

Clyde 2020 Research Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Agreed by Clyde 2020 Steering Group

The following Terms of Reference have been developed in response to the need to establish a Research Advisory Group (RAG) as an independent source of scientific advice for the Clyde 2020 Steering Group¹. These Terms of Reference should be used and interpreted on the basis that they reflect the Terms of Reference of the Clyde 2020 Steering Group as appended.

The aim of Clyde 2020 (and therefore the RAG) is to achieve the vision - The Firth of Clyde is a healthy and thriving marine ecosystem that is capable of adapting and mitigating for the challenges of climate change and supports sustainable fishing, tourism, leisure and other sustainable developments while offering protection to the most fragile species and habitats. This will enhance the quality of life for local communities and contribute to a diverse and sustainable economy for the West of Scotland.

Status

The Research Advisory Group (RAG) will be a non-executive body appointed by the Clyde 2020 Steering Group.

Role

The RAG will provide independent, objective, impartial advice and strategic guidance on the research requirements, overall Clyde 2020 Action Plan implementation, direction and coherence in so far as relates to science and research.

The RAG will help the Clyde 2020 programme integrate with wider research and practical programmes such as those being undertaken to support the development and management of the Scottish MPA network or the MSFD/GES actions by giving advice about how to align work programmes to best effect.

It will not be required to implement, secure resources or to undertake research beyond that which might reasonably be expected to fulfil its advisory role.

The RAG will only be required to report and provide advice to the Clyde 2020 Steering Group.

It will not be required to respond to direct ad hoc requests for advice from members of Clyde 2020 unless constituted as a subgroup of the Steering Group (see 1).

Scope

The RAG will primarily focus on science and research relevant to the natural environment, which will include social and economic research as appropriate- see the evolving Action Plan developed by the Steering Group for more detail.

¹ Refers to Clyde 2020 Steering Group or agreed task specific sub-group.

The RAG may provide independent, objective, impartial advice on the research requirements proactively and in response to requests from the Clyde 2020 Steering Group.

Members of the RAG may be actively involved in research relevant to Clyde 2020 and in the future may wish to be involved in research advocated by the Clyde 2020 Steering Group. Conflicts of interest in this regard must be declared to the Chair of the RAG.

The RAG will not be responsible for the procurement or commissioning of research.

Composition

There will be a maximum of 12 members of the RAG.

The RAG will have an independent Chair of such stature and experience in a field relevant to marine science to command wide respect. The Chair will be appointed by the Clyde 2020 Steering Group.

A Deputy Chair from within the RAG will be appointed by the Chair. The Deputy Chair will support the Chair in leading the RAG and may chair meetings of the RAG in the absence of the Chair and may attend Clyde 2020 Steering Group meetings as an alternate to the RAG Chair.

The term of the initial appointment will be up to 3 years with possible extension for up to a further 3 years subject to annual agreement by the Clyde 2020 Steering Group.

Changes in RAG membership will, as far as possible, be phased to ensure that approximately a quarter of the members are replaced every three years from the time of the inception of the RAG.

The Chair may request that a member of the RAG is replaced should they fail to attend more than three consecutive RAG meetings or no meetings over an 18 month period.

A meeting of the RAG will be quorate if a minimum of 6 RAG members including the Chair or Deputy Chair are present.

Mode of operation

The RAG will meet at least once per year and ideally should convene on an approximately six monthly cycle. The Chair of the Clyde 2020 Steering Group, or alternate, will attend RAG meetings to receive advice. Additional invites or requests to attend meetings will be considered from relevant members of the scientific community or statutory agencies on an ad hoc basis.

The Secretariat for the RAG will be provided by Marine Scotland Science. This will include organising meetings, taking minutes and assisting communication with Clyde 2020 Chair and project staff as well as coordinating the RAG membership application process.

Limited out of pocket expenses will be covered on application to the secretariat.

The Chair of the RAG, in agreement with the Clyde 2020 SG will be able to establish *ad hoc* Task Groups with specified time-bound remits to support projects initiated by the SG. These Task Groups can include co-opted individuals subject to the approval of the Chair of the RAG.

The RAG will operate in an open and transparent manner. Agendas and minutes of meetings will be published. There will be defined exceptions for business that is reserved as confidential.

Conflicts of Interest

All members of the RAG must declare any interest in the business of the RAG in advance or as soon as they are aware of such conflict. The RAG Chair will then take a view on whether the conflict of interest has sufficient bearing as to exclude the member from further discussion or input.

Appointment of RAG Members

At the request of the RAG Chair, and with the agreement of the Clyde 2020 Steering Group, the RAG Secretariat (MSS) will openly advertise the opportunity for individuals with appropriate scientific expertise and understanding to apply to become members of the RAG.

Applicants must submit applications by email to the designated RAG Secretariat (MSS) by an agreed deadline. Applicants will be judged on their individual expertise and experience, taking into account the balance of coverage of the stakeholder community and of scientific expertise relevant to the remit of Clyde 2020.

An application will consist of a full CV together with a covering letter of no more than two sides of A4 in length outlining their expertise relevant to the Terms of Reference of the RAG and any other specific qualifications or qualities as may be specified.

The Clyde 2020 Steering Group will agree a selection panel in discussion with the Chair of the RAG.

The selection panel will review the applications and draw up a shortlist with recommendations for appointment which will be submitted to the Clyde 2020 Steering Group for approval.

Appointees will be formally notified by the RAG Secretariat.