

News release

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NEW DIRECTOR FOR SAMS

Professor Laurence Mee will become the new director of SAMS, one of the oldest marine science organisations in the world. He will be taking up the new position in September. Professor Mee is currently the Director of the Marine Institute at the University of Plymouth and has an international reputation for his work in marine policy.

The president of SAMS, Sir John Arbuthnott, said: "We are delighted that Professor Laurence Mee has accepted the post of director. With over 30 years in marine science he brings the right mix of leadership and scientific skills to the position. As director he will be able to shape and adapt the organisation to emerging opportunities and challenges including developing the case for creating the new Scottish Oceans Institute (SOI) in collaboration with the University of St Andrews."

SAMS is a collaborative centre of the UK Natural Environment Research Council. Professor Alan Thorpe, Chief Executive of NERC, said: "We look forward to working with Laurence Mee as he takes up the leadership of SAMS, and particularly on their contribution to the exciting *Oceans 2025* marine research initiative."

SAMS is also an academic partner in UHI Millennium Institute, working towards the creation of a university for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The principal of UHI, Professor Robert Cormack, welcomed the appointment: "Professor Mee's background and experience suggest he is well able to take SAMS forward to the next stage in its development. SAMS is central to the future University of the Highlands and Islands in helping us build our research base and capacity. Under Professor Mee's leadership we expect the degree in marine science to be even further enhanced."

Highlands and Islands Enterprise, which has been a strong supporter of SAMS, expressed its satisfaction with the outcome of the search for a new director. Area Director, Ken Abernethy, said: "The Government Economic Strategy stresses the importance of strengthening the links between the Scottish research base and business innovation. We believe that SAMS has been a shining example in recent years and we look forward to even greater success in the future under Professor Mee."

It was critical for SAMS to appoint the right person to the role of director to guarantee the further flourishing of an organisation that has been growing significantly under the leadership of its departing director of 12 years, Professor Graham Shimmiel. SAMS therefore engaged the reputable Search Company, Odgers Ray & Berndtson's, to assist in the recruitment process. Caroline McCreath, a partner in Odgers, Ray & Berndtson's Scottish practice based in Glasgow, who oversaw the recruitment process, said: "This appointment is of critical importance to SAMS at a time when proposals for new marine legislation in Scotland and the UK is high on the public agenda. Professor Mee's proven track record of scientific achievement combined with his clear vision for taking SAMS forward ensured he was a strong candidate from the outset. I am sure he will be looking forward to the challenges ahead and, in particular, the opportunity to help shape a dynamic research and educational

institution, which has an internationally-recognised heritage.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Professor Laurence Mee is the UK's first Professor of Marine and Coastal Policy and has a strong research reputation for work on modelling coupled social and ecological systems. He is a member of the Scientific Steering Group of the IGBP Land-Ocean Interactions in the Coastal Zone programme and Chair of the Advisory Committee on the Protection of the Sea. He recently acted as Special Advisor to the House of Commons Select Committee inquiry on *Investigating the Oceans*. Before his move to Oban Professor Mee worked for the UN – among other positions as Head of the Marine Environmental Studies Laboratory of IAEA-MEL in Monaco - and before that was at the National Autonomous University in Mexico.

SAMS is a learned society with an international membership and its 140 staff conduct independent research and provide higher education in marine science. It was formed in 1884 as the 'Scottish Marine Station' by Sir John Murray. The SAMS mission is to improve understanding and stewardship of the marine environment through research, education, maintenance of facilities and technology transfer. For more details see www.sams.ac.uk

The previous director, Professor Graham Shimmield, led SAMS from 1996 to 2008 and next week takes up the position of executive director of the Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences in Maine, USA.