



Integrated Research on Disaster Risk International Centres of Excellence (IRDR ICoE)

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Co-sponsored by the International Council for Science (ICSU), International Social Science Council (ISSC), and United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), a ten-year **Integrated Research on Disaster Risk Programme** (hereafter referred to as **IRDR**) was launched to address the major challenges of natural and human-induced environmental hazards. It aims to adopt an international, transdisciplinary and cross-hazard approach to conduct disaster risk reduction (DRR) research, and to reduce the impacts as well as losses induced by natural disasters.

The IRDR Programme is directed by the **Science Committee of the IRDR (IRDR SC)**. The **International Programme Office (IPO)** was also established to support the work of the Science Committee and to help promote and disseminate its scientific results to target audience at various levels. A limited number of **International Centres of Excellence (ICoE)** will be established to make contributions during the term of IRDR and to make IRDR's further development possible and sustainable.

Objectives of IRDR ICoE

Generally, each ICoE will be in line with the IRDR's main principles, objectives and studying domains. ICoE is not only committed to supporting SC and IPO in facilitating IRDR but also to be developing as a global network for IRDR knowledge, expertise and researchers. Specifically, ICoE will envision 3 objectives for its activity in IRDR. **Firstly**, each ICoE research programme will embody an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction that directly contributes to the IRDR Science Plan and its objectives: the scientific characterization of natural and human-induced environmental hazards, vulnerability and risk; the understanding of decision-making in complex and changing risk contexts; and the reduction of risk and curbing losses through knowledge-based actions. The ICoE will also contribute to the cross-cutting themes of: capacity building; case studies and demonstration projects; and assessment, data management and monitoring. The ICoE and the IRDR projects will collaborate to provide global contributions towards achieving the IRDR legacy. The ICoE will, in particular, enable regional scientific activities through geographically-focused contributions based on more localized inputs and by being visible centres of research motivate participation in the IRDR. **Secondly**, ICoE will be supportive in developing and strengthening powerful partnership with UN Agencies and disaster management organizations at international, regional and national levels which will

provide a reserved supply of intelligent and informational resources for IRDR. **Thirdly**, the ICoE will further extend its core function as the facilitator of IRDR and will be an international center for providing support for decision-making, promulgating achievements of DRR research, as well as fostering DRR senior researchers and practitioners.

Main Roles of IRDR ICoE

In order to comply with the objectives of IRDR Science Plan and its own objectives, roles of ICoE would be broadly categorized as below:

- Facilitate and participate in IRDR events;
- Contribute to disaster risk researchers' network or platform;
- Conduct integrated research on disaster risk at local, regional, and global scale, in accordance with objectives of IRDR four Working Groups;
- Provide specifically-designed schemes on disaster risk and reduction management for decision-making;
- Provide technical support for formulating regional or national disaster risk reduction programs based on integrated research;
- Promote IRDR research by conducting regular trainings, workshops or other activities for disaster managers, decision- makers, and junior researchers.

Designation of IRDR ICoE

The ICoE will be sited in various locations around the world chosen by IRDR SC to provide broad geographic distribution and a mix of disciplinary and hazard foci. The Centres will be designated on the basis of the following criteria:

- A good track record in, or commitment to, transdisciplinary research combining social science, natural science, engineering as well as policy, etc.;
- Provision of unhindered access to researchers from participating countries and international visitors;
- Proven multi-national experience in research excellence related to disaster risk reduction;
- Internal capabilities to manage multi-national research teams;
- Commitments to provide appropriate funding for the national and international components consistent with IRDR objectives;
- Provision of fully equipped office space and supporting services;

Selection Process of IRDR ICoE

The IRDR ICoE selection round could be conducted through the following competitive four-stage process.

• Stage 1: Call for Application

An open call for applications will be announced via IRDR website (www.irdrinternational.org); it is also publicized in the occasions of formal events conducted by IRDR cosponsors and partners, such as annual meeting, summit conference, high-level meetings, as well as global and regional platform /network conference. IRDR IPO will identify a few occasions and events,

which are wide- influential, mostly theme-focused, and suitably for promoting IRDR, to make announcements on call for applications.

- **Stage 2: Submission of Application**

Interested organizations, foundations, institutions, academies, universities, and other capable entities can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the IRDR IPO directly via email:

connect@irdrinternational.org;

These EOIs will be reviewed by IRDR Selection Advisory Committee. Successful EOIs will be invited to submit a Full Proposal for further review. The full proposal may incorporate the following parts:

- A description of the organization requesting IRDR ICoE, including its basic organizational structure, key personnel, funding sources, scientific research capacity, linkage with international disaster risk research and reduction network
- An overview of the professional activities for the past years, including past and ongoing programme with regard to disaster risk research and reduction.
- A plan of incorporating IRDR objectives into its own missions and its implementation.
- A vision to develop the IRDR ICoE

- **Stage 3: Review and Evaluation of Application**

IRDR Selection Advisory Committee will review and assess applications in accordance with criteria. Proposals that are shortlisted will be asked for an interview.

- **Stage 4: Denial and Approval of Application**

Based on the interviews, the Selection Advisory Committee will make recommendation to the IRDR Science Committee. The IRDR Science Committee will make the final selection.

Organization of IRDR ICoE

The ICoE will vary in their structure and include the possible establishment of a Centre shared between two or three locations in different countries or within one country. The Host Institution will be agreed between the participating organizations and the IRDR SC.

Each ICoE will have both local and international components. The local component will consist of a strong cadre of disaster risk reduction academics and researchers from universities, academies of science, institutes and centres within the host country (or countries). The international component will consist of short- and longer-term (6-12 month) visiting scientists from developed and developing countries and support to host workshops, colloquia and 2 scientific meetings that bring together scientists on, for example, case studies or forensic investigations. These could then be extended to other countries in longer-term cooperative studies.

As a contribution to international science and the IRDR Programme, the ICoE is expected to provide for openness of data, information and outputs for all to use. The ICoE is expected to be sustained for at least 5 years.

Each ICoE will be overseen by an international advisory board (IAB) of 7-9 members appointed jointly by the IRDR SC and the Host Institution. At least one member of the IAB shall at all time be a serving member of the IRDR SC. The ICoE shall be headed by a Director, who shall be responsible for the administration and operation of the Centre and appointed by the Host Institution in consultation with the IAB and IRDR SC.

As a part of IRDR initiative in the structure diagram, the IRDR ICoE will function independently and work closely with IRDR SC, Regional and National Committees and the IPO. IRDR ICoE should provide regular, quarterly reports to the IPO and IRDR SC. At a minimum, the ICoE shall submit their work plan and report to the IPO on a yearly basis.

Funding for IRDR ICoE

The funding for each ICoE will be provided by the Host Agencies/Organizations for the duration of the Centre's life. The Host Institution will be expected to provide and mobilize funding for all day-to-day operations as well as for projects and visiting scientists.