



# SAMS Strategy 2025 – 2030

World-leading science  
for a healthy ocean and thriving people

.....

A partner of



Natural  
Environment  
Research Council



## SAVING PLANET OCEAN

# together

As the UK's oldest ocean research and education charity we have been exploring and studying our changing seas and ocean for over 140 years, with partners from across the world.

**“If we save the sea,  
we save our world”**

- Sir David Attenborough

We have always loved what we do, but we are concerned by the rapid deteriorations in our marine world.

We are launching this new strategy during a period of profound environmental, political, social and economic changes.

We are facing a monumental task: 'If we save the sea, we save our world' says Sir David Attenborough in his emotive 2025 documentary, Ocean. We do not profess to have all the answers but we have a plan that staff and trustees have developed together and are working towards.

## Milestones in our history

1884

Challenger naturalist John Murray opens the 'Scottish Marine Station' aboard The Ark in Edinburgh

1914

Articles & Memorandum of Association set up that rule SAMS to this day

2004-13

Opening of a new research building (2004), business incubator (2005), education building (2011) and the Ocean Explorer Centre (2013)

1872-76

Challenger Expedition is dominated by Scottish scientists

1897

Relocation of the Ark & opening of 1st land-based facilities in Millport (Isle of Cumbrae) which soon become the main site

1967-70

The Association relocates from Millport to its current site at Dunbeg near Oban



## OUR VISION

# World-leading science for a healthy ocean and thriving people

## What our vision means

- **HEALTHY**  
A healthy ocean is an ocean that can support a diverse range of marine life and can continue to fulfil its crucial role in regulating the Earth's climate and ecosystems.
- **THRIVING**  
The ocean sustains human life and wellbeing. Our health is fundamentally connected with ocean health.

Image: A thriving kelp forest on the west coast of Scotland  
Photo by Dr Alasdair O'Dell, SAMS marine ecologist



## Discover

We discover new knowledge about the ocean through world-class, transformational research

RESEARCH

## Communicate

We communicate this new knowledge through inspirational education, policy advice and public engagement

EDUCATION

## Apply

We apply this knowledge through government, business and research partnerships to solve some of the greatest challenges facing our planet

INNOVATION

## OUR MISSION

We broaden and share knowledge of the marine environment, and pioneer solutions to environmental challenges.

## Our purpose is...

to deliver fundamental and applied research; communicate our knowledge through outreach, education and training; and commercialise our innovations for real-world impact and to generate more income to deliver our mission.

Image: A lionfish in the Red Sea with diver Prof John Howe  
Photo by Dr Alasdair O'Dell, SAMS marine ecologist



## 1. Discover



## 2. Educate & communicate



## 6. Develop & support our people



## 5. Take action for Planet Ocean



## 4. Shape our future



## 3. Innovate





# Discover

We will **discover** and **create** new knowledge

We will deliver impartial, cutting-edge and impactful research in current areas of ocean systems, dynamic coasts, and blue economy.

1

Objectives

## STRENGTHEN

research through critical mass in priority areas of:

- biodiversity and ecosystems
- changing climate
- discovery and observation
- intelligent ocean
- sustainable seas

## MONITOR

emerging local and global research trends and emergencies

## PROMOTE

a more active innovation and commercialisation culture in research

Deliverables

## STRENGTHEN

- research projects from regional to global and fundamental to applied - generating sustainable income
- new technologies and approaches
- maintenance and development of research facilities and equipment
- membership and contributions to national and international networks and partnerships
- REF 2029 submission

## MONITOR

- align research areas and influence national and international policies
- periodically realign research capabilities to address emerging environmental and societal challenges

## PROMOTE

- creation of more thematic groups of translational research and innovation



## 2

# Educate and communicate

We will **share**  
our knowledge

We will deliver inspirational education, hands-on experiences, engagement and influence: our discovery research will inform our learning programmes, is shared with the wider public and helps policy making.

Image: SAMS UHI students survey tropical habitats during an undergraduate student expedition to the Red Sea  
Photo by Dr Alasdair O'Dell, SAMS marine ecologist

Objectives

## ATTRACT

a greater number of students from across the world

## DELIVER

a broad curriculum through academic partnerships and interdisciplinary world-class research

## PROVIDE

a supportive and fulfilling student experience through outstanding teaching, effective support and improved facilities

**CAPTURE and COMMUNICATE** our discoveries, achievements and their impacts

## INCREASE

ocean literacy outreach and participation in science education

Deliverables

## ATTRACT

- a yearly intake of 40+ undergraduate students
- more international students
- a community of PhD students averaging at least one student per Principal Investigator

## DELIVER

- an accessible field course for undergraduate students that alternates with the Red Sea excursion
- international exchanges for interested students
- an MSci in Marine Science with a year in industry
- more Master's level programmes

## PROVIDE

- excellent student satisfaction

## CAPTURE AND COMMUNICATE

- all major research, education and policy outputs
- the impacts of our activities

## INCREASE

- ocean literacy and STEM learning by establishing an ocean learning base and shared public science plan
- knowledge exchange activities



# Innovate

We will **apply** our knowledge

We will create commercial solutions to the challenges facing the ocean.

Objectives

## CULTIVATE

an entrepreneurial mindset

## GENERATE

a robust innovation pipeline

## ACCELERATE

scalable, meaningful commercial ventures, services and products

Deliverables

## CULTIVATE

- a nuanced understanding of our customers
- a business-informed handling of Intellectual Property issues
- a collaborative, transdisciplinary approach

## GENERATE

- more knowledge exchange and innovation activities
- a Marine Business Accelerator
- new commercial products and services

## ACCELERATE

- a high-value consultancy business known for world-leading experts solving complex problems for clients
- sales income from SIMBA, NewDEPOMOD, and the Seaweed Nursery
- the diversification and success of Seaweed and Scientific Robotics Academies' products and services
- CCAP market reach, revenue, expansion of cryo-facilities and diversification of education programmes



We will be recognised as  
a national research asset  
and increase our influence.

4

# Shape our future

We will **define** “SAMS”

Objectives

## ESTABLISH

a roadmap for SAMS to 2050

## BUILD

strategic regional, national and international alliances to shape our future

## CREATE

an ethical governance and proactive business management system

## INCREASE

our reach to specific audiences to facilitate our future ambitions and growth

## OBTAIN

scientific national capability status in Scotland to help decision-making on environmental issues

Deliverables

## ESTABLISH

- a master planning project that uses evidence to define how to expand SAMS in a financially sustainable manner for the next 25 years

## BUILD

- a coherent approach on how to develop the European Marine Science Park

## CREATE

- a governance structure that gives a voice to the ocean on our Board
- digital transformation in business and research operations
- an institutional ethics framework

## INCREASE

- understanding of our audiences and ways to engage them effectively
- our influence on policy and funding through trustworthy science

## OBTAIN

- Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institution (SEFARI) status



# Take action for Planet Ocean

5

We will show **responsibility** in the climate and biodiversity crises

We will use research, innovations, actions and influence to focus on the urgent challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Objectives

## FOCUS

research, innovation and commercialisation activities on biodiversity and ecosystems, and climate change

## DECARBONISE

our infrastructure and activities

## INFLUENCE

international, national and local decision-makers and communities to tackle the climate emergency.

Deliverables

## FOCUS

- develop a new Centre for Seaweed and Shellfish Innovation, Development and Ecological Restoration
- establish new markets for SAMS Enterprise

## DECARBONISE

- reduce the carbon emissions from our facilities and operations
- include proactive decarbonisation plans in new capital developments and purchases
- obtain a low-emission, fit-for-purpose research vessel
- enhance the fabric of our estate and staff awareness around decarbonisation; reduce our value-chain emissions and procure responsibly

## INFLUENCE

- establish an Ocean Matters Think Tank
- increase our dialogue and collaboration with policymakers and communities



# Develop and support our people

We will make **SAMS** an even better place to work and study

We will put our people at the heart of what we do. We will strive for a positive and inclusive working culture where staff and students are united by a common purpose and shared aims.

Image: Staff and students going swimming from the SAMS back beach during their lunchtime hour  
Photo by Euan Paterson, Senior Communications Manager

Objectives

## ENSURE

that all staff can see their part in the strategy and how they contribute to a positive working culture

## ENCOURAGE

an inclusive and safe environment to attract a diverse range of people who will foster innovation & creativity in all areas of work

**ATTRACT and RETAIN** talented people

Deliverables

## ENSURE

- we evaluate and report the progress and success of our strategy and amend it when necessary
- we integrate strategic objectives and deliverables in the staff journey from recruitment to promotions

## ENCOURAGE

- fairness and respect between job families
- growing diversity eg through Investors in Diversity accreditation

## ATTRACT AND RETAIN

- Enhance a proactive health & safety culture with support mechanisms for employees
- Provide access to internal job/project opportunities for existing staff
- Identify key organisational areas for recruitment investment
- Further develop the flexible and social working environment where people enjoy coming to work
- Invest in developing strong leaders across the workforce, creating a network of support for employees and inspire progression



# Values



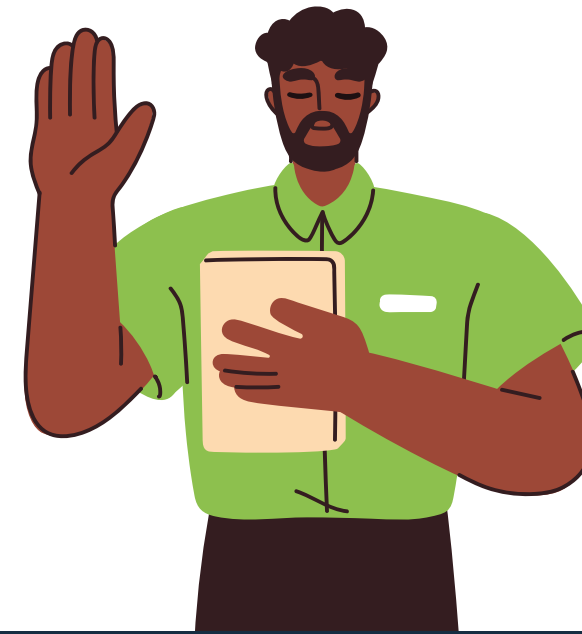
## EXCELLENCE

We strive for the highest standards in everything we do, and in the way we do it. Excellence drives our commitment to quality, performance and positive impact.



## INNOVATION

We innovate for our research to have real-world impact and find solutions to global environmental issues. We also innovate so that our operations embrace best practice to maximise our efficiency.



## IMPARTIALITY

Our scientific research, decisions and conclusions are solely based on equal consideration of data and viewpoints, without bias or undue influence. We uphold a culture of transparency and integrity in all areas of our business.



## INDEPENDENCE

We maintain our organisational freedom to make decisions and take actions based on our core principles and values.



## COLLABORATION

We cannot succeed alone, and we will be a reliable and constructive partner to other research institutions, industry and governments.



## COMMUNITY

We believe that a supportive and inclusive environment fosters success.

We are dedicated to building meaningful relationships with our stakeholders, and empowering the voices of the communities we serve.



## RESPECT

We treat each other and our partners with dignity and fairness, valuing diverse perspectives and opinions. Respect is fundamental to fostering a positive and productive environment as well as fruitful partnerships.



## ACCOUNTABILITY

Our actions and decisions are inspired by transparency and integrity, and driven by the sustainability of our organisation and high standards of delivery. We aim for continuous improvement and strengthening trust with our partners.

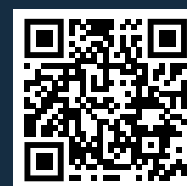




## SAMS OCEAN EXPLORER

# Podcast

Our Ocean Explorer Podcast takes you on a deep dive into marine science and the human relationship with the ocean. Each episode explores a special topic and features SAMS scientists, students and special guests.



amazon music



Listen on  
Apple Podcasts

## SAMS OCEAN EXPLORER

# Updates

Subscribe to our e-newsletter to keep in touch. Our regular Ocean Explorer Updates brings you marine science news including new scientific discoveries, upcoming events, courses, job opportunities and ways to support our work directly into your email inbox.



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