

SAOS Purpose Beliefs, Values, Strategic Objectives

Purpose and Beliefs

The purpose of SAOS is to ensure that Scotland's farming, food & drink businesses benefit from the commercial advantages that are achieved through co-operation and collaboration, enabling them to contribute to the success of Scotland's food and drink industry and its rural economy.

We believe that Scotland's farmers and food businesses can preserve their independence and grow by co-operating to secure gains that are not available if acting independently of each other. Collaboration within food and drink supply chains generates additional value for all participants by developing transparency and trust and reducing uncertainty and risk.

Values

SAOS values are cooperative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equitability, transparency, openness, learning and concern for community. SAOS works for the benefit of farmers the food and drink industry and rural Scotland, and strives to be a source of innovation for them. All of our resources are applied to delivering our purpose. SAOS is prohibited by its Rules from distributing any profits to members.

SAOS engages and harnesses the uniqueness, talents, beliefs, capabilities and ways of working of the people who work for our organisation. We provide a culture where people are valued and respected, and contribute their best work. We recognise and respect that every one of our staff and our associates are exceptional with individual differences and talents that enhance the unique values of SAOS.

Towards 2025 - Introductory context

Towards 2025, the opportunities for increasing the output and value of our farming, food and drink industry are substantial. Leading edge knowledge and technologies are more affordable and available than ever and, accessing markets and consumers who value the special provenance and integrity of Scotland's products is feasible, wherever they may be. Consequently, Scotland has adopted ambitious targets in response to growing global demand for quality food and drink.

The opportunities are greater than ever, but so are the challenges and demands which must be overcome or managed within an extremely competitive market. Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity emanating from a myriad of sources feature and impact on all parts of farming, food and drink supply chains and at an accelerating pace. This means that better management of business resources, risks and the need for greater resilience must be accommodated with the requirement for ambition, innovation, investment and entrepreneurialism.

As Scotland's farming, food and drink industry looks to co-operation and collaboration to exploit ever greater opportunities along with the spectrum of uncertainties, the demands and expectations on SAOS increase. The tasks of research, innovation and planning: knowledge and translation of markets, fulfilment mechanisms, new production technologies, emergent business models, technology and data opportunities, environmental consequences, finance needs, potential returns and critical risks, are all essential and, in combination, are moving beyond the resources of many businesses and business groups. A global rather than a national contextualisation of new strategies is necessary and when added to the co-operative or collaborative dimension, the result is rapidly increasing demand for the knowledge and skills that SAOS applies with an obligation on us to invest in providing 'leading edge' capabilities that deliver unique solutions for Scotland.

Organisation Strategy

SAOS' role is described by stakeholders as "helping to keep us one step ahead". To meet this expectation in tomorrow's business environment, SAOS will adopt a leadership role in identifying opportunities for new co-operation and collaboration. We will research and develop strategies that deliver the potential for growth in output and value and which also take into account the complexity and risk in implementation. To enable this, we will invest in our people, our key resource, so that we increase our knowledge and deepen our specialisms and skills in innovation and change management delivered through cooperation and collaboration. We will work to achieve synergy and connection across all our areas of expertise and work.

Industry Co-operation and Collaboration

Amongst Farmers

Our objective is that farmer co-operation and co-ops will be pre-eminent in optimising farmers' market opportunities and access by acting as initiators of innovation in farm production and supply chains. Their effectiveness will create better connection with, and be essential in, the growth of Scotland's food and drink industry, and be a determining factor in attracting new investment in food and drink processing.

We will:

1. Affirm and further strengthen our position as a global centre of knowledge and excellence in farmer co-operation.
2. Identify and develop business opportunities horizontally amongst farmers and vertically with others in food and drink industry supply chains to deliver growth, value and security.
3. In partnership, draw on research of emergent technologies and data industries to innovate new solutions that improve resource efficiencies and competitiveness enabling farmers both to reduce costs and environmental impacts.
4. Consistent with and implicit within the strategies above, research and deliver co-operative solutions to current and new challenges including, but not limited to, climate change, extreme price fluctuations, uncertainty and high risk, with increased farm and industry resilience as an outcome.
5. Improve the governance of co-ops by increasing the knowledge and skills of farmer directors, co-op managers and staff, and ensuring that knowledge of co-ops is disseminated to farmers, students and potential next generation leaders.

Resources

In-House Talents – Our objective is that our team should consist of talented, motivated, committed individuals who are highly effective and highly regarded in meeting industry needs and in implementing SAOS' objectives and strategies, whilst at the same time exemplifying and practicing SAOS' co-operative values.

We will:

1. Uphold a culture of individual responsibility and freedom to act within a supportive and nurturing team environment. Employ working practices that result in knowledge sharing across our team and joint working across sectors, supply chain actors, projects and disciplines to achieve best outcomes.

Within the Supply Chain

Our objective is that horizontal and vertical collaboration amongst businesses and within supply chains becomes a 'mainstream' strategy adopted by all of Scotland's farming, food and drink industry. The commercial advantages of collaboration are being realised in the industry, revealing the outstanding potential for further adoption.

We will:

1. Affirm SAOS as Scotland's centre of excellence of knowledge and commercial development expertise in supply chain collaboration in the farming, food and drink industry.
 2. Identify and develop opportunities for new commercial collaborations across industry sectors and along supply chains (including the primary sector) in partnership with Scotland Food & Drink and its public, private and academia participants.
 3. Design and deliver projects and initiatives that improve competitiveness and efficiencies within sectors and along supply chains through collaboration utilising leading edge research, techniques and technologies.
 4. Identify and develop opportunities for new services that SAOS can deliver to businesses in response to evidenced need.
2. Review, plan and increase the size of our team responding to opportunities and demands for our expertise and capabilities.
 3. Deepen, extend and diversify the knowledge sources, specialisms and skills of our team in response to current and emerging requirements and opportunities, searching globally where appropriate.
 4. Provide opportunities for career-long personal growth through training and experiential learning that is consistent with contributing towards SAOS' purpose and objectives.
 5. Provide individuals with job satisfaction through a sense of achievement and being valued, a supportive work environment, and recognition of success through income growth.

Resources

Working With Others – Our objective is that SAOS creates collaborations that enable us to better deliver our projects and initiatives, and in so doing exemplify successful partnership and demonstrate good practice in relationships and participation in the industry.

We will:

1. Create and manage a network of associates and experts able to augment SAOS' in-house talents in delivering projects that require specialist knowledge, skills and experience and provide them with attractive opportunities to work alongside SAOS in pursuit of industry goals.
2. Provide skilled specialist services and resources to lead, plan, resource and manage the implementation of industry strategies for the development of commercial collaboration.
3. Participate fully and constructively in the Scotland Food & Drink 'industry cluster' of private, public and academic organisations, contributing specialist expertise in the development of innovative industry strategies and implementation programmes.
4. Nurture participation in appropriate UK, EU and global networks to extend SAOS partnership and knowledge sources and provide opportunities for cross-continent collaborations.

Finance – Our objective is to secure the resources and roles that will enable us to deliver SAOS' strategic objectives. The financial resources generated by SAOS will be optimised by continuously strengthening our contribution towards the industry's success. We will work to generate multiple income streams including delivery of profitable SAOS services, and by securing appropriate work outside Scotland.

The Governance of SAOS

Our objective is full participation by our members in the governance of SAOS, in accordance with our Council and Board Governance Charter and the best practice principles contained in the SAOS and Co-operatives UK Code of Governance for Agricultural Co-operatives. We will empower members to exercise their roles, responsibilities and control rights.

We will:

1. Adopt best practice appropriate to SAOS as stated in the current Co-operatives UK / SAOS Corporate Code of Governance for Agricultural Co-operatives.
2. Fully involve members and Council in setting the strategic direction and plans of SAOS in accordance with the provisions made in the Rules. In so doing, we will inform them of the needs expressed by other stakeholders.
3. Communicate our achievements against objectives and plans, and provide opportunities for feedback and accountability at the AGM, Council meetings and other events.
4. Educate members about the principles and practices of co-operatives, encourage sharing of learning amongst members, and communicate related information on strategic and regulatory developments pertinent to co-ops. Provide access to information via a range of media.
5. Encourage attendance at the Annual General Meeting, the annual conference and dinner, and all other networking events that we arrange.
6. Evolve the SAOS membership proposition in response to members' needs and provide and deliver membership services.