SSAC Quarterly Update – December 2025

The SSAC provides independent advice, through its Chair, to the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) for Scotland, to inform policy development and delivery across all areas of the Scottish Government's (SG) work. It typically develops advice on a medium to long term basis, advising on developments in science and technology and their implications for policy and identifying potential future opportunities and threats.

Chaired by Professor Julian Jones from 1 December 2023, the SSAC has seventeen other members, in addition to the Scottish Government's Chief Scientific Advisers, all of whom are ex-officio members: Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) for Scotland, Professor Calum Semple, Chief Scientist (Health), Professor Dame Anna Dominiczak, CSA (Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture), Professor Mathew Williams, Chief Social Policy Adviser, Professor Linda Bauld and CSA (Marine), Professor Mark Inall.

The SSAC issues a short report following each quarterly meeting to provide an update on its latest work streams and areas of interest. The next SSAC operational meeting will be held on 3 February 2026, with the first of the bi-annual strategic meeting to follow on 17 March 2026. The SSAC Updates will follow the bi-annual strategic meetings.

1. SSAC CURRENT WORKSTREAMS

- Critical Technologies – The report was published on 1 December 2025 and has been well received. A teach-in event is being arranged for January 2026.
- The Engineering Biology report was agreed by SSAC at the 2 December meeting. Work is underway for publication of the report in early 2026.
- NHS decarbonisation – The Scoping Agreement has been confirmed and uploaded on the SSAC website. A research assistant is being sought to help with the project and regular working group meetings have been scheduled to take forward the project.
- Flexible Energy Demand Management – An updated scoping document was agreed at the SSAC meeting on 2 December and uploaded to the website. Regular working group meetings will be scheduled for the new year.

2. SSAC FUTURE WORKSTREAMS

- Skills – A draft scope was circulated for feedback ahead of the December meeting. The feedback is being considered and a further meeting is to be arranged in the early new year to agree the scope in more detail and to confirm a research assistant for the project.
- Innovation – A scope is being developed by the working group ahead of planned discussion at the February operational meeting. .
- AI – Ongoing discussions around hosting an ongoing roundtable in early 2026 with key stakeholders. A short paper of questions for the roundtable has been circulated for feedback and stakeholder list being compiled.
- Hydrogen – It was agreed to revisit this proposed project following the publication of hydrogen related reports expected in Spring 2026.

3. SSAC MEMBERSHIP NEWS

- SSAC membership recruitment to begin in Spring/Summer 2026 to allow for timely replacement of members who will be stepping down in November 2026.

For further information, please contact the SSAC Secretariat team at:
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