund Training and Skills Stream, which is expected to launch imminently with a decision by Autumn 2022. The bid will seek to underpin the establishment of the Centre, linked to key outcomes such as communicating clearly with the public, learners and industry to set out the facts of sustainability and seafood, and; identifying gaps in educational provision at all levels and creating content relevant to seafood sustainability. It is likely that this would also fund the recruitment of a Postdoctoral Researcher in early 2023 to support the Director.

Decision: Based on the funding committed to date and the pending application to the UK Seafood Fund, Finance and General Purposes are asked to approve the commencement of the process to recruit a senior academic to lead the Centre, either as a Director or Professorial Chair.

The appointment will be on a permanent basis, meaning that the Centre will have to quickly become self-sustaining under the appointee’s leadership. This incurs a level of financial risk to UHI Shetland.

The proposed recruitment process and anticipated timeline are included below for context, along with the project Risk Register.

Recruiting a Chair in Sustainable Seafood

UHI Shetland are open to a wide range of potential candidates for the Director/Chair of the Centre for Sustainable Seafood, in line with feedback from the industry Steering Group. The successful candidate will be an academic with a strong publication record and a history of working at the research/policy interface in fisheries and/or aquaculture or in the industries themselves.

A high-level outline of Shetland UHI’s approach to recruitment is set out below. The process will ensure that the correct candidate is identified, with a commensurate reduction in the risk profile across the project. The Fishmonger’s Company have indicated that they will provide funding for the appointment of a recruitment agency.

Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of specialist recruitment agency • Engagement with stakeholders to identify high-potential candidates • Pro-active approaches to potential candidates via agency • Wide-ranging online and social media promotion and advertisement through specialist channels
Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortlisting to include input from selected Steering Group members • Three stage assessment process <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation to panel 2. Panel interview 3. Q&A with Steering Group • In-person assessment, with interview expenses paid • Panel to be made up of 2x Shetland UHI staff (Principal and Director of Research and Innovation) and 1x Steering Group member
Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with relocation to be provided (including support with finding accommodation) • Press releases and promotion via local and national media and social media channels

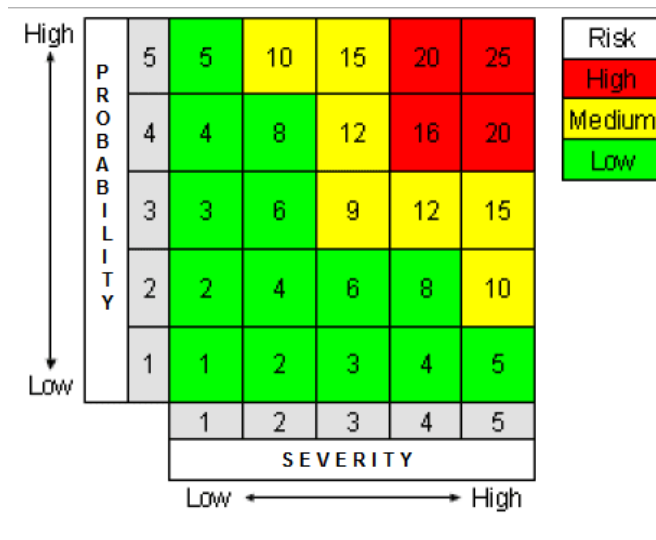
Timeline

Activity	Dates	Outputs/Outcomes
Engagement activity (Industry, Public Sector, NGOs, Academic Partners and HEIs)	April – August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalised business plan • Steering Group membership • Steering Group Terms of Reference • Pump-priming funds in place
Recruitment of Chair in Sustainable Seafood	July – October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment approach and documentation approved by Advisory Group • Chair recruited

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PhD project opportunities identified
Establishment of Centre for Sustainable Seafood at Shetland UHI	September – December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public launch of Centre First meeting of Advisory Group CSS Strategy developed
Recruitment of Post-doctoral researcher	March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postdoctoral researcher recruited
CSS Year 1 reporting	May – June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports to stakeholders Research outputs
Recruitment of Research Technician	June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technician recruited
Recruitment of PhD Students	September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PhD Students recruited
CSS Year 2 reporting	May – June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports to stakeholders Research outputs

Risks

The principal risks associated with the proposed project and their management are captured in the risk register overleaf. The diagram below illustrates the methodology used for assessing risks in terms of their probability and severity. The risk register presents the assessments pre- and post-mitigation to demonstrate the impact of planned risk management activity.



Risk Register

Ref	Category	Risk Description	Effect	Severity (/5)	Prob. (/5)	Score (/25)	Mitigating Actions	Res. Severity (/5)	Res. Prob. (/5)	Residual (/25)
1	Organisational - Management	Failure to successfully manage project	Project does not meet specification with regards to time, cost or quality.	4	3	12	Effective project management by Shetland UHI	4	2	8
2	Organisational - Management	Failure to realise the potential benefits of the project.	Stakeholders' expectations not met Industry does not benefit as anticipated Reputational damage to Shetland UHI	5	2	10	Oversight by Steering Group Regular communication w/stakeholders	3	2	6
3	Organisational - Staffing	Failure to recruit suitable Chair and/or other staff	Stakeholders' expectations not met Reduced likelihood of securing funding for sustainability Benefits of project not realised	5	4	20	Expert advice on governance, recruitment, organisational structure Bespoke recruitment process	5	3	15

Ref	Category	Risk Description	Effect	Severity (/5)	Prob. (/5)	Score (/25)	Mitigating Actions	Res. Severity (/5)	Res. Prob. (/5)	Residual (/25)
4	External	Changes to Government or Funding Council policies or priorities leads to reductions in funding streams	Unexpected changes may result in impacts on benefits realisation	4	3	12	Wide net cast for funding opportunities, including international and industry partnerships Expert advice from Chair and Steering Group	2	2	4
5	External	The COVID-19 pandemic or associated public health measures (e.g., lockdowns) impacts recruitment and/or the opening of CSS	Delay in appointing Chair and associated impact on timelines Delay in opening centre and associated impact on accessing funding and developing and implementing strategy	4	2	8	Long lead-in time for recruitment Robust procedures, using remote methods for recruitment and strategic planning	3	1	4

