



# Great Lakes HABs Collaboratory

Linking Science and Management to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms

## Charter

### Preamble

In the Great Lakes Basin, there has been a resurgence of harmful algal blooms that degrade water quality and threaten drinking water. Along with a recurrence of HABs, there has been an increase in research to help understand what causes or influences HABs and how we can prevent, manage, or respond to them. Since HAB research spans multiple disciplines and geographic areas, communication between research groups can be difficult. To help facilitate this communication, the Great Lakes HABs Collaboratory was formed by the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) and U.S. Geological Survey- Great Lakes Science Center (USGS) in 2015 to provide a “collective laboratory” that enables science based information sharing among scientists and also between scientists and decision makers.

Since the beginning, administration and work planning has been conducted by the GLC and USGS with periodic input from Collaboratory members. In an effort to create a more collaborative environment with more direct member involvement in decision making, priority setting, and communication with stakeholders, a charter was drafted in the winter of 2017 with the purpose of creating a formal leadership structure. A Steering Committee was formed early in 2018 and revised the draft charter. This Charter, adopted May 2018, guides the leadership structure and is amendable by the Steering Committee. USGS and GLC remain committed to providing administrative and program development assistance to the Collaboratory.

### Mission and Objectives

The collaborative seeks to improve communication among scientists, and between scientists and decision-makers, on issues related to Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in the Great Lakes Basin.

The Objectives of the HABs Collaboratory are to:

1. Build reliable information sharing tools and processes to coordinate science across basin experts and institutions.
2. Develop new and enhance existing information strategies/tactics to transmit key science to managers, policy makers, and other stakeholders and enable those groups to communicate science needs.
3. Enhance integration of relevant science through improved communications related to HAB sources and impacts.

### Operating Principles

The collaborative is committed to working by consensus of its members. Consensus is defined as overwhelming agreement among collaborative members attained through a good-faith effort to meet the interest of all members. The key indicator of whether consensus has been reached is if everyone agrees they can live with the final proposal.

Decisions or documents created by the HABs Collaboratory do not necessarily reflect the opinions or positions of the individual agencies, organizations, or companies that are represented on the HABs Collaboratory. Instead, products of the collaborative are to be viewed as the result of discussions between members leading to general consensus.

## Organizational Structure and Roles

- **Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee will serve as the governing board for the collaborative. Membership of the Steering Committee will be determined by nomination and confirmed by membership consensus. Composition of the Steering Committee will ideally include representatives from across the Great Lakes Basin. Steering Committee members are asked for a commitment of 2 years, with a limit of 2 consecutive terms. Included in this charge is the responsibility to:
  - Participate in the development and approval of a Charter
  - Attend a majority of the Steering Committee meetings
  - Participate in the development and approval of an annual workplan.
  - Seek funding opportunities for the collaborative.
  - Serve as a liaison between the collaborative and larger HABs research and/or management community.
  - Participate and attend an annual in-person meeting.
- **Co-Chairs:** The Steering Committee will be led by Co-Chairs who will take the leadership role in the collaborative. Co-Chairs will be nominated from the Steering Committee and hold their position for 2 years, with a limit of two consecutive terms. Duties of Co-Chairs will include:
  - Develop a Charter and receive input from the Steering Committee.
  - Develop agendas and facilitate Steering Committee meetings.
  - Create an annual work plan, which will develop priorities for the upcoming year.
  - Apply for funding for the collaborative.
  - Organize and attend an annual in-person meeting.
- **General Members:** General members are defined as participants on the list-serv. The collaborative is designed for researchers, managers, policy makers, and other stakeholders. There is no formal requirement for membership and members of the public can join. However, content shared on the list-serv may contain jargon that is difficult for the public to understand.
- **Subgroups:** Ad-hoc subgroups can be formed to address areas of interest to the group. For example, if a group of members would like to come together to create a specific product, then a subgroup can be formed.
- **Core Team:** A core team of staff at the GLC and USGS are responsible for administrative duties, communication, and leadership in development of programs for the collaborative.

## Workplan

An annual workplan shall guide the activities of the collaborative. Objectives for the workplan will come from suggestions at the annual in-person meeting and from members of the collaborative. The Co-Chairs and Steering Committee will develop and approve the annual workplan and prioritize activities.