

ALL-ATLANTIC OCEAN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ALLIANCE

Terms of Reference of the AAORIA

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

This non-binding Terms of Reference (“TOR”) describes the working modalities of the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (“AAORIA”). This document is not an international agreement and does not give rise to any rights or obligations under international law and has no financial implications.

1. FOUNDATION OF AAORIA

The AAORIA was established through the signing of the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (“All-Atlantic”) Declaration on 13 July 2022 in Washington D.C., United States of America by representatives from: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, the European Union, Morocco, South Africa, and the United States (“Signatories”).

The Signatories of the All-Atlantic Declaration are automatically considered Partners of AAORIA. Additional Partners may join using the process outlined in the “Partner Eligibility” section of this document. Additionally, others throughout the Atlantic Ocean basin may contribute to and participate in certain AAORIA activities.

The purpose of AAORIA is to coordinate activities aligned with the implementation of the All-Atlantic Declaration by identifying opportunities for synergies in new or existing activities amongst the AAORIA Partners and Supporters, and by working towards the objectives and principles of the All-Atlantic Declaration.

2. HIGH-LEVEL BOARD (HLB)

The main implementing body of AAORIA is the High-Level Board, which is responsible for the strategic positions related to the operative coordination and implementation of the AAORIA Declaration. The HLB takes positions on membership, defines the strategic directions and main lines of activities of the Alliance, and updates the TOR when necessary or appropriate.

2.1. HLB COMPOSITION

- The High-Level Board is composed of one (1) senior representative from each of the Partners.

2.2 HLB CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS

- The HLB is led by a Chair represented by the HLB Partner which will be hosting the next scheduled AAORIA Forum.
- The HLB will have up to two (2) Vice Chairs. One represents the last AAORIA Forum host and the other represents the host of the next AAORIA Forum (if known).
- The Chair communicates on behalf of the HLB to external entities, as appropriate and decides using the consensus rules set out in the next sections (2.3).
- The Chair will aim to convene the HLB in person annually during the AAORIA Forum and at least once inter-seasonally and may meet more often if deemed necessary.

2.3 DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- For decisions taken at meetings, there should be a quorum of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the current Partners present at the meeting or participating in the meeting via virtual means. All decisions should be made by consensus among a quorum.
- For decisions not taking place at a meeting, such as via email, all current HLB members should be notified by the HLB Chair. In the absence of any objection by an HLB member, the decision will be considered taken.
- Decisions regarding potential applicants interested in becoming Partners will follow the process in section 4.2 of this TOR prior to a meeting or decision taken via email.
- Decisions to remove a Partner should be made by consensus among the quorum or via a decision not taking place at a meeting, but the Partner considered for removal will not be considered as part of the quorum and will not be allowed to participate in the

decision. Current HLB members have three months to respond to the HLB Chair with any objections or concerns in writing prior to a decision on removal via a meeting or email.

3. THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee provides support to the HLB, including by preparing materials and bringing forward proposals for consideration by the HLB.

3.1 Steering Committee Composition

- Each Partner is encouraged to designate one lead Steering Committee representative and additional representatives, as appropriate.

4. PARTNER ELIGIBILITY

AAORIA welcomes potential new Partners whose countries have Exclusive Economic Zones in the Atlantic Ocean basin, including the Caribbean, who endorse the principles and objectives described in the All-Atlantic Declaration, using the process outlined in section 4.2 below. New Partners automatically accept the content of this TOR. Partners may be representative of a government at the level of, ministries, departments, or agencies, or relevant institutions of the European Union. Only one Partner may represent a government of a State that is part of a union of States or the European Union. However, additional government ministries, departments, or agencies, a government of a State that is a part of a union of States, or relevant services of the European Commission, are welcome to participate in AAORIA activities as Supporters.

4.1 ROLES OF AAORIA PARTNERS

- Partners should be encouraged to identify collaborative activities that aim to contribute to the principles and objectives of the All-Atlantic Declaration. It is not expected that all Partners will choose to, or be able to, or requested to participate in every activity.

- Each AAORIA Partner should consider diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in their communication plans and all activities linked with the AAORIA, making every effort to advance participation from diverse, under-represented, and under-served communities.
- Partners should endeavor to invite other relevant possible new Partners, such as government ministries, departments, or agencies in the Atlantic Ocean Basin, to join as Partners of the AAORIA activities undertaken in pursuit of the AAORIA Declaration.
- Partners should endeavor to amplify AAORIA activities and the spirit of the All-Atlantic Declaration at domestic and international engagements, as appropriate.
- Each Partner is encouraged to actively lead and support AAORIA activities, including ongoing review of progress towards defined objectives and communication of results. This could be done, for example, by building on the results of the Galway and Belém Statements' actions, identifying new activities that align with AAORIA priorities.

4.2 INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY JOIN AAORIA AS PARTNERS BY TAKING THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

- Applicants interested in becoming an AAORIA Partner demonstrate a willingness to become Partners of AAORIA by submitting a letter on official letterhead to the AAORIA High Level Board Chair. The letter should outline their endorsement of the All-Atlantic Declaration and desire to support the AAORIA activities.
- The HLB Chair is to share the letter with the HLB within two (2) weeks of receiving the letter and seek their views in writing via electronic means where Partners are given three (3) months to consider the request. If any Partner raises a concern with the applications in writing in relation to alignment with vision, values, and goals of the Declaration within the three (3) months period, the HLB is to discuss at the next possible meeting, where a decision will be made using the decision-making process outlined in section 2.3. If no Partner raises objections in writing within the allotted time period, the applicant will be considered an approved new Partner and endorsed during the next possible meeting.

5. SUPPORTERS

The HLB and Steering Committee are encouraged to identify institutions with Exclusive Economic Zones in the Atlantic Ocean Basin (such as regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, businesses, or research or academic institutions) to participate in AAORIA activities relevant to the principles and the objectives of the All-Atlantic Declaration.

6. ROLES OF AAORIA SUPPORTERS

Supporters are not Partners to AAORIA, but they can contribute to the objectives of AAORIA and participate in its activities, including the AAORIA Forum during the discussion of its projects and/or programs, consistently with the principles and objectives of the All-Atlantic Declaration. It is expected that AAORIA Supporters are located within a coastal State that has an Exclusive Economic Zone in the Atlantic Ocean.

7. AAORIA ACTIVITIES

Partners should endeavor to keep the successful, well-structured cooperation already in place to maintain the momentum of the All-Atlantic Declaration and to communicate when and as appropriate the positive contribution of research and innovation to address the most pressing challenges for the benefit of the Atlantic Ocean communities.

8. AAORIA FORUM

Each year, AAORIA will endeavor to have an in-person forum to bring together the AAORIA Partners and Supporters to discuss accomplishments, activities, and ocean research and innovation initiatives for the future. In addition, the Forum should serve as the venue for the formal announcement of new AAORIA Partners during the preceding year.

8.1 HOSTING OF ALL-ATLANTIC FORUM

Hosting of the AAORIA Forum is voluntary. Interested hosts are to be AAORIA Partners and are encouraged to notify the HLB at least one (1) year prior to the next Forum. The preference for hosts may follow a rotational basis between North and South Atlantic Partners.

Hosts are expected to designate an HLB Vice Chair in the year before their hosting, a Chair the year of their hosting, and a Vice Chair for the year after their hosting. In addition, they are expected to provide financial resources and logistical support to host the AAORIA Forum, as well as logistical and coordinating services for the HLB and Steering Committee.

The initial schedule for 2023-2027 hosts is as follows, pending confirmation of resources and support by the proposed host:

- 2023: South Africa
 - 2024: Canada
 - 2025: European Union
 - 2026: Brazil
 - 2027: United Kingdom
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