

Future Earth Global Coordination Hub

Terms of Reference

Future Earth Global Coordination Hub and the Global Secretariat Hubs constitute the distributed Future Earth Secretariat. The Global Coordination Hub, led by the Future Earth Executive Director, works with the Global Secretariat Hubs and their Directors as a single unit to deliver the key functions of the Future Earth Secretariat aiming to accelerate transformations to global sustainability through research and innovation. The funding and hosting institutions of the Global Coordination Hub and the Global Secretariat Hubs recognize the global endeavour of Future Earth, and commit themselves to supporting the global work of Future Earth, and to adhering to the mission, objectives and values of Future Earth.

Contribution to the main functions and operations of the Future Earth Secretariat:

The Global Coordination Hub's main responsibility is the strategic leadership of the Future Earth network. It oversees and coordinates the main integrative, holistic and synergistic functions and transversal activities of the Future Earth Secretariat, conducted by the Global Secretariat Hubs¹ and global research networks, and manages and supports the governing bodies. This coordination and oversight role of the Global Coordination Hub is fundamentally different from the Global Secretariat Hubs that lead specific global activities of Future Earth and also engage nationally and regionally. The Global Coordination Hub operates exclusively at the global level, with a set of specific functions that should include:

- Executive representation of Future Earth through the Executive Director
- Management and support of the Future Earth governance (Assembly and the Governing Council)
- Management of Future Earth common resources (Future Earth "Core Fund"²), including preparing an annual audit to the Governing Council

¹ The work of the Global Secretariat Hubs includes: the development of Future Earth strategy, approved by the Assembly; engagement with national and international science-policy processes; fundraising and partnership management; and support to global research networks of Future Earth, including promoting outcomes, and facilitating synthesis and integration within and beyond the Future Earth networks and securing funding opportunities for research, science-policy initiatives, collaborations and other global research network activities. In addition, the Global Secretariat Hubs support national and regional work in collaboration with national structures, including coordination of national and/or regional work within their region; and promotion and advancement of sustainability science within their country / region.

² The Core Fund is managed by the Global Secretariat Coordinating Hub with the aim to support key global operations and transversal functions of the Secretariat; provide core funding to the Global Research Networks (GRN, the current GRPs and KANs) in the form of a fixed annual contribution ("block grant") in non-earmarked funding per GRN as well as funds to incentivize collaboration among existing global programs (GRPs and KANs) and new partners; and strengthen Future Earth's participation in global science-policy-practice interface processes. A Core Fund with a minimum of EUR 500K per annum is deemed necessary to secure support for the key global functions and GRNs (100K for global functions and 400K for GRNs). A smaller fund requires prioritization of activities, a larger fund enables Future Earth to increase its activities, initiatives and impact. The Core Fund is supported by annual contributions from each Global Secretariat Hub. In-kind contributions are also possible but will be decided on a case-by-case basis. The Global Coordination Hub will deliver an annual audit of the Core Fund to the Governing Council.

- Leading strategy development, network oversight, and monitoring and evaluation of Future Earth's global programs
- Leading of fundraising efforts and management of partnerships
- Leading of global communications (internal³ and external)
- Overall coordination of the distributed Secretariat activities, including management of the Directors Council and coordinating meetings of the organization's governing bodies
- Overview of the Secretariat finances for strategic planning and reporting
- Dispute resolution and arbitration.

The Global Coordination Hub receives financial support for these global activities from the Future Earth Core Fund, to which all Future Earth Global Secretariat Hubs contribute. Staff salaries and basic operating expenses (office rent etc.) will be covered by the host organization(s) and funders.

Staffing and management:

- A full-time Executive Director, reporting to the Governing Council. The Executive Director will be selected by an impartial review committee through a global competitive search.
- Five to six other full-time staff members (FTE; the positions can also be split between part-time staff members) that secure the above listed key leadership and coordination functions of the Future Earth Secretariat. The staffing can be built over time.

Hosting and resourcing arrangements:

- Support for staffing and operating expenses of the Global Coordination Hub should come from the national government and research agencies within the hosting country, with financial or in-kind support from hosting institutions, but the support can come from other structures - both national and international - as well. The Global Coordination Hub can seek to establish consortium funding models involving multiple revenue sources.
- The institution that hosts the Global Coordination Hub can also host a Global Secretariat Hub, or engage in national and regional Future Earth activities and initiatives, but the finances and operations of these hubs are to be kept separate.
- Contribution to funding for transversal functions of the Future Earth Secretariat, outlined above, will be provided through the Future Earth Core Fund.
- Hosting and funding agreements need to be clear in their oversight and accountability arrangements.

Making changes to this Terms of Reference:

All changes to this Terms of Reference will be made by the new Governing Council and ratified by the Future Earth Assembly.

³ Develop and implement mechanisms for network engagement and lines of communication within Future Earth, with an explicit focus on both bottom-up and top-down flows.

ANNEX A.

Establishment process and timeline:

The New Future Earth Global Secretariat is to replace the current Global Secretariat, the Executive Office of which was based in Montreal, Canada - in one of the Global Hubs. In the new structure, the strengthened Executive Office will be located in a Global Coordination Hub and it will receive stronger support from the growing network of Global Secretariat Hubs. To allow the Global Coordination Hub to fully focus on its global mandate, its functions will be limited to global leadership, coordination, representation and communications work as outlined above.

The Global Coordination Hub and the first set of Global Secretariat Hubs will be established by mid-2021. They are expected to be joined by further Global Secretariat Hubs the following years. The Global Coordination Hub and the Global Secretariat Hubs will be selected through an open bidding and review process. The first call will be announced by the current Future Earth Secretariat and the Governing Council on February 1, 2021. While the number of the Global Secretariat Hubs is not fixed, there will be only one Global Coordination Hub.

The current Future Earth Secretariat staff, Implementation Team members, as well as the members of the broader Future Earth community are encouraged to support potential applicants and funders in the development of the applications. Institutions or consortia of institutions from any country or region are welcomed to develop and propose a Global Coordination Hub; applications from the Global South are particularly encouraged and welcome.

Applications are reviewed by an external review committee (see below), following the criteria set out by Future Earth Implementation Team Working Group 1 and approved by the Governing Council. The application and review process will be iterative, and include an interview / Q+A meeting of the applicants with the review committee. This allows the applicants to better understand the roles and functions of the Global Coordination Hub, and to improve their application where necessary.

The review committee will select the Global Coordination Hub, which will then be approved by the Governing Council and/or ratified by the Future Earth Assembly.

ANNEX B.

Review Committee:

The review committee consists of 10 members, representing leading experts in relevant fields, coming from different backgrounds (geography, discipline, gender). Six members are drawn from the Future Earth community, and 4 from communities outside Future Earth that are involved in activities that support or are synergistic to those of Future Earth. Members of the review committee need to have a good knowledge of Future Earth resourcing and operations, or similar large organisations and networks, as well as expertise in complex organizational design. Members of the review committee are nominated by the Future Earth Community. Based on these nominations, the Implementation Team proposes a list of candidates to the Governing Council, which then makes the final selection and approves committee members by February 2021. Nominated review committee members should declare any potential conflict of interest and be excluded from the review process where appropriate. The same review committee that reviews applications for Global Secretariat Hubs, also reviews applications for the Global Coordination Hub.

ANNEX C.

Glossary of Terms:

Core Fund

The Core Fund is managed by the Global Secretariat Coordinating Hub with the aim to

- support key global operations and transversal functions of the secretariat
- provide core funding to the Global Research Networks (GRN, the current GRPs and KANs) in the form of a fixed annual contribution (“block grant”) in non-earmarked funding per GRN as well as funds to incentivize collaboration among existing global programs (GRPs and KANs) and new partners
- strengthen Future Earth’s participation in global science-policy-practice interface processes.

A Core Fund with a minimum of EUR 500K per annum is deemed necessary to secure support for the key global functions and GRNs (100K for global functions and 400K for GRNs). A smaller fund requires prioritization of activities, a larger fund enables Future Earth to increase its activities, initiatives and impact.

The Core Fund is supported by annual contributions from each Global Secretariat Hub. In-kind contributions are also possible but will be decided on a case-by-case basis. The Global Secretariat Hub will deliver an annual audit of the Core Fund to the Governing Council.

Global Secretariat Hub Director

Global Secretariat Hub Director manages the hub staff and budgets. Hub staff may include staff leading key global functions of the Future Earth Secretariat. Global Secretariat Hub Directors, working with their boards, are responsible for raising funds to support national, regional, and global functions.

Directors Council

The directors of each Global Secretariat Hub and the Executive Director constitute the Directors Council, which meets quarterly. The Directors Council oversees the use of the shared core funds, administered by the Global Coordination Hub. It also oversees the activities, platforms, programs and initiatives that are supported by multiple parts of the Secretariat and other parts of the community. The role of the Directors Council is to ensure that key strategic initiatives are properly resourced and coordinated across the network. The Directors Council is chaired by the Executive Director of Future Earth. Together with the Global Secretariat Hub Directors, the Global Coordination Hub prepares regular updates to the Governing Council. It is also responsible for financial reporting on core funds as well as for financial forecasting of core funds based on regularly updated funding pipelines. All funders of the Global Secretariat Hub and the Global Coordination Hub are invited to a regular meeting to discuss funding needs and program priorities, respecting the leading role of the Assembly in approving the global strategy of Future Earth.

Secretariat Executive Team

The Secretariat Executive Team supports the Directors Council in executing cross-organizational operations. It is composed of a subset of members of the Directors Council (always including the Executive Director) and occasionally Secretariat staff members (by invitation). The Secretariat Executive Team is chaired by the Executive Director and it meets weekly.