Africa Centre of Excellence for Neglected Tropical Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology (ACENTDFB)

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

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1.0 Background and Rationale

The Africa Centre of Excellence for Neglected Tropical Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology (ACENTDFB), Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, is a multidisciplinary centre established to advance research, postgraduate training, innovation, laboratory capacity development, and knowledge translation in neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), forensic biotechnology, and related areas of public health.

The Centre recognises the importance of strengthening collaboration among academia, industry, government institutions, healthcare organisations, biotechnology enterprises, professional bodies, and development partners to ensure its research, training, and innovation activities effectively respond to societal needs.

An Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) is therefore proposed as a strategic advisory mechanism to provide independent professional guidance, industry perspectives, technical expertise, and opportunities for collaboration.

The Board will help ACENTDFB strengthen the relevance, quality, sustainability, and practical application of its programmes while promoting partnerships that support research translation, workforce development, innovation, and institutional growth.

The IAB will serve as an important interface between the Centre and relevant external stakeholders, particularly organisations involved in biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, public health, laboratory services, scientific instrumentation, environmental health, forensic science, and related sectors.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Industrial Advisory Board is to provide strategic advice and professional guidance to ACENTDFB on strengthening its research, training, innovation, industry engagement, and sustainability in alignment with the Centre's mandate and the strategic priorities of Ahmadu Bello University.

The Board shall promote productive engagement between ACENTDFB and relevant industries, government agencies, professional organisations, research institutions, and development partners.

The IAB will support the Centre in identifying opportunities for collaboration, translating research outputs into practical applications, improving the relevance of postgraduate training, mobilising external expertise, and developing sustainable partnerships.

3.0 Objectives

The specific objectives of the Industrial Advisory Board are to:

- Provide strategic advice on the Centre's research priorities, innovation agenda, postgraduate training, and institutional development.
- Promote industry-responsive research and training in NTDs, parasitology, entomology, biotechnology, molecular diagnostics, forensic science, and related disciplines.
- Strengthen collaboration between ACENTDFB and private-sector organisations, government agencies, professional associations, research institutions, and development partners.
- Identify opportunities for technology transfer, commercialisation, research translation, and the practical application of scientific discoveries.
- Advise on the development of industry-relevant competencies, professional training, internships, industrial attachments, and career development opportunities for students and early-career researchers.
- Facilitate access to technical expertise, specialised equipment, scientific infrastructure, professional networks, and potential research partnerships.
- Support the identification of funding opportunities, collaborative research projects, contract research, consultancy services, and other sustainable sources of institutional support.
- Promote quality assurance, laboratory standards, accreditation readiness, biosafety, biosecurity, and good laboratory practices.
- Advise on emerging technologies, industry trends, workforce requirements, and opportunities for innovation within the Centre's areas of specialisation.
- Strengthen ACENTDFB's visibility, institutional reputation, and engagement with national, regional, and international stakeholders.

4.0 Scope of Advisory Responsibilities

The Industrial Advisory Board shall provide advice and recommendations in the following areas:

a. Research and innovation

The Board shall:

- Review the relevance of the Centre's research priorities to industry needs, public health challenges, and national development objectives.
- Identify opportunities for collaborative research involving ACENTDFB and industrial partners.

- Advise on translating research findings into diagnostic tools, laboratory procedures, technologies, products, services, and evidence-based interventions.
- Identify opportunities for applied research, contract research, technology development, and innovation.
- Recommend mechanisms for protecting intellectual property and promoting responsible innovation.
- Encourage interdisciplinary research involving biotechnology, public health, environmental sciences, forensic science, and related fields.

b. Industry-responsive education and training

The Board shall:

- Advise on the relevance of postgraduate curricula and professional training programmes to current and emerging industry requirements.
- Identify competencies required for graduates entering biotechnology, diagnostics, pharmaceutical, laboratory, public health, and forensic sectors.
- Recommend opportunities for industrial attachments, internships, workplace exposure, mentorship, and joint training.
- Facilitate engagement between students, researchers, industry professionals, and potential employers.
- Advise on professional development programmes, short courses, executive training, and continuing professional education.

c. Laboratory development and quality assurance

The Board shall:

- Provide advice on laboratory infrastructure, equipment, technology acquisition, maintenance, and utilisation.
- Identify opportunities for partnerships in laboratory development and scientific capacity strengthening.
- Advise on quality management systems, accreditation readiness, standard operating procedures, and internationally recognised laboratory practices.
- Promote biosafety, biosecurity, ethical research conduct, and responsible management of biological materials.
- Support opportunities for specialised technical training and laboratory workforce development.
- Identify opportunities for collaborative laboratory services, reference testing, and contract-based analytical services where appropriate.

d. Industry partnerships and stakeholder engagement

The Board shall:

- Identify relevant industries, enterprises, professional bodies, and organisations with potential for collaboration.
- Facilitate introductions and engagement between ACENTDFB and prospective partners.
- Advise on partnership models, including research collaboration, technical services, training, sponsorship, and innovation partnerships.
- Encourage joint workshops, conferences, industry dialogues, exhibitions, and knowledge-sharing activities.
- Promote engagement with pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology firms, diagnostic laboratories, environmental organisations, and public health institutions.
- Support the development of mutually beneficial partnerships that align with the Centre's mandate and University policies.

e. Funding and sustainability

The Board shall:

- Identify potential sources of funding for research, training, innovation, and infrastructure development.
- Advise on engagement with private-sector sponsors, foundations, development partners, and other funding organisations.
- Identify opportunities for contract research, consultancy, technical services, professional training, and other appropriate revenue-generating activities.
- Recommend strategies for improving the financial sustainability of the Centre's programmes.
- Support the development of business cases and partnership proposals where appropriate.
- Advise on sustainable models for maintaining specialised laboratory facilities and scientific equipment.

f. Technology transfer and commercialisation

The Board shall:

- Identify research outputs with potential for practical application, innovation, or commercial development.
- Advise on appropriate pathways for technology transfer, licensing, product development, and commercial partnerships.
- Promote collaboration with technology incubators, innovation hubs, biotechnology enterprises, and relevant investors.
- Encourage the development of intellectual property management practices consistent with University policies.
- Support responsible innovation and the translation of research into products, services, and solutions addressing public health and societal needs.

g. Strategic development and institutional positioning

The Board shall:

- Advise on emerging opportunities in biotechnology, NTD research, public health diagnostics, forensic science, and related fields.
- Provide industry perspectives on the Centre's strategic development priorities.
- Recommend opportunities for regional and international collaboration.
- Support the Centre's engagement with relevant government policies, industry standards, and professional frameworks.
- Advise on institutional visibility, reputation, and positioning within the national and international research ecosystem.

5.0 Composition of the Industrial Advisory Board

The Industrial Advisory Board shall comprise experienced professionals and recognised experts drawn from relevant industries, government institutions, professional organisations, research organisations, and development partners.

a. Membership

The Board shall consist of approximately 8–12 members, subject to approval by the appropriate University authorities. It shall reflect appropriate technical expertise, professional experience, sectoral diversity, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to the Centre's development.

Sector	Suggested representation
Biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry	Biotechnology companies, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and research-based enterprises
Diagnostics and laboratory services	Molecular diagnostics, medical laboratories, reference laboratories, and laboratory technology providers
Public health and disease control	Relevant public health agencies, disease control programmes, and health institutions
Forensic science and biotechnology	Forensic laboratories, forensic biotechnology enterprises, and relevant professional organisations
Scientific equipment and technology	Scientific instrumentation, laboratory equipment, and technology providers
Environmental and biological sciences	Environmental biotechnology, vector control, and related enterprises
Industry and professional associations	Relevant industry associations and professional bodies

Innovation and entrepreneurship	Technology incubators, innovation hubs, and biotechnology entrepreneurs
Research and development	Research institutions, innovation centres, and relevant academic-industry partnerships

a. Chairperson

The Chairperson shall:

- Provide leadership and direction for the Board's advisory activities.
- Preside over Board meetings.
- Guide discussions towards practical recommendations.
- Ensure that the Board's advice remains aligned with ACENTDFB's mandate and strategic priorities.
- Promote constructive engagement among members and the Centre's leadership.
- Support the timely preparation and submission of advisory recommendations.

The Chairperson shall be appointed or approved by the appropriate University authority in accordance with applicable institutional procedures.

b. Members

Members shall:

- Provide professional expertise and independent advice.
- Participate actively in Board meetings and assigned activities.
- Identify relevant industry developments and opportunities.
- Contribute to recommendations on research, training, innovation, and partnerships.
- Facilitate appropriate engagement with their respective organisations.
- Maintain confidentiality and declare potential conflicts of interest.
- Support the Centre's development without compromising professional independence.

c. Secretary

The Secretary shall be designated by the Centre's leadership.

The Secretary shall:

- Coordinate meeting arrangements and communication.
- Prepare and circulate meeting agendas in consultation with the Chairperson.
- Maintain records of meetings, attendance, recommendations, and action points.
- Prepare draft minutes and advisory reports.
- Maintain an updated register of Board members and their professional affiliations.
- Monitor follow-up actions and maintain relevant documentation.

- Serve as the administrative liaison between the Board and ACENTDFB.

d. Ex-officio and invited members

The Centre may invite the following to participate in Board activities:

- The Centre Director or designated representative.
- Heads of relevant laboratories and research units.
- Representatives of the University's research, innovation, technology transfer, and partnership offices.
- Programme coordinators and postgraduate training representatives.
- External experts invited to discuss specific technical or strategic matters.

Ex-officio members and invited experts shall participate according to the arrangements approved by the Centre and the University.

6.0 Appointment and Tenure

a. Appointment

Members of the Industrial Advisory Board shall be appointed or approved through the appropriate institutional process.

The Centre shall identify prospective members based on their professional qualifications, experience, relevance to the Centre's activities, and potential contribution to its strategic development.

Appointments shall be subject to the approval of the appropriate University authority.

b. Tenure

The proposed tenure of Board members shall be three years, renewable for one additional term, subject to institutional approval.

Appointments may be staggered to promote continuity and institutional memory.

c. Resignation and replacement

A member may resign by giving written notice to the Chairperson and the Centre Director.

The Centre may recommend replacement of a member who:

- Resigns or becomes unable to serve.
- Repeatedly fails to participate in Board activities without reasonable explanation.
- Has a conflict of interest that materially affects the ability to contribute independently.
- Engages in conduct inconsistent with the University's policies or the Board's responsibilities.

Any replacement shall be appointed through the appropriate institutional procedure.

7.0 Meetings and Conduct of Business

a. Frequency

The Board shall meet at least twice annually.

Additional meetings may be convened when required to address specific strategic issues, partnership opportunities, or institutional priorities.

Meetings may be conducted physically, virtually, or through hybrid arrangements.

b. Convening meetings

Meetings shall be convened by the Chairperson in consultation with the Centre Director.

The Secretary shall circulate:

- Meeting notices.
- Agenda.
- Relevant background documents.
- Previous meeting minutes.
- Outstanding action points.
- Reports requiring consideration.

Members should ordinarily receive meeting materials at least seven working days before the scheduled meeting.

c. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of at least one-half of the serving members, rounded up to the next whole number, including the Chairperson or an authorised presiding member.

Where a quorum is not achieved, the meeting may proceed for discussion, but formal recommendations shall be deferred until an appropriate quorum is established or the recommendations are subsequently endorsed through an approved procedure.

d. Decision-making

The Industrial Advisory Board shall operate primarily through consultation and consensus.

Where consensus cannot be achieved, the Chairperson may record the differing views and recommendations.

The Board shall not exercise executive or statutory decision-making powers unless such powers are specifically delegated by the University through an approved institutional arrangement.

e. Minutes and records

The Secretary shall prepare minutes of each meeting, documenting:

- Attendance.
- Agenda items.
- Key discussions.

- Recommendations.
- Decisions on advisory matters.
- Assigned actions.
- Responsible persons.
- Timelines for follow-up.

Minutes shall be circulated to members for review and maintained in the Centre's official records.

8.0 Responsibilities of ACENTDFB

The Centre shall:

- Provide the Board with relevant institutional information, strategic documents, and programme updates.
- Identify priority areas requiring industry advice.
- Facilitate meetings and provide administrative support.
- Present research, training, laboratory, and innovation activities for advisory review.
- Maintain communication with Board members between meetings.
- Consider and respond to Board recommendations.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration arising from Board discussions.
- Monitor the implementation of accepted recommendations.
- Provide periodic updates on actions taken.
- Ensure that Board activities comply with University policies and applicable regulations.

The Centre shall maintain an appropriate mechanism for documenting recommendations, institutional responses, and follow-up actions.

9.0 Responsibilities of Board Members

Each member shall:

- Participate actively in meetings and advisory activities.
- Provide objective, evidence-informed, and practical recommendations.
- Share relevant professional knowledge and industry perspectives.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and capacity development.
- Support appropriate engagement with external stakeholders.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding institutional information.
- Declare actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Respect the University's governance, research ethics, and administrative procedures.
- Avoid representing the Board or Centre without appropriate authorisation.

- Contribute to the preparation and review of advisory reports where requested.

Members are expected to act in the best interests of ACENTDFB and its institutional mandate while maintaining their professional independence.

10.0 Expected Deliverables

The Industrial Advisory Board shall contribute to the following outputs:

Deliverable	Expected output
Strategic advisory recommendations	Written recommendations on research, training, innovation, and institutional development
Industry engagement	Identification of prospective partners and opportunities for collaboration
Training and workforce development	Recommendations on industry-responsive competencies, internships, and professional training
Laboratory development	Advice on laboratory infrastructure, equipment, quality systems, and technical capacity
Research translation	Identification of research outputs with potential for practical application
Funding and sustainability	Identification of potential funding, sponsorship, consultancy, and partnership opportunities
Institutional networking	Facilitation of relevant professional and industry engagements
Annual advisory report	Summary of activities, recommendations, partnerships, and priorities for the following year

The Board may prepare additional advisory reports when requested by the Centre.

11.0 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

The performance of the Industrial Advisory Board shall be reviewed annually to assess its contribution to the Centre's strategic development.

The review shall consider:

- Number of Board meetings held and member participation.
- Quality and relevance of recommendations provided.
- Number of recommendations considered and adopted by the Centre.
- Partnerships and collaborative opportunities identified.
- Industry contributions to training and professional development.
- Opportunities for internships, industrial attachments, and mentorship.

- Contributions to laboratory development and quality improvement.
- Research translation and innovation opportunities identified.
- Funding and sustainability opportunities facilitated.
- Overall contribution to ACENTDFB's institutional objectives.

The Centre shall document the outcome of the annual review and identify areas for improvement.

12.0 Conflict of Interest

Members shall disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest arising from their professional affiliations, commercial interests, research collaborations, or other relationships.

A member shall not use Board membership to obtain inappropriate personal or commercial advantage.

Where a conflict of interest arises, the Chairperson and Centre Director shall determine appropriate measures, including:

- Disclosure in the meeting record.
- Restriction of participation in the relevant discussion.
- Withdrawal from consideration of a specific matter.
- Other measures consistent with University policies.

Members shall not participate in decisions involving their own commercial interests where such participation would compromise the integrity of the Board's advice.

13.0 Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

Board members shall treat confidential institutional, research, commercial, and partnership information with appropriate discretion.

Members shall:

- Maintain confidentiality of non-public information.
- Avoid unauthorised disclosure of research findings, institutional documents, or commercial information.
- Respect the intellectual property rights of ACENTDFB, Ahmadu Bello University, researchers, collaborators, and other stakeholders.
- Ensure that any proposed use of institutional information complies with applicable agreements and University policies.
- Avoid using confidential information for personal, commercial, or professional advantage.

Intellectual property arising from research and collaboration shall be managed in accordance with the applicable University policies, contractual arrangements, and relevant laws.

14.0 Relationship with University Governance

The Industrial Advisory Board shall operate as an advisory body within ACENTDFB and shall not replace or interfere with the statutory and administrative responsibilities of Ahmadu Bello University.

The Board shall:

- Provide advice to the Centre's leadership.
- Make recommendations on strategic and technical matters.
- Support institutional development and external engagement.
- Respect the authority of the Centre Director and relevant University organs.
- Operate within the University's established procedures for research, finance, procurement, partnerships, intellectual property, and administration.

All recommendations of the Board shall remain advisory and shall be subject to consideration and approval by the appropriate Centre and University authorities.

The Board shall not independently approve expenditure, enter into contractual agreements, recruit staff, establish commercial partnerships, or commit the Centre or University to obligations unless specifically authorised under applicable institutional procedures.

15.0 Funding and Administrative Support

The Centre shall provide reasonable administrative support for the Board's activities, subject to available resources and institutional approval.

Such support may include:

- Meeting facilities and virtual meeting arrangements.
- Secretariat services.
- Preparation and distribution of meeting documents.
- Communication and coordination.
- Documentation and reporting.
- Approved travel and meeting-related expenses.

Any honorarium, reimbursement, or other financial arrangement for Board members shall be subject to University policies, available funding, and appropriate approval.

Board members may contribute voluntarily to the Centre's activities, where appropriate and mutually agreed.

16.0 Review and Amendment of the TOR

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed at least once every three years or when required by changes in the Centre's strategic priorities, institutional policies, or operational requirements.

Amendments may be proposed by:

- The Centre Director.
- The Chairperson of the Industrial Advisory Board.
- Board members.
- Relevant University authorities.

Proposed amendments shall be considered by the Centre and submitted to the appropriate University authority for approval.

17.0 Effective Date

These Terms of Reference shall become effective upon approval by the appropriate authority of Ahmadu Bello University.

The Centre shall communicate the approved TOR to all members of the Industrial Advisory Board and maintain an official copy in its institutional records.

Approval Date: November 13, 2026

Signature: 

Name and Status of Approving Officer: Prof Y.K.E. Ibrahim, Centre Leader

ANNEX I: PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

The following categories are proposed to guide the identification and appointment of members. They are not named appointments.

No.	Membership category	Relevant expertise
1	Chairperson	Senior industry leader or distinguished professional with experience in biotechnology, public health, or scientific innovation
2	Pharmaceutical industry representative	Drug development, pharmaceutical research, manufacturing, or product development
3	Biotechnology industry representative	Biotechnology innovation, molecular biology, or applied research
4	Diagnostics and laboratory representative	Molecular diagnostics, clinical laboratory services, laboratory quality management
5	Public health representative	Disease control, health systems, NTD programmes, or public health implementation
6	Forensic science representative	Forensic biotechnology, forensic laboratory services, or applied forensic research
7	Scientific technology representative	Laboratory equipment, instrumentation, scientific technologies, or technical services
8	Environmental or vector-control industry representative	Vector control, environmental health, insecticide technologies, or related fields
9	Industry association representative	Industry networking, professional engagement, and sector development
10	Innovation and entrepreneurship representative	Technology transfer, innovation management, commercialisation, or enterprise development
11	Research and development representative	Applied research, research partnerships, and industry-academic collaboration
12	Centre representative/Secretary	ACENTDFB institutional coordination and administrative support

Membership should be adjusted to ensure appropriate representation, avoid unnecessary duplication, and maintain a manageable Board size.

ANNEX II: PROPOSED ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Activity	Timing	Responsibility	Expected output
Appointment and orientation of Board members	Year 1	Centre leadership	Approved membership and orientation
Review of Centre strategic priorities	First meeting	IAB and Centre leadership	Strategic advisory recommendations
Identification of industry partnership opportunities	Throughout the year	IAB members and Centre	Partnership opportunity register
Review of training and workforce needs	First or second meeting	IAB and programme coordinators	Training recommendations
Laboratory development and quality advisory session	As required	Relevant IAB members and laboratory leadership	Laboratory improvement recommendations
Research translation and innovation review	Second meeting	IAB and research teams	Research translation opportunities
Funding and sustainability engagement	Throughout the year	IAB and Centre leadership	Funding and partnership leads
Annual performance review	End of year	Chairperson, Secretary, Centre leadership	Annual advisory report

The diagram represents the proposed advisory relationship. It does not establish a new statutory reporting line or transfer University governance powers.

ANNEX III: PROPOSED BOARD MEMBER ACCEPTANCE

ACENTDFB INDUSTRIAL ADVISORY BOARD

I, _____, accept the appointment/invitation to serve as a member of the Industrial Advisory Board of the Africa Centre of Excellence for Neglected Tropical Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology (ACENTDFB), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

I agree to:

1. Contribute professional expertise and independent advice to the Centre.
2. Participate in Board meetings and assigned advisory activities.
3. Maintain confidentiality of institutional and research information.
4. Declare actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
5. Respect the policies and governance procedures of Ahmadu Bello University.
6. Support the objectives and responsibilities outlined in the approved Terms of Reference.

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPROVAL

For institutional consideration

Prepared by	ACENTDFB Management
Reviewed by	_____
Recommended by	_____
Approved by	_____
Approval date	_____
Effective date	_____

Institutional recommendation: The TOR should be submitted to the Centre's appropriate governance structure and the relevant University authority for review and approval before appointments are formally made. The proposed membership size, tenure, meeting frequency, and administrative arrangements should be confirmed against ABU's applicable policies.

Reviewed: November 07, 2026

Prof. Y.K.E. Ibrahim (Centre Leader)