

# Research protocol for SeaBOS

SeaBOS is a novel way for science and business to interact and learn from each other, while also advancing knowledge and action. The aim of this collaboration is to investigate if industry leaders, with support from science, can stimulate large-scale, transformative change towards ocean stewardship.

This document aims to clarify the relationship between science and business in this process, which requires two different modes of research, namely:

- 1) scientific support for achieving progress – *Science for SeaBOS*; and
- 2) scientific monitoring to document progress – *Science of SeaBOS*.

The rationale and practical conditions for each mode of research are described below.

## **1. Science for SeaBOS**

This mode of research primarily provides SeaBOS members with knowledge that supports the implementation of commitments made by companies. For instance, how can a commitment to eliminate modern slavery be enabled, what is the state of the art of existing knowledge and practice, what new knowledge is necessary, and what has worked before or in other sectors? This mode of research supports the operational science-business interaction that takes place in individual task forces. The primary place for presenting results is through background briefs presented at SeaBOS meetings and on the associated web-page. Scientific publications are also likely to emerge from this work.

*Science for SeaBOS requires that:*

1. The research task is specified according to the dual criteria of scientific rigour and business needs (aligned to SeaBOS commitments);
2. The required capacity is defined, including any funding or other resources;
3. The research design is clear, for instance the definition of roles and responsibilities of SeaBOS members and SRC (and scientific partners), including an agreement on timelines.

*The principles that apply are:*

1. Work will be co-designed (following the same spirit of the Keystone Dialogue process).
2. Research ethics (and especially issues of confidentiality) are addressed clearly.
3. Legal and commercial issues arising from the research are addressed clearly.
4. The research team will be able to use material from the work (subject to confidentiality) in developing original research.

*General specification (Science for SeaBOS):*

| Sourcing the research need  | Funding and other resources  | Design and logistics   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>There are three potential sources of research needs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The extension and refinement of existing collaborative work. Given that much of the research undertaken will be novel, it is expected that the outcomes of some of the research will prompt additional lines of inquiry.</li> <li>2. Requests for specific insight might emerge from the SeaBOS members (as a group, or prompted by an individual member or task force) or from the SRC Science Director.</li> <li>3. Proposals might come from the SRC in response to a need to better understand the Keystone Dialogue process or from emerging questions in the regulatory or academic landscape.</li> </ol> | <p>Potential resources for work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Existing SRC grant from the consortium of philanthropic bodies (there is an existing research programme specified in these grants).</li> <li>2. External academic contributions 'in kind' from the existing partnerships which are funded by general university resources or from grants held outside of SRC (e.g. PhD studentships and post-doc posts at University of Birmingham and Burgos).</li> <li>3. Contributions 'in kind' from SeaBOS members (e.g. vessel or personnel time in trialling programs).</li> <li>4. Specific new grant funding (from academic or philanthropic sources) that has been obtained to support specific or general work on the Keystone Dialogues.</li> </ol> | <p>Issues that need to be agreed for work to be done in a timely fashion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Both identify and specify the work to be conducted (including time lines and nature of work being undertaken).</li> <li>2. Both identify how this work fits with the priorities of SeaBOS and the SRC.</li> <li>3. SRC identify who from the SRC will lead the work, who will undertake the work, and who will provide quality control.</li> <li>4. Both identify who from SeaBOS will be needed to collaborate in the work.</li> <li>5. Both identify any external participants who should be involved in this work and the nature of those interactions.</li> <li>6. SRC identify if proper ethical oversight/agreements for the work are in place.</li> <li>7. Both identify the form in which work will be delivered (e.g. background briefs, working papers, academic/practice/policy articles etc).</li> </ol> |

## **2. Science of SeaBOS**

This mode of research provides an understanding of the process and its outcomes. The development of a Keystone Dialogue process (which has resulted in the creation of SeaBOS) is innovative and unique.

As a result, the SRC (supported by the SeaBOS science funders) are monitoring how SeaBOS evolves over time. This involves understanding the internal dynamics of SeaBOS, the importance of existing networks and initiatives, and the role of partners, including individuals (e.g. The Hon. Jane Lubchenco Ph.D.) and organisations (eg High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability, the UN Global Compact on sustainable ocean business), as well as the critical support provided by Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, a global SDG advocate Alumni).

The main audience for this information is the international scientific community, SeaBOS members, international policy makers, international seafood industry, philanthropic funders, environmental NGOs, and other stakeholders.

Science of SeaBOS will answer questions such as: “What has been achieved and how?”. Science of SeaBOS will develop an understanding of *if and how* industry can accelerate change towards ocean stewardship, providing insights of what works well, and what does not work well. Scientific publications are the main venue for presenting results. This mode of research clarifies the need for, and potential in, transformative change, while also describing the Anthropocene reality and providing a systems perspective that clarifies the new reality for companies.

It is hoped that this science work will inform other attempts at Keystone Dialogues in different production sectors, as well as increase understanding of how corporations engage in transformations for stewardship.

Part of this work takes place naturally alongside the Science for SeaBOS, including participating in meetings and through working alongside SeaBOS staff. From time to time, however, it is necessary to more formally reflect upon the SeaBOS work and this might take the form of process documentation (e.g. collecting data on SeaBOS meetings), interviews and questionnaire surveys of SeaBOS participants, or studies of public SeaBOS members reports. Combined, these and other sources of information provide perspectives on the initiative, the processes it follows, and the results it generates.

## **3. Principles of all research engagement**

1. Any data asked for will be either used as part of the direct scientific support for SeaBOS (Science for SeaBOS), or the science aimed at monitoring SeaBOS (Science of SeaBOS). The purpose of the data asked for will be made clear at the onset.
2. Information submitted will normally be anonymized and only used in an aggregated form. At times (for example, where shared learning is being sought) individual companies may be identified. In these instances, data will only be shared within SeaBOS. When this latter situation pertains, this will be made clear at the outset of any particular survey.

3. Participation in all targeted surveys is voluntary and consent to participate in such surveys is obtained (most usually by deciding to participate in the survey).
4. As scientists we follow best research practice by complying with existing laws and practice on confidentiality when collecting, analyzing, storing and publishing data.
5. All research will adhere to the requirements of anti-trust law. For example, research will not deal with or share any commercially sensitive information. Commercially sensitive information covers a wide range of information, and includes not only prices, capacity/stocks, costs, profit margins, etc, but also information on proposed R&D, marketing strategies and future market entry.
6. Where agreement is obtained, aggregated results from research undertaken by the scientists will be made publicly available (for example as scientific background briefs on the web-page, in scientific publications, or other forms).
7. All data collected by the science team and any results it generates will be held by the science team.
8. The scientific engagement by scientists with SeaBOS as an organization or its members companies does not mean that these scientists, their institutions, or funders, necessarily agree with or endorse the activities of SeaBOS or its members.

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