



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

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORs)

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 (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 audiences 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. The ICoEs can be based on existing institutions focusing on disaster risk education, research and technical cooperation. They should operate as network mechanisms engaging other similar institutions in their region, country or city.

Objectives of IRDR ICoE

Generally, each ICoE will be developed to contribute to IRDR's main principles, objectives and studying domains and to promote and disseminate widely the IRDR concepts, approaches and methodologies. The ICoEs would not only be 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, ICoEs will envision 3 objectives for their 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, ICoEs will be supportive in developing and strengthening powerful partnership with UN Agencies and organizations at international, regional and national levels working on disaster risk, which will provide a reserved supply of intelligent and informational resources for IRDR.

Thirdly, the ICoEs will further extend their core function as facilitators 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. All the above with a view to ensure the shift of focus towards disaster risk reduction in research and policy-making.

Main Roles of IRDR ICoEs

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

- Conduct integrated research on disaster risk at local, regional, and global scale, meeting with objectives of 4 IRDR Working Groups;
- Provide specifically-designed technical cooperation on disaster risk and reduction management for policy and decision-making;
- Provide technical support for formulating regional, national or local 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.
- Facilitate and participate in IRDR events;
- Contribute to disaster risk researchers' network or platform

Criteria for 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 on disaster risk, 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 support, including funding and in-kind 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 process.

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. They should 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 network
- An overview of the professional activities for the past years, including past and ongoing programme with regard to disaster risk research..
- A plan of incorporating IRDR objectives into its own missions and its implementation.
- A vision to develop the IRDR ICoE
- Identification of funding and other support

Review and Evaluation of Application

IRDR will review and assess applications in accordance with criteria. Recommendations will be made to the IRDR Science Committee. The IRDR Science Committee will have final decision.

Organization of IRDR ICoE Network

The ICoEs will vary in their structure and include the possible establishment of a Centre to act as a host institution and coordinating mechanism shared between several institutions in different countries, within one country or one city. The Host Institution will be agreed between the participating organizations and the IRDR Science Committee (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.

The IRDR ICoE network and each ICoE will be overseen by an international advisory board (IAB) of 5 to 9 members appointed by the IRDR SC in consultation with the Host Institution. Each 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 Regional and National Committees and the IPO, under the overall guidance and supervision of the IRDR SC. IRDR ICoE should provide bi-annual reports to the IPO prior to the IRDR SC meetings. At a minimum, the ICoE shall submit their work plan and annual report to the IPO for the SC 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. Fundraising would be undertaken jointly with the IRDR IPO and supported by SC members as needed.