AIFCA DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

3rd March 2026

Directors present

Robert Clark
Tony Tomlinson MBE (chair)
Mike Williams (vice chair)
Will Wright
Mat Mander (part)
Pia Bateman
Sam Davis
Mark Taylor
Julian Gregory
Rob Pearson

Also present

Paul Williams

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

Colin Trundle,
David McCandless,
Mark Southerton

2. Declaration of interests

None

3. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting were approved.

4. Budget Control Statement

The budget control statement was approved.

5. Additional Defra Funding for MPA Delivery and Data Infrastructure

The Directors heard that a request, from Defra, to provide a summary of additional costs for AIFCA delivery for MPA management in the current financial year was received and the AIFCA responded to request;

Promotion	£11,693.50
Training	£5,000
Officer time	£22,000
Total	£38,693.50

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Directors received a report and considered the AIFCA application (risks and opportunities) for funding from Defra's Data Infrastructure Funding under the Capital Delivery programme (CDEL). Directors heard how funding totalling £413,000 will support development of shared digital systems and data capability across the IFCA network, including:

- redevelopment of the MMO Mobile Working Application,
- support for the rollout of the CLUE system, and
- development of improved MPA mapping capability.

the funding will be provided using the Section 31 grant mechanism, which allows central government to allocate funding to local authorities for specific purposes. The grant will be issued to Norfolk County Council, the lead authority for Eastern IFCA, which will act as the accountable body for distributing the funds in support of the agreed programme of work. This mechanism has been proposed by Defra as the most appropriate route for the current financial year and reflects the fact that the IFCAs are hosted by local authorities.

Directors discussed the governance and assurance for the use of these funds. Directors heard that the governance approach includes:

- recognition that the AIFCA is coordinating the data infrastructure programme on behalf of the IFCAs;
- establishment of a working group involving Defra, IFCAs and relevant partners to oversee delivery;
- confirmation that AIFCA members are commissioning the Association to undertake additional MPA work aligned with Defra priorities.

A governance framework setting out roles, responsibilities, reporting arrangements and financial oversight is currently being developed in discussion with Defra. This framework will ensure transparency and appropriate accountability for the funding.

6. ISSF Funding Bid AIFCA Role

Directors considered the role of the AIFCA in hosting a Project Officer post proposed within a funding bid to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Directors to discussed whether AIFCA should support the ongoing work by hosting the position and providing organisational oversight.

The Directors noted the report. Requested further information on the amount of time allocated to the role; the wider remit of the role; the job description and job specification.

Directors considered:

- how hosting the position aligns with AIFCA's mission
- the strategic benefits of AIFCA continuing to play a leadership in the ISSF project
- the level of support and oversight that would be required from AIFCA; and

After discussion the report was noted. The Chief Officer will report to members on the submission for funding and provide recommendations for a Project Officer to be considered by the Members Forum.

7. AIFCA Expenses

To inform members of the current process of expense reimbursement and to seek a more efficient process.

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