Strategic Advisory Network (SAN) Case Studies

3 current SAN members share their experience of their role on the SAN

Francesca Medda, University College London, SAN member since 2016

“In my experience as a SAN member I participated in several Work Streams. This is for me always a very interesting experience that I can summarise in three ways. Firstly, we are compelled to look beyond our own expertise and confront our own ideas with other colleagues from different universities and from industry; and this is an exciting challenge to learn new things and to study a problem from a variety of perspectives. Secondly, we have the chance to meet and work with amazing colleagues and industry practitioners with whom we find important commonalities or disagreements (but always polite!). Thirdly, through this experience we are able to directly contribute to research that may ultimately be more effective and relevant to society.”

Tim Softly, University of Birmingham, SAN member since 2016

“As a member of the EPSRC SAN for the last three years, I have served on four workstreams – Public Engagement; the Strategic Delivery Plan; Responsible Innovation; and Career Mobility. All four have been interesting and enjoyable experiences and provided a great opportunity to contribute to and influence developing EPSRC policy, and to identify practical actions for Council to consider for future EPSRC support and prioritisation. My sense has been that EPSRC has really wanted to listen and get the detailed input from the SAN/Council members on the workstream. The demands on my time have been relatively light, with EPSRC staff providing all the information and paperwork for discussion, based on our initial input. It has also been a good opportunity to get to know better the other members of the SAN and the EPSRC staff and make some lasting contacts. More than anything, as someone with a university leadership role that touches on all these areas, it has helped me to think about what we are doing as a university and what we could do better. From that perspective, the effort in participating has brought a valuable return to my own day job.”

John Stairmand, Jacobs, SAN member since 2018

“I have been a member of the EPSRC peer review college for some time, and always found that attending panel meetings gave me a better insight into the peer review process. In a similar way, being a member of the Strategic Advisory Network (SAN) gave me insights into how EPSRC’s research priorities and processes were managed, and how EPSRC’s work within UKRI fits into the national context. By being involved in one of the SAN working groups, I was able not just to understand the issues, but also to contribute to the discussions that would guide EPSRC’s responses. Being based in industry, I found no difficulty engaging with the academic community who welcomed the different perspectives I could bring.”

Applications for the SAN are currently live on the EPSRC website. The closing date is the 23rd November 2020 at 16:00 (GMT)