

TERMS OF REFERENCE
User Advisory Panel
Global Water Futures Observatories
October 10, 2023

Purpose: The Vice-President Research (VPR) of the University of Saskatchewan (USask) has been delegated the authority, on behalf of USask, for oversight of management and operation of the national facility called the *Global Water Futures Observatories (GWFO)*, funded by the Major Science Initiative (MSI), Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). Specifically, the VPR has the responsibility to ensure that the MSI-CFI grant achieves the vision, mission, goals, and objectives as proposed in its institutional application, in accordance with USask and federal policies and procedures. Given this authority, the VPR established an academic Strategic Management Committee (SMC) to establish scientific directions driven by the data from GWFO, with advice and guidance of a formal User Advisory Panel (UAP). As a national facility, it is of utmost importance for GWFO to maintain its effective, efficient and relevant data services for the Canadian and international community. This can only happen when we get feedback from our users (existing and potential) of the data. Hence the feedback and advise of the UAP is critical for our success and paving the path forward for GWFO.

The Vision for GWFO is to operate a national water observatory consisting of a network of instrumented water observing sites (including watersheds, glaciers, lakes, rivers, and wetlands), supported by deployable observing systems (including drones, underwater gliders, etc.) and major laboratories, that provides open access water data and the necessary infrastructure to collect supplementary data, which informs the development and testing of water prediction models, monitors changes in water sources, underpins diagnosis of risks to water security and helps design solutions to ensure the long-term sustainability of Canadian water resources.

Responsibilities: Reporting to the GWFO Director, the UAP will yield insights into the user science and decision support needs underpinned by the GWFO data, provide recommendations and avenues for translating GWFO's data to support the real-world impacts, and support scientific exchange with private and public sectors. In addition, the panel will provide strategic advice and be a catalyst in identifying new opportunities for enhancing the user-base for the GWFO data and services. Specifically, as a member of the UAP, individuals will:

- Provide guidance on understanding the information needs (supported by the GWFO data) of decision-makers and policy practitioners to effectively manage water challenges in a changing climate;
- Recommend effective, efficient and relevant data services for the Canadian and international community;
- Provide unbiased opinions and guidance on identifying data gaps and how they might be addressed by GWFO;

- Provide guidance and expert advice in the development and assessment of reports to the MSI-CFI Oversight Committee;
- Provide recommendations on developing and managing relationships with existing partners and stakeholders;
- Identify ways to improve collaboration between researchers, governments, and partner and user organizations;
- Identify strategic priorities, data needs, and research opportunities from the perspective of user needs; and,
- Identify information on additional program funding opportunities for science supported by the GWFO data.

Membership: The UAP will be composed of individuals who can offer broad and insightful perspectives and are drawn from provincial/territorial and federal government agencies, Indigenous communities, non-governmental organizations, industry, and urban and rural communities. The Director of GWFO will serve as an ex-officio member and the UAP Resource Personnel will provide administrative support, including minute-taking, to the UAP.

Operation: the UAP will select a chair who will lead the Panel in addressing its responsibilities and will receive administrative support from GWFO for meetings. The UAP is envisioned as having regular quarterly meetings. From time to time the SMC will refer questions to the UAP and request UAP review of and input to GWFO reports to MSI-CFI that may require additional meetings to address.

Resource Personnel: The UAP will be aided by the following personnel from the GWFO Secretariat who will provide necessary expertise and assistance as required:

- Director of Operations and Science, GWFO – [Chris DeBeer](#)
- Knowledge Mobilization Specialist, GWFO – [Monica Morrison](#)
- Outreach Specialist – [Stacey Dumanski](#)