

Working Group on Robust Information

Terms of Reference

The Working Group aims to support activity that will:

- Define the process by which we construct climate information (with and for societal use) in a decision making space (towards the result of a “robust” decision)
- Identify epistemic attributes for “robust” actionable information products for use in a decision making context.
- Identify challenges and needs across communities to implement the mechanisms/procedures/practices needed to achieve (1) and (2) (e.g. structures and mechanisms for coordination and collaboration, funding, regulatory bodies, etc).

To achieve this, the Working Group will initially focus on:

1. Review literature on procedural ethics and the social science of information construction;
2. Engage in mapping the range of relevant stakeholders working in this space, along with gaps and opportunities, using surveys, interviews or other mixed methods as appropriate;
3. Engage specific stakeholders strategically, and as opportunities arise, developing a protocols for these interactions dependent on the knowledge base of the interlocutor;
4. Convene panels of stakeholders when it deems this to be appropriate;
5. Identify potential case studies, including on ethical oversight around adaptation;
6. Develop a framework of attributes of climate information products that are “robust”, referring to the process by which such products may be developed;
7. Launch task teams for subsets of these tasks, as it deems necessary, ensuring frequent and substantive sharing of information between these task teams.

Membership:

8. The Working Group consists of 2 or 3 co-chairs, and 8-12 regular, voting members. Any Task Teams constituted by the working group follow the same membership structures outlined here.
9. Decision making is by consensus. However, if this is not possible, a vote should be taken. For a decision to be approved, there must be a 2/3 majority vote with 75% quorum of Voting Members.
 - a. The RIfS Scientific Steering Group (SSG) should be notified of any significant decisions within the annual report. In some circumstances, particularly where there are significant community coordination/resources implications, the Working Group may wish to seek endorsement from the RIfS SSG for a decision.
10. Non-voting, ex-officio membership is granted to a co-chair of the RIfS SSG, the RIfS IPO, co-chairs of task teams who are not already regular members of the working group, and other relevant WCRP liasons as the co-chairs deem appropriate
11. Working Group members are appointed for 4 year terms, with possibility of renewal for an additional 2 years. Task Team appointments will typically be shorter, and should be specified in an open call.
12. When possible the ends of co-chair terms should be staggered by at least one calendar year to prevent gaps in leadership and enhance resilience

13. When an existing member moves up to one of the co-chair positions, the appointment length “clock” is reset, with the condition that the member can serve on the working group up to a maximum of 10 years altogether.
14. All members can resign from their position at any point and are encouraged to give three months’ notice. Resigning members are encouraged to first discuss their circumstances with a chair/co-chairs. It might be more suitable to pause the membership in circumstances where ability to participate is restricted for a specific period (e.g., parental leave).
15. Co-chairs, and voting members of the Working Group are approved and formally appointed by the RIfS SSG based on their personal experience and expertise and should be willing to represent relevant geographical or specialist science/technical areas, beyond their existing affiliations, as set out in the membership call text. The Working Group approves and formally appoints members of any Task Teams that it launches.
16. All new appointments should be made with consideration of compliance with the [WCRP Guidelines on Membership and Responsibilities](#) on diversity. Restrictions may be included to address under-representation within the working group. An open call should be issued by the RIfS IPO with a specification of requirements in line with membership responsibilities set by the co-chairs. The open call should run for at least a month. A deadline will be set for applications, which will be collected by the RIfS IPO.
17. Initial appointments will give priority to Interim Working Group members, whose term will be considered to have commenced when the interim working group was constituted.
18. The RIfS SSG co-chairs are responsible for recommending working group co-chairs, and the Working Group co-chairs will review applicants for regular voting members. All membership recommendations are submitted to the RIfS SSG for approval. No communication with candidates should be made before this formal approval is secured.
19. Similarly, the Working Group co-chairs are responsible for recommending Task Team co-chairs, and the Task Team co-chairs will review applications for regular Task Team members. All membership recommendations are submitted to the Working Group for approval before formal communication with candidates is made.
20. Members may be removed by the co-chairs if any of the following criteria are met:
 - a. lack of engagement, e.g., two unexcused meetings in a row
 - b. Violation of the [WCRP code of conduct](#)
 - c. Undeclared conflict of interest¹.
21. All member removals, including the reasoning for the removal and a copy of the removal communication, must be shared with the RIfS SSG and RIfS IPO.

¹ Conflict of interest: A “conflict of interest” refers to any current professional, financial or other interest which could: i) significantly impair the individual’s objectivity in carrying out duties and responsibilities for the Working Group, or ii) create an unfair advantage for any person or organization. For the purposes of this policy, circumstances that could lead a reasonable person to question an individual’s objectivity, or whether an unfair advantage has been created, constitute a potential conflict of interest. These potential conflicts are subject to disclosure. [as defined by the IPCC in their [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)]