

Terms of Reference – Strategic Management Committee, Global Water Futures Observatories

Adopted: February 12, 2025

Purpose

The Global Water Futures Observatories (GWFO) facility is Canada's premier national scientific freshwater observation network, funded in part through the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and its Major Sciences Initiative (MSI) from 2023–2029. GWFO is led by the University of Saskatchewan (USask) and is a partnership amongst USask, the University of Waterloo (UW), McMaster University (MU), Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU), the University of Windsor, Trent University, Carleton University, the University of Western Ontario, and the University of Toronto. Management and strategic initiatives of the facility are implemented by a Strategic Management Committee (SMC) that reports to a Governance Board (herein referred to as the Board). The SMC is Chaired by the GWFO Director and includes representatives from each of the main partner institutions as well as other expert scientific expertise representatives. It is the primary management and executive committee for GWFO, responsible for providing direction and ensuring optimal operations and utility towards supporting monitoring and transformational science, managing GWFO finances and budget, and providing recommendations to the Board for allocating resources. The SMC is supported by the Secretariat and the User Advisory Panel (UAP).

Duties and Responsibilities

The SMC provides direction and ensures effective and efficient operation of GWFO. The SMC oversees financial and operational aspects of the facility and ensures the facility is meeting the needs of partners and users. Specifically, the SMC:

- Provides strategic direction for the planning, activities, and operations of GWFO as an integrated and coherent national freshwater observation facility.
- Ensures that the facility operates efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of its partners and data users, to be responsive to these needs and any changes over time, and to be excellent and useful towards monitoring, novel science, and training.
- Approves usage of the facility when major requests are brought forward and oversees all usage of the facility to ensure these meet the objectives and purpose of GWFO and CFI-MSIF and institutional rules.

- Develops and implements facility policies and procedures and guides the development of best practices with the input, knowledge, and skills of the GWFO Operations Team¹.
- Effectively and responsibly manages the facility budget and allocations and oversees expenditures at the individual institutional partners and facilities.
- With the support of the Secretariat, monitors facility performance, tracks usage, and develops annual progress and financial reports for the Board, CFI, and other funding agencies.
- Ensures robust data management, preservation, and open sharing of GWFO operational data in adherence to the GWFO Data Management Policy. The SMC oversees the Data Management Team and Secretariat, and coordinates the Operations Team and individual facilities, to achieve the central mission of GWFO in providing open access water data.
- Liaises with partners, users, and other stakeholders, and develops new relationships with external communities and organizations to ensure delivery of fit-for-purpose data and scientific support and to seek new funding and resources to support the facility.
- Manages and resolves any conflicts or disagreements prior to these having to be brought up to the Board for resolution.

Meetings, Communications, and Information to the SMC

The SMC meets on a regular basis and is provided the necessary information and materials to fulfill the duties and responsibilities above. In particular, the SMC:

- Meets on an approximately bi-monthly basis in person or by hybrid format (including teleconference or web conference), and at other times as necessary, under certain circumstances.
- Is provided with relevant materials and detailed information on activities, operations, management, finances and spending, and personnel changes. The SMC is provided these materials in advance of meetings and receives updates from the GWFO Director and Secretariat to be able to have meaningful discussions on the matters at hand, make optimal executive decisions, and provide well-thought advice or responses to the Board. Email correspondence is used to solicit information or perspectives on various matters at some times.

Membership and Support Personnel

The composition of the SMC is as follows:

- Chair: Distinguished Professor John Pomeroy, GWFO Director, University of Saskatchewan
- Professor Jennifer Baltzer, Wilfrid Laurier University – institutional representative

¹ The GWFO Operations Team consists of the individual Facility leads and technical staff, the Data Management and Outreach and Knowledge Mobilization Teams, and the Secretariat. The Operations Team facilitates coordination and sharing of best practices, identification of gaps and opportunities, tracking of progress and facility usage metrics, and enhances communication, knowledge mobilization, and data sharing.

- Professor Helen Baulch, University of Saskatchewan
- Professor Sean Carey, McMaster University – institutional representative
- Professor Aaron Fisk, University of Windsor – institutional representative
- Professor Emeritus Lawrence Martz, University of Saskatchewan
- Professor Deborah McGregor, University of Calgary
- Professor Alain Pietroniro, University of Calgary
- Professor David Rudolph, University of Waterloo
- Professor Corinne Schuster-Wallace, University of Saskatchewan
- Professor Julie Thériault, Université du Québec à Montréal
- Professor Philippe Van Cappellen, University of Waterloo – institutional representative

The SMC is aided by the Secretariat who provide the necessary expertise and assistance as required:

- Director of Operations and Science, Chris DeBeer
- Operations Specialist – Cuyler Onclin
- Outreach Coordinator, Stacey Dumanski
- Knowledge Mobilization Specialist, Monica Morrison
- IT Coordinator and Data Management Team Lead, Stephen O’Hearn
- Director of Finance, Dean Olorenshaw
- HR and Facilities Specialist, Joni Onclin