

# Steering Committee for the Global Terrestrial Network for Glaciers

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## 1. Background and Aim

Worldwide collection of information about glacier changes was initiated in 1894, with the foundation of the International Glacier Commission at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Geological Congress in Zurich, Switzerland. Since 1986, the World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS), a service of the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences (IACS) based in Zurich, has continued to collect and publish standardized information about ongoing glacier changes and distribution. The WGMS is part of the World Data System of the International Science Council (WDS/ISC) and has been in charge of the Global Terrestrial Network for Glaciers (GTN-G), in close collaboration with the US National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) in Boulder, and the Global Land Ice Measurements from Space (GLIMS) initiative. GTN-G was founded in 1998 to serve as an organizational framework, authorized under the Global Climate Observing System, to coordinate the international glacier monitoring activities in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2009, a GTN-G Steering Committee was established to coordinate, support, and advise the WGMS, the NSIDC, and the GLIMS initiative, as well as related IACS working groups, concerning the monitoring of glaciers.

The GTN-G Steering Committee has the status of an IACS Standing Group and consists of:

(a) an Executive Board that is responsible for (i) the development and implementation of the international observation strategy for glaciers, (ii) providing standards for the monitoring of glacier fluctuations (e.g., length change, mass balance) and for inventories, and (iii) the compilation and distribution of such information in a standardized form, and

(b) an Advisory Board under the lead of the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences (IACS) that is to (i) support, (ii) consult, and (iii) periodically evaluate the work of the Executive Board and its three operational bodies concerning the monitoring of glaciers.

## 2. Generic structure of the *GTN-G Steering Committee*

### ***GTN-G Executive Board***

- At least one representative of the WGMS
- At least one representative of the NSIDC
- At least one representative of the GLIMS coordinating institutions
- At least one representative of related IACS working groups

### ***GTN-G Advisory Board***

- IACS Division Head for Glaciers
- At least one representative of data producers (field observations)
- At least one representative of data producers (remote sensing)
- At least one representative of data users (glaciological community)
- At least one representative of an international umbrella organization (e.g., GCOS, ISC, UNEP, UNESCO, WMO)

### 3. Terms of Reference

- The GTN-G Steering Committee aims to coordinate, support and advise the WGMS, the NSIDC and the GLIMS initiative concerning the monitoring of glaciers. It frames and adapts the monitoring strategies and standards for glacier monitoring in the context of existing and new developments in nature, science, and technology.
- The GTN-G Executive Board meets approximately annually to:
  - assess the state of the international monitoring of glaciers,
  - coordinate the cooperation between the WGMS, the NSIDC, the GLIMS initiative, and related IACS working groups,
  - establish the issues and agenda about which the Advisory Board shall be consulted,
  - and reports annually on the GTN-G activities to the GTN-G Advisory Board as well as to the funding agencies and umbrella organizations of the WGMS, the NSIDC, and the GLIMS initiative.
- The GTN-G Advisory Board:
  - is chaired by the IACS Division Head for glaciers,
  - consists of the chair and additional representatives as described in the generic structure above,
  - advises the WGMS, the NSIDC, the GLIMS initiative, and related IACS working groups concerning present practice and future developments of the monitoring of glaciers, and also on the delivery of datasets to the wider glaciological community,
  - and periodically (approximately eight-year interval) evaluates the work of the GTN-G Executive Board and its three operational bodies concerning the monitoring of glaciers by a process that consists of a self-evaluation report of the GTN-G Executive Board, a site-visit at one of the body's location (if possible), and a final evaluation report from the GTN-G Advisory Board.
- The members of the GTN-G Advisory Board are jointly nominated by the IACS Bureau and the GTN-G Executive Board, will serve for four-year renewable terms, and will normally communicate electronically.
- The GTN-G Steering Committee members communicate electronically on a regular basis; meetings of the full GTN-G Steering Committee may be called if:
  - (a) Requested by the Executive Board, or
  - (b) Requested by a majority of Advisory Board members.