CoSeC External Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday 17 September 2026
Rutherford Appleton Laboratory

ATTENDEES:

Board:
James Kermode (University of Warwick, Chair)
Jane Winters (University of London)
Simon Hettrick (Institute for Research Software)
Henning Hermjakob (EMBL)
Andrea Cavalli (CECAM)

Observers:
Barbara Montanari (Associate Director of Programmes & Strategy for Scientific Computing at STFC)
Stephen Longshaw (CoSeC Director)
Mark Savill (Cranfield University, Chair of CoSeC Community Forum)
Mai Hoang (CoSeC, Secretary)

APOLOGIES:
Richard Gunn (UKRI DRI)

1. Welcome, review of minutes and actions from March 2026 – EAB Chair

- The minutes from the March 2026 meeting were approved, and updates were provided on previous actions - CoSeC EAB Action Log (Sep 2026).pdf.

2. CoSeC update and review of progress against recommendations from March 2026 – CoSeC / All

CoSeC update

- CoSeC published a new annual report, intended to communicate CoSeC's impact to a wider audience alongside the more technical Community Forum reporting.
- Six NPRAISE training projects had started, following a ring-fenced call across CoSeC communities, giving RTPs practical AI-upskilling opportunities in relevant areas. CoSeC also continued collaboration with CAKE on EDI work, including the community-wide EDI survey, and started work with FortranFutures Network+ on the future use of Fortran.
- Technical examples included GPU porting for OpenFOAM, energy-efficient computing, mixed precision, and the CoSeC Catalogue, which is being

developed as metadata and catalogue infrastructure for research objects across communities.

- CoSeC highlighted the 2026 CoSeC Impact Award, awarded to Sunday Nwokolo for work linked to CCPi's gVirtualXRay software, and continued outreach through events including the STEP-UP Conference, Durham HPC Days, the UK Reproducibility Network Conference, ISC26 and SC26.

Response to the Board's March 2026 recommendations

- **Engagement with UKRI and government:** CoSeC reported continued engagement with EPSRC, UKRI DRI and relevant STFC contacts on future funding, digital research infrastructure and planning ahead of the upcoming CCE opportunity. CoSeC also arranged discussions with CCP and HEC chairs to understand their plans for the CCE call and explore how CoSeC could contribute to, or coordinate with, future bids.
- **Community Forum and strategic messaging:** CoSeC used the Community Forum to test its future model with communities. Feedback supported CoSeC's role in technical coordination, but communities were clear that research priorities and grand challenge topics should remain community-led.
- **Common themes across communities:** CoSeC used the Forum to draw out shared technical themes, with sessions on FAIR, AI, energy efficiency and quantum. Examples included GPU porting for OpenFOAM, mixed precision for energy efficiency, and the CoSeC Catalogue as metadata and catalogue infrastructure for research objects. The Forum was also co-located with the CCP-QC algorithms event, which took place the following day.
- **Collaboration and convening role:** CoSeC continued to work with related organisations and initiatives, including the SHAREing Hub, the UK Reproducibility Network, BioFAIR, the Institute for Research Software, CAKE Network Plus and FortranFutures Network+.

CoSeC next steps

- CoSeC set out the uncertainty around UKRI DRI and EPSRC funding beyond March 2027. The forthcoming CCE call was described as the clearest current opportunity, but not a like-for-like replacement for CoSeC's existing model.
- CoSeC described its core role as enabling research software as infrastructure by providing long-term ownership, expertise, continuity and sustainability for research software.
- CoSeC described the main functions of its current model, including technical work led by research communities, cross-cutting technical activity led by CoSeC, bringing communities together around shared technical priorities, funding coordination and RTP career development. The Board was asked which of these should be prioritised in any future model.
- CoSeC outlined possible areas for a future CoSeC CCE model, including software support, data and catalogue activity, access to national compute resources, and wider impact. CoSeC asked the Board to consider where CoSeC

should focus, how it should position itself for the CCE opportunity, and which partners, communities or users may need to be involved.

3. Closed discussion – Board only plus Mark Savill

- The Board held a closed discussion on CoSeC's response to previous recommendations and its future operating model in the changing UKRI DRI landscape. No minutes were taken during this item.
- The Board then provided feedback to CoSeC, with the Chair noting that the advice was provisional until more detail was available on the CCE call and wider funding context.

4. Feedback to CoSeC and discussion – EAB Chair / All

The Board noted that CoSeC had responded positively to the March recommendations, with clear progress since the previous meeting. In particular, the Community Forum was seen as a useful way to test CoSeC's future model with its communities.

1. The Board supported a technical focus for a CCE proposal but advised CoSeC to narrow this further. The proposal should clearly show CoSeC's core expertise and distinctive strengths, including embedded RTP expertise and long-term relationships with research communities.
2. CoSeC should use its existing experience to show how it is prepared for future DRI and CCE needs, while presenting the proposal as forward-looking rather than as a continuation of the current model. The Board also suggested considering whether the CoSeC name remains the right fit for a CCE given the requirements of the call may not align with the top-level mission of the Centre directly.
3. CoSeC should use STFC staff input to identify its main strengths and USPs. The Board suggested that internal discussions or focus groups could help clarify these strengths. Data-related work should not be presented as CoSeC's main USP, as other organisations and significant programmes are already active in this area. The Board felt CoSeC's stronger case was its RTP expertise and community-led technical software capability.
4. CoSeC should consider how RTP roles may change as AI-assisted coding becomes more common, with value increasingly lying in verification rather than only in writing code.
5. Once the CCE call is published, CoSeC should consider whether a broader consortium or coalition is needed. For example, an energy-efficiency focus may require hardware specialists, mathematicians or other partners to strengthen the proposal.
6. CoSeC should promote its successes more strongly. The Board welcomed the new annual report as a clear example of this. It also recognised commercially relevant work linked to BBSRC- and MRC-funded communities, specifically CCP4 and CCP-EM, where income is reinvested into software development.
7. CoSeC should consider what an orderly reduction of activity would look like if future funding does not support all current activity.

8. CoSeC should look beyond the immediate CCE call and explore other potential funding routes, including European opportunities such as FP10/Horizon and wider partnerships where appropriate.

Post-recommendation discussion

- The discussion covered how CoSeC and the Institute for Research Software could work together, with the Institute stronger on policy, university engagement and research culture, while CoSeC's strength is technical, domain-linked software capability.
- The Board asked how it could help. CoSeC said support in positioning CoSeC within the DRI strategy and future CCE opportunity would be useful. The Board offered to review the CCE call once published and consider whether a message of support to the UKRI DRI programme would help.

5. AOB and next steps – All

- The next EAB meeting was agreed for Thursday 25 March 2027 and is expected to be held online. It may be cancelled or adapted depending on the timing and outcome of the CCE call.

ACTIONS:

1. CoSeC to demonstrate the CoSeC Catalogue at the next EAB meeting.
2. CoSeC to provide an update on its response to the September 2026 Board recommendations at the next EAB meeting.
3. The Board will contact the UKRI DRI programme with a message of support for CoSeC's role in future digital research infrastructure
4. The Board to review the CCE call and provide proposal advice once the call is published, if requested by CoSeC.