

Interim Review of MASTS – Covering the period: 2009 - 2015

This document is a digest of the interim review of the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology Scotland (MASTS) covering the period 2009 - 2015.

The remit for the review set out nine areas for consideration:

1. Governance mechanisms of MASTS and effectiveness of the structure
2. Activity and effectiveness of the Directorate.
3. Structure and functioning of the Graduate School
4. Strategic Science supported by MASTS
5. Scientific outputs and impact
6. Alignment of MASTS strategic science with government and industry
7. MASTS Strategic Approach in an International Context
8. Scope and Effectiveness of MASTS Communications and Outreach
9. MASTS Beyond 2017

The overall view of the interim review panel is that MASTS is achieving its stated mission, function and projected outcomes. Evidence for this view is available in the documents supplied and in views gathered from stakeholders by questionnaire and at the Annual Science Meeting 2015. The review panel feels that it will be important to maintain the level of activity in the Directorate and Graduate School, as these have been instrumental in developing the cohesion and identity of MASTS. There may be scope for re-examining the scope and function of the various governance committees. Themes and Forums have been useful, but there is scope to refine objectives and spread best practice across groups.

Summary and Recommendations

MASTS is, and should be seen as, a highly successful initiative. The Review Panel feel that MASTS should be seen as a priority for support, both by its members and the funding agencies. In a short period of time, a cohesive alliance has been built. The ASM is appreciated by participants from government, industry and academia. The Graduate School is providing an excellent educational experience for students. Other countries are planning similar initiatives or would like to emulate MASTS. MASTS has an international profile and can act as a point of contact for European funding bids. The consortium is well-run and able to identify areas to improve (e.g., heterogeneity of forums) and the means of doing so.

Specific recommendations are:

- Consider streamlining the governance, while being alert to the need to keep all members engaged.
- Maintain the level of activity of the Directorate, this is important for cohesion
- Consider the composition and roles of the advisory committees
- Continue with initiatives in the Graduate School, including looking for internship possibilities from a wide range of potential partners
- Continue with Themes and Forums, including efforts to refine objectives and spread best practice across groups
- Continue engagement with industry, consider mechanisms for links with economists and social scientists to build the case for interdisciplinary and inter sectoral partnerships.

Interim Review Panel:

Professor Mark Johnson

Professor Olof Linden

Professor Isabel Sousa Pinto

Documents and evidence consulted by the Review Panel

- MASTS review stakeholder questionnaire (47 responses from Marine Science Scotland, agencies, universities and private sector)
- Advisory Board minutes
- Executive Committee minutes
- Governing Council minutes
- Grad School Steering Group minutes
- Annual Science Meetings – programme details
- Annual Reports
- Example Press Releases
- Kelpie newsletter
- REF impact statements
- Review of the MASTS Graduate School 2015
- MASTS International Strategy
- EXPANSION OF MASTS - Discussion Paper
- Terms of Reference - MASTS Review - Final
- MASTS General Update
- 20110926 MASTS Consortium Agreement
- Theme and Forum Review Summary + Budget