

Terms of Reference and Governance Plan of the Future Earth - IRDR –WCRP - WWRP Knowledge Action Network on Emergent Risks and Extreme Events (Risk KAN)

(Version 3.0, July 30th, 2021)

1. Purpose of the Future Earth - IRDR – WCRP - WWRP Knowledge Action Network on Emergent Risks and Extreme Events

1.1. Vision

The vision of the Future Earth - IRDR – WCRP - WWRP¹ Knowledge Action Network on Emergent Risks and Extreme Events, hereby, further denoted as Risk KAN, is to establish a science-policy-society network on extreme events and emergent risks, thereby fusing the diverse expertise present in the communities around Future Earth, IRDR, WCRP and WWRP.

1.2. Mission

The **Knowledge-Action Network (KAN) on Emergent Risks and Extreme Events** provides an **open platform for scientific communities**, policy-makers, educators, civil society, media, industry, and donors, from across science disciplines and engineering, working on extreme events, disaster risk reduction and governance **to exchange information, knowledge and data and engage in collaborative research activities**. It is a joint initiative of the Future Earth, IRDR, WCRP and WWRP programmes to address systemic, complex and cascading risks by synthesis of various scientific approaches and products.

1.3. Activities

Until now, the Risk KAN has initiated activities as a “network & think tank” (co-)organizing international conferences, webinars, workshops and summer schools, via “scientific synthesis”, the “(co-)design of research agendas and elaboration of joint proposals”. Key goals include:

- To build a global partnership and network of science excellence and practitioner expertise across disciplines and sectors to accelerate integration and synthesis for ground breaking and solution-oriented research based on systems thinking, and synthesize for disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and for respective governance and decision making under global environmental and societal change.
- To identify priorities and support complementarity of research on systemic risk, including the interaction of climate-change induced extreme events and other disasters.
- To explore and enhance the role of science as an active participant in transformations to sustainability and resilience through systematic scientific synthesis and research, facilitation and convening roles among diverse science communities and in collaboration with societal actors (business, administration, policy, NGO’s).

¹ The three ISC (formerly ICSU) programmes – all with strong stakeholder partnerships –initiating this Knowledge Action Network on Emergent Risks and Extreme Events are Future Earth (FE), Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) and the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP). The World Meteorological Organization’s (WMO) World Weather Research Programme (WWRP) joined as 4th co-parent programme of the Risk KAN in February 2021.

2. Structure of the Future Earth - IRDR - WCRP - WWRP Risk KAN

2.1. Structure

The Risk KAN is largely driven by the research community and relevant stakeholders. The Risk KAN is open and inclusive for participation by interested and relevant parties.

The Risk KAN is developed with a flexible structure that changes according to the needs of its stakeholders in time as the Risk KAN progresses and needs to fulfil different roles. The suggested entities are intended to serve different functions and enable smooth timely operations. The entities within the structure are as follows:

1. Risk KAN Steering Committee (formerly named Development Team)
2. Risk KAN Members (incl. institutional partners)
3. Risk KAN Working Groups, and
4. Risk KAN Secretariat

2.2. Risk KAN Steering Committee (SC)

2.2.1 Definition Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Risk KAN Steering Committee

Core tasks of the Steering Committee will be to explore, develop and review a long-term vision for the Risk KAN and its implementation, including supporting mechanisms for Risk KAN activities, assess and approve proposals for Working Groups, make recommendations to guide further actions of the Risk KAN and related activities of sponsoring programmes and partners.

The Risk KAN Steering Committee aims to

- Formulate and review the concept, scope and scientific/research agendas for the Risk KAN and update the vision document and science plan;
- Establish strategies for (1) stakeholder engagement, (2) resource identification, (3) continuous engagement (e.g., identification of contact points) with scientific partners. This is to be done in consultation with the sponsoring programmes and partners including ISC, to maintain and engage a wide international community including researchers, research users, donors, practitioners, and beneficiaries;
- Assess and approve proposals for Risk KAN Working Groups, monitor and support their activities with respect to relevance to the Risk KAN scope and aims;
- Review and provide input to the ongoing and proposed activities for the Risk KAN informed by the research agendas of ISC, Future Earth, IRDR, WCRP, WWRP and other supporting organizations or partners;
- Make recommendations to guide further actions of the Risk KAN and related activities of sponsoring programmes and partners;
- Explore, facilitate and develop funding proposals in communication with potential partners and sponsors (national research councils, international development, research donors etc.) to identify necessary resources for Risk KAN implementation, in coordination with sponsoring programmes;
- Develop and review an outreach strategy, in accordance with a roadmap for partner engagement.

2.2.2. Steering Committee Composition

In principle, around 22 Steering Committee members who represent different regions, disciplines and sectors, in line with the mission of the Risk KAN, form the SC. The SC should aim for a balanced representation of geographies, disciplines, and gender.

The Steering Committee is composed by Risk KAN Working Group representatives and elected members (see 2.2.3.2.). While the majority of SC members will be expected to demonstrate a track record of international leadership in disaster and/or systemic risk, development, climate or weather sciences through e.g., fundraising, publications or taking management or administrative responsibility, a minimum of two positions will be reserved for junior scholars, PhD's, PostDocs or young professionals with five years or less work experience.

In addition, each sponsoring body can nominate one ex-officio Steering Committee member.

2.2.3. Steering Committee Structure

2.2.3.1 The SC members select/appoint/approve a chair and up to three SC members who serve as co-chairs. These are elected positions, as are all other positions, with chairs serving on different rotation schedules (see below). Diversity in terms of gender, expertise and regions should be considered. The chair is convening SC meetings and coordinating the SC activities, with support by co-chairs. Tasks will be agreed among co-chairs on a case-by-case basis.

2.2.3.2 Appointment and Tenure: New SC members are nominated by the Risk KAN Working Groups (each Risk KAN WG can nominate one of its members to represent the WG in the SC), by the supporting programmes and/or the Risk KAN community members or apply for the SC, and voted on by Risk KAN SC members based on their expertise/organization/professional standing. In addition, each sponsoring body can nominate one ex-officio Steering Committee member.

Appointments of SC members are decided through the following steps:

1. Call for Expression of interest via Future Earth, IRDR, WCRP, WWRP and, via the Risk KAN emailing list and webpage.
2. Selection of candidates by the Steering Committee.
3. Inquiry to the selected new candidates for willingness to serve as Officers.
4. Nomination of candidates by the Steering Committee.

Steering Committee members hold 3-year terms. Membership in the SC shall terminate upon the occurrence of the following:

- A. Resignation.
- B. Failure to contribute to SC activities over the course of a full calendar year.
- C. After the end of the 3-year term.

If a SC membership is terminated before the 3-year terms ends, the successor will be filled upon suggestion and vote by the SC members without an open call. An open call can be initiated if needed. Balances in gender, geography and disciplines will be kept.

2.2.3. Renewals: Members of the SC may run for a second term, but no member may serve more than 6 years. Instead, they can become, once there is an Advisory Group entity, members of the Advisory Group.

2.2.4. Steering Committee Member Duties: Develop research focus areas, identify opportunities, support research and action, represent the Risk KAN e.g., during conferences, workshops, and other external events, develop cross-cutting processes and activities, propose and approve projects and sub-committees, develop a strategy for the Risk KAN, support funding applications, contribute to the SC's decision making and managing Risk KANs potential own budget, conduct outreach, funding applications, and governance. In addition, the SC members will be responsible for representing the Risk KAN within Future Earth, IRDR, WCRP and WWRP wide events.

SC membership is voluntary and it is generally understood that no reward or compensation for dedicated time and resources is expected. A limited level of support may be available to facilitate attendance at face-to-face SC meetings with priority for early career and low-income country members. All SC members are encouraged to identify funding and resources for contributing activities.

2.2.5: Steering Committee Chair and Co-chair Duties: In addition to the duties listed for regular members of the SC, co-chairs will support the chair in bringing the Risk KAN forward by convening, preparing, chairing regular SC meetings, manage SC voting and decision making, also about potential Risk KAN budgets, shaping the Risk KAN's contribution to international events, supporting and approving the Risk KAN's participation, submitting an annual short report with institutional partners (this depends on the type of partnership), ISC and the four programmes Future Earth, IRDR, WCRP, WWRP.

2.2.6. Steering Committee members agree that that their photo (sent by the respective SC member or taken from their professional webpage), short CV bio and link to professional webpage will be displayed on Risk KAN webpage.

2.3. Risk KAN Members (incl. institutional partners)

2.3.1 Definition

A wider group of individual (non-)experts and institutional partners (see below) who contribute, follow, help and promote shape the Risk KAN's activities. The members contribute to the Risk KAN by proposing, sharing, and participating in activities, Working Groups (see below), sharing data and information, contributing to joint research activities and other actions.

An institutional partner can be an international organization, institution, cooperation, etc. that contributes directly or indirectly from an institutional standpoint to one or more key products, projects, and/or convening in line with the vision and mission of the Risk KAN.

2.3.2 Individuals and institutional partners wishing to join the Risk KAN can sign up using a standardized form via the Risk KAN webpage indicating their name, email, affiliation and country. They will be granted a Risk KAN membership, and only in exceptional cases of misconduct or undermining the goals of the Risk KAN, members can be excluded by 2/3 majority vote of the SC.

2.4. Risk KAN Working Groups

2.4.1. The aims of Working Groups are to conceptualize cutting edge research agendas, provide syntheses and perspectives on specific sets of topics, to organize events, to identify stakeholders and collaborators and means to engage them, and to develop, if relevant, fundraising strategies for the Working Group (WG) and governance principles in consultation with stakeholders.

2.4.2. Working Groups can be suggested by any Risk KAN member, and will be approved by the SC based on voting as described below.

2.4.3. Working Groups should strive for geographical, stakeholder, and gender diversity unless specified otherwise in line with the objective of the specific WG and agreed by the SC.

2.4.4. The Working Groups nominate a representative for the Risk KAN SC, provide a one-page description of the WG (including title, core members, scope and aims) for the Risk KAN webpage, update the SC on at least a yearly basis, contribute with contents to the Risk KAN webpage and for presentations and reports upon demand.

2.4.5. Working Groups are encouraged to establish their own mailing lists for communication using the Risk KAN listserv managing tool. Also Working Groups can develop and operate according to their own procedures, as they are mostly formulated through the community's bottom-up initiatives. Up to 3 WG leads per group can participate in the regular SC meeting with an advisory and supporting role.

2.5. Risk KAN Office

The Risk KAN Office has the following roles:

- Prepare & convene Risk KAN SC meetings
- Support Risk KAN SC
- Act as a point of contact (internal and external and to ISC, Future Earth, IRDR, WCRP, WWRP contacts)
- Develop and maintain the Risk KAN webpage
- Support Risk KAN activities and outreach

3. Voting

3.1. ToR Risk KAN Steering Committee

i. Overall decisions within SC (tasks etc.)

- Overall decisions within the Risk KAN SC should be consensus-based, firmly depending on volunteerism and, seeking volunteers for tasks is one important role of the SC.
- If no consensus can be reached, concrete decisions are based on simple majority;

ii. Election SC Chair and co-chairs

- Simple majority for approval
- 2/3 majority for dismissal

iii. Decisions of SC regarding Working Groups (WG)

- Simple majority for approval of a WG; 2/3 majority for dismissal of a WG

iv. Endorsement of projects and initiatives

- Simple majority for approval; 2/3 majority for dismissal

v. *Change of ToR*

These ToR is designed to be adaptive and a “living” ToR. In particular, new procedures can be suggested by any SC member and approved by simple majority. Change of existing procedures require 2/3 majority. The absence of any response by SC members to a written request (including one reminder) via email within 4 weeks will be considered as tacit consent.