

Integrated Research on Disaster Risk International Centres of Excellence (IRDR ICoEs) Terms of Reference (ToRs)

1. Background and purpose

- 1.1 Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) is an international scientific programme cosponsored by the International Science Council (ISC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). The mission of IRDR is to mobilize science for the reduction of all types of disaster risk, building resilience, and reducing vulnerability by integrating risk science with climate change adaptation and mitigation and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). IRDR aims to usher in an inclusive, safe, and sustainable world by promoting a better understanding of disaster risk and the effective use of risk science in decision-making.
- 1.2 The first phase of IRDR was from 2010 to 2020. With the completion of the first phase and a transition in 2021-2022, the IRDR Phase II officially commences in May 2023. This new phase of IRDR will continue for ten years.
- 1.3 IRDR International Centres of Excellence (hereafter referred as ICoEs) are established to make direct contributions to IRDR missions in research and capacity building.
- 1.4 The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of ICoEs as provided in the following articles of this document are updated from the 2010 version of ToRs of ICoE.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 ICoEs will embody integrated approaches to disaster risk reduction (DRR) that directly contribute to IRDR missions: improve knowledge and understanding of risk and uncertainty that hamper progress toward inclusive, safe, and sustainable development; promote innovation in research and action, and explore effective solutions in DRR; and build institutional capacity required under various socio-economic and cultural settings and development contexts for risk-informed development. The ICoEs are required to contribute to the implementation of the research priorities of “A Framework for Global Science in Support of Risk-informed Sustainable Development and Planetary Health” (hereafter “Research Framework”). The ICoEs will, in particular, enable regional scientific activities

through geographically-focused contributions based on more localized inputs and by being visible centres of research and actions in IRDR.

- 2.2 ICoEs will be supportive in developing and strengthening partnerships with UN Agencies and DRR related organisations at international, regional, and national levels, which will provide expertise for impactful DRR solutions.
- 2.3 ICoEs will further extend their core function as facilitators of IRDR and be an international centre for providing support for decision-making, promulgating achievements of DRR research, as well as fostering DRR senior researchers and practitioners. The deliverables of ICoEs are expected to contribute to the development of Open Science.
- 2.4 All the above with a view to ensure the focus towards DRR in research and policy-making and support the implementation of global agenda such as the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Research Framework.

3. Organisation

- 3.1 As a part of IRDR entities, the IRDR ICoEs will function independently and work closely with IRDR National Committees (NCs) and the IRDR International Programme Office (IPO), under the overall guidance of the IRDR Scientific Committee (SC).
- 3.2 The ICoEs will vary in their structure and include the possible establishment of an ICoE to act as the secretariat or host institution of a coordinating mechanism shared between several institutions within one country or in different countries.
- 3.3 Each ICoE shall be headed by a Director, who shall be responsible for the administration and operation of the Centre. A focal point shall be designated for communication within the IRDR community. Each ICoE is also suggested to be overseen by a scientific advisory board (SAB).
- 3.4 Each ICoE will have both local and international components. The local component will consist of a strong cadre of DRR 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 months) visiting scholars, especially IRDR young scientists, and support to host workshops, colloquia, and scientific meetings that bring together scientists. ICoEs are encouraged to cooperate with other ICoEs.

3.5 The funding for each ICoE shall be provided by its Host Institution for the duration of the validation period of MoU. 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. The funding received shall be reflected in the annual fact sheet.

4. Selection process

4.1 The interested organisations, foundations, institutions, academies, universities, and other entities shall submit an Expression of Interest (Eoi) to the IPO.

4.2 The Eoi should incorporate the following parts:

- (a) A description of the organisation requesting IRDR ICoE, including its basic organisational structure, key personnel, funding sources, scientific research capacity, and linkage with the international disaster risk research network;
- (b) An overview of the professional activities for the past years, including past and ongoing programmes with regard to disaster risk research;
- (c) A plan of incorporating IRDR objectives into its own missions and its implementation;
- (d) A vision to develop the IRDR ICoE;
- (e) Identification of funding and other support.

4.3 IRDR SC members will review and assess applications in accordance with the following criteria:

- (a) A good track record in, or commitment to, transdisciplinary research on disaster risk, combining social science, natural science, engineering as well as policy, etc.;
- (b) Support to Open Science Initiative;
- (c) Proven multi-national experience in research excellence related to DRR;
- (d) Internal capabilities to manage multi-national research teams;
- (e) Commitments to provide appropriate support, including funding and in-kind for the national and international components consistent with IRDR missions.

4.4 The result and decision will be announced by IPO based on the collective assessment of SC members in the SC session of the year. The newly approved ICoEs will be invited to attend the SC session of the year and present the action plans.

4.5 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a five-year validation period will be signed between the Host Institution of ICoE and IPO when the application is approved. IRDR Executive Director will sign the MoU on behalf of IRDR. The

MoU is the official approval of the membership of IRDR.

5. Renewal evaluation and termination

5.1 The announcement renewal evaluation will be informed by IPO to each ICoE 6 months prior to the expiration of the MoU. Should the ICoE wish to renew the MoU, the ICoE shall submit a report to the IPO on the due date.

5.2 The evaluation panel, organised by IPO, will consist of five representatives from SC members, IRDR Fellows, IPO staff, or IRDR partners. The members of the panel shall have had no existing affiliation with the ICoE. An online review meeting or an onsite review will be organised when it is applicable. The ICoE shall cover all the costs related to the onsite review.

5.3 The following parameters shall be considered by the evaluation panel:

- (a) The relevance and impacts of the deliverables of the ICoE to IRDR missions and the Research Framework;
- (b) The relevance and impacts of the deliverables of the ICoE to the global agenda;
- (c) The quality of coordination and connection with IRDR, both with IPO and with other IRDR members, regarding the engagement in IRDR publications and activities;
- (d) The financial resources available for ensuring sustainable institutional capacity and viability;
- (e) The action plan for next term.

5.4 The evaluation panel shall submit the evaluation report to SC for their decision. The result will be announced by IPO. The renewal MoU shall be prepared by IPO.

5.5 The termination or non-renewal of an ICoE shall be authorized by a decision of SC in consultation with IRDR Co-sponsors. Reputational risks for the Organisation shall also be considered as grounds for termination of an ICoE.

6. Visibility

6.1 Use of IRDR's name and logo: ICoEs shall be allowed to use IRDR's name and/or logo in consultation with the IPO. Upon termination of the MoU for the designation of ICoE status, an institute or centre shall no longer be allowed to use IRDR's name and/or logo.

7. Reporting

7.1 Each ICoE shall submit an annual fact sheet to IPO. IPO will provide the template. The fact sheet shall provide the following information:

- (a) The priorities in research and actions of the year;
- (b) Structure and Operational Management, including basic organisational structure, finance and budget, secretariat, and key staff;
- (c) Highlight of main achievements and contributions;
- (d) Main actions planned and impacts expected for next year.

<end of ICoE TOR>