

Lake Edward and Albert Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Revised April, 2021

Introduction:

The African Great Lakes (AGL), like other large, freshwater multi-jurisdictional resources, requires coordination of efforts to protect these lakes. During December, 2019, the African Center for Aquatic Research and Education created, and now facilitates, six lake-specific, expert advisory groups on each of the AGL: Lakes Albert, Edward, Kivu, Malawi/Niassa/Nyasa, Tanganyika, Turkana, and Victoria.

The advisory groups are:

- Lake Edward-Albert Advisory Group
- Lake Kivu Advisory Group
- Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa Basin Fisheries & Aquaculture Network
- Lake Tanganyika-Science Advisory Group
- Lake Turkana Advisory Group
- Lake Victoria Advisory Group

Over 80 African freshwater experts from the ten AGL riparian countries (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) regularly meet, dialogue, hold issue specific discussions, and share resources and knowledge for conducting research that results in useful, harmonized data and ideas to influence positive change for improved health of the lakes.

These agreed Terms of Reference are for the purpose of ensuring effective functioning of each advisory group, defining how members interact with each other, and to a larger extent, interaction with other freshwater experts globally. This is a guiding document, meant to evolve as the group changes.

Lake Edward-Albert Advisory Group (LEAAG)

The Lake Edward-Albert Advisory Group is comprised of members of Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo freshwater experts with the purpose of strengthening science to better understand the impacts of biological, physical, chemical, economic, political, social, and technical factors on Lakes Edward and Albert.

The LEAAG is facilitated by ACARE • www.agl-acare.org

This document covers the Lake Edward-Albert Advisory Group and has the following sections:

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A. Purpose of ACARE Advisory Groups

The intent of the ACARE-administered advisory groups is to strengthen science on the African Great Lakes. Thus, ACARE helps facilitate the process of communication between members of each advisory group, among members of all advisory groups, and between global experts and members of the ACARE network (advisory groups and known contacts). ACARE will make best efforts to transfer knowledge, messages, and other information to the global community or specific audiences for the purpose of strengthening research and/or training the future generation of freshwater experts.

B. General Terms of Reference

B1 Members:

B1.1 Definition of Member

A member of an advisory group is defined as:

- a. A resident of a riparian country bordering the lake in which they are working on
- b. An expert on subjects relating to freshwater or large-lake sciences or issues on the lake(s) of that specific advisory group.

Advisory group members shall be nominated by members of their specific advisory group. Such nominations should be recognized as leading representatives of the categories identified in section B1.7. Members should consult other advisory group members, ACARE secretariat, or other regional experts in selecting nominees. Nominees who proactively apply or self-identify for consideration will also be considered. The advisory group shall appoint all members to the group. Appointed members must agree to adhere to these terms of reference and to those of their specific advisory group (Section C).

B1.2 Becoming a member, Process of

- Interested non-members can apply to join the advisory group (through email or formal letter to any member of the advisory group or secretariat) who shall notify the ACARE secretariat and the advisory group members. Voting will be done at the next meeting to reach consensus and make a decision. The guiding factors include: expertise, qualifications, unique attributes, and value of the prospective member to the advisory group.
- Membership of an individual is conducted through a majority vote of current members on the advisory group. A vote can be conducted via electronic means or a voice/hand vote during virtual or in-person meetings.
- A non-member can be proposed/nominated/recommended by existing advisory group members and vetted through voting to help make a determination.

B1.3 Discontinuing membership of an Advisory Group

B1.3.1 Voluntary Withdrawal:

A member may “resign” their position by providing a 30 day notice (email) to the Lead and ACARE Secretariat. It is recommended that departing members suggest a suitable replacement for themselves.

B1.3.2 Disqualifying Withdrawal

Members serve at the pleasure of the advisory group. In the event a member is not contributing satisfactorily to the advisory group, the Lead, in consultation with other members and with oversight of ACARE secretariat, may be asked to cede their position on the group due to cause. Cause could include:

- failure to attend three consecutive meetings;
- lack of participation in advisory group activities;
- any member who has breached the terms of reference;
- consistent cause of conflict;
- disregard for good faith efforts in communications (Section D) or meeting membership expectations (Section E).

Note: A vacant position will be filled per the process noted in section B1.2.

B1.4 ACARE-Advisory Group Relationship

ACARE benefits from robust, two-way lines of communication between ACARE and a diverse assemblage of key stakeholders and leaders in the region. ACARE’s mandate is to inform each advisory group about the relevant issues and processes that ACARE is undertaking, and vice versa. Members are encouraged to assist the ACARE board and secretariat in making informed decisions related to their specific lake or regional African Great Lakes issues, specifically research-oriented activities, education and training, and other programs and processes relevant to the lake's health. Recommendations and other communications from members may be made in writing or orally and may be in any form deemed appropriate, including resolutions, press releases, statements, etc.

B1.5 Decision Making Process:

Decision-making by advisory group members, on issues before them, should be by consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, the concerns of the different interests should be described in a report to the ACARE secretariat. Proxies for individual advisors are permitted only with the express consent of the Lead on a case-by-case basis.

B1.6 Communications:

Each advisory group shall have letterhead stationary for use in communicating approved group recommendations, statements, or other communications. Advisory group letterhead shall be distinct from ACARE letterhead and shall note briefly the role of the advisory group. Any correspondence or document involving the letterhead must receive the explicit approval of the Lead and must represent a formal position of the committee. Members may not use the letterhead for personal correspondence or for any matter not approved by the advisory group Lead. The secretariat shall assist the Lead in producing correspondence or documents involving the letterhead.

B1.7 Advisory Group Leadership:

There shall be a system of leadership within each advisory group consisting of Leads and Co- or Vice-leads, as defined by the group. Leadership positions are newly considered every two years, or as determined by the group. Each advisory group should choose one of the below options, or craft their own. Each advisory group's structure will be identified in Section C below:

- **Option 1: Lead with a Vice Lead**

- Each position will be filled with a representative from different riparian countries.
- The Lead is responsible for activities outlined in Section B1.7.1 (below)
- A Vice-lead will be responsible for activities outlined in Section B1.7.2 considered the backup or support position for the Lead

- **Option 2: Co-Leads**

- Each position will be filled with a representative from different riparian countries.
- Co-Leads share all responsibilities outlined in Section B1.7.1. It is up to the discretion of the Co-Leads to choose which of them conducts specific activities (such as giving a presentation or chairing a meeting) when a single actor is warranted.

- **Option 3: Lead with country-specific-leads**

- The Lead will be responsible for activities in section B1.7.1
- The Lead will consult with each country-specific-lead on all activities in section B1.7.1
- The Lead and country-specific-leads will each represent the different riparian countries on the lake their advisory group represents.

B1.7.1 Advisory Group Leadership Responsibilities:

B1.7.1.1 The LEAD, with support and assistance from the ACARE Secretariat (see Section B1.10), shall:

- Chair virtual and in-person advisory group meetings;
- Facilitate the collection and consolidation of input from the committee on significant matters, projects, or processes;
- If requested, be responsible for communicating via email or other appropriate media, issues of interest to the advisory group members;
- From time to time and at the request of ACARE secretariat or board members, provide input on routine, noncontroversial matters (in lieu of consulting the entire committee);
- Express the outcomes, needs, and processes associated with their specific advisory group to the broader global research, development, and other partner community;
- Give a presentation at annual ACARE meetings on behalf of their group.

B1.7.1.2 The VICE-LEAD (if this position is in place) shall:

- Serve as chair in the chair's absence and take over responsibilities outlined in Section B1.7.1 when the Lead cannot undertake those responsibilities;
- Provide input on non-controversial matters from time to time, and otherwise assist the chair in executing the business of the committee;
- Work with the chair to develop recommendations, advice, comments and reports to ACARE.

B1.7.1.3 The CO-LEAD (if this position is in place) shall:

- Work together with the other Co-Lead to conduct all activities described in section B1.7.1. Each activity will be agreed upon prior to initiating.

B1.7.1.4 Country-specific-leads (if this position is in place) shall:

- Work with the Lead of their advisory group to conduct all activities described in section B1.7.1. Each activity will have to be agreed upon prior to initiating.

B1.7.2 Leadership elections

All advisory group leadership positions (whether Lead, Vice-Lead, Co-Lead, or Country-Specific-Leads), will be chosen by members of the whole advisory group during every second annual ACARE meeting. Leadership positions will be conducted through a majority vote of current members on the advisory group. A vote can be conducted via electronic means or a voice/hand vote during virtual or in-person meetings.

If a person in a lead position cannot, or does not, want to continue in their position they may relinquish their position with notification to their entire advisory group and the ACARE secretariat and initiate a replacement. Discontinuing leadership position will not affect membership on the advisory group. New leadership position nominations and elections under these conditions will be immediately undertaken and the new position holder will hold office until the regular, two-year-schedule term is up.

B1.7.3 Terms of Office:

Leadership positions should ideally change country representation during every election cycle. In the case of bi-national lakes, the positions should consist of a member from each country and switch every two years. With multi-jurisdictional lakes, leadership should ensure that each country is represented as a Lead at least every three (Victoria and Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa) or four (Tanganyika) years. The leadership team should not consist of members from the same country.

B1.8 Membership and associated benefits

Members shall not receive compensation for their services as advisory group members. Consistent with current practice, ACARE will support each advisory group member's associated travel costs to participate in the annual meeting. Travel costs will be reimbursed Per ACARE's policy. If ACARE requests the attendance of members at other meetings, ACARE will pay the associated travel costs.

B1.9 ACARE support of the process

ACARE secretariat will supply support services to the members of the advisory groups. This will include, inter alia, development and dissemination of meeting agendas, organization of video- and tele-conferences, production and distribution of minutes (after committee review), and development and communication of advisory group recommendations, advice, comments, and reports.

B1.10 Membership of advisory groups

Membership on each advisory group will be defined by each individual advisory group (see section C below). Groups will consist of equal member representation from each of the riparian countries within one meeting occurrence (unless explicit agreement by members or undue circumstances disallow).

B1.11 Meetings guidelines:

It is expected that members attend each meeting. It is understood that schedules often prevent members from attending. Missing three consecutive meetings will initiate a process by which a person's membership is revoked.

B1.12 Active period for a member:

Each member of the advisory group will be a member for 5 years at which point they may re-state their desire to continue to be on the advisory group or discontinue.

B2 Non-advisory group Members

There can be non-members in each of the advisory groups. From time to time, Advisors, Expert Guests, and Observers shall join the group, based on needs and as requested by advisory group members and ACARE Secretariat:

B2.1 Advisors to the Advisory Groups:

- a. **Definition:** Someone invited to be a part of the regularly scheduled meetings and has the appropriate background and desire to assist
- b. **How to become an advisor:** An advisor can self-identify or be invited
- c. **Role of an advisor:** to assist in the strategic progress and goals of the advisory group. An Advisor does not have formal voting rights
- d. **Active period of an advisor:** at the leisure of the advisory group
- e. Advisors do not count in the number of members of the advisory group

B2.2 Expert Guests to the Advisory Groups

- a. **Definition:** Someone who has experience, knowledge or other value and can assist in specific areas of research, funding, strategy, projects, or processes
- b. **How to become an expert guest:** be invited
- c. **Role of an expert guest:** to provide specific knowledge or assistance
- d. **Active period of an expert guest:** as needed and requested
- e. Expert guests do not count in the number of members of the advisory group

B2.3 Observers to the Advisory Groups

- a. **Definition:** An observer is someone who is either requested or requests to attend the advisory group's meetings. This might include a funder or someone with a relevant project who wants to attend and engage, or someone who is simply interested in the lake
- b. **Role of an observer:** Observers can attend advisory group meetings and ask questions or provide input upon being recognized by the chair of the meeting
- c. **How to become an observer:** Any requests, whether coming from a member of the advisory group or the requester themselves, must be submitted at least five (5) days prior to the scheduled meeting to allow for members to accept/reject attendance
- d. **Active period of an observer:** at the leisure of the advisory group
- e. Observers do not count in the number of members of the advisory group

C. Specific advisory group Terms of References for the Lake Edward-Albert Advisory Group

C1 Lake Edward Albert Advisory Group (LEAAG)

This group falls under the General Terms of Reference (Section A, above), in addition to this current section: **C1 LEAAG**, which is specific to the Lake Edward-Albert Advisory Group.

C1.1 Concerning Membership:

The LEAAG shall consist of no fewer than six (6 (3/ea.)) and no more than twenty-four (24 (12/ea.)) members at any one time. Membership is required to be evenly split between members of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (unless there is exceptional need).

C1.2 Leadership

- **Co-Leads**
 - Each position will be filled with a representative from different riparian countries.
 - Co-Leads share all responsibilities outlined in Section B1.7.1. It is up to the discretion of the Co-Leads to choose which of them conducts specific activities (such as giving a presentation or chairing a meeting) when a single actor is warranted.
 - A member from each country (Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo) will be in the position to lead at all times, as co-leaders.

C1.3 Terms of Office

- Leadership positions will change country representation during every election cycle.
- Maximum term period of every leadership will be in a 2 years cycle.

C1.4 Sectors Representation and Institutions

The LEAAG will have representatives from the following sectors or issues:

- Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Oil and Mineral extraction
- Water Resource: Management, Quality and Pollution Control
- Climate Change
- Monitoring
- Education and Information
- Marine Transport
- Wildlife and Tourism
- Research
- Socio-economics

D. Meeting Ethics and Guidelines for All ACARE sponsored Meetings

- Be respectful of all perspectives.
- Come prepared and on time.
- Actively listen and participate, speaking loud enough to be audible.
- Don't interrupt others while speaking, and let everyone speak.
- Keep thoughts concise and on topic. Summarize your point as much as possible.
- Take turns speaking when allowed by the facilitator.
- Follow the agenda.
- Ask questions at the appropriate time.
- Put away unnecessary technology to avoid disruption by electronics.

E. Membership Expectations

Each member of the advisory group process agrees that he or she:

- Is considered a leader. It is not necessary to wait for action to take place, but rather each member is expected to take initiative and help others take initiative and action.
- Is expected to help build trusting relationships. Only through generous collaboration can we address, together, the issues that affect our natural resources.
- Is expected to attend monthly meetings and assist in facilitating the meeting to take place, initiate agenda items, and help others with action items.
- Is expected to bring forth issues that are needed to be addressed
- Ensures that the networks of other scientists and experts locally, regionally, and globally are kept updated, brought into the group, or partnered in some manner.
- Supports each other to ensure challenges are overcome.
- Recruits new members as outlined in this document.
- Continually reaches out to bring in new people.
- Shares experiences and lessons learned with others to promote collective learning.

F. Membership Agreement

Members of Lake Edward and Albert Advisory Group advisory have been invited due to their knowledge and expertise. They foremost represent themselves. No actions from the advisory groups will construe a binding agreement between formal organizations or entities unless explicitly planned, written, and agreed upon by each member of the advisory group and appropriate administrative approval from formal entities.

Equality and Representation

It is ACARE's intention to increase gender equality in the official membership of this group.