

Future Earth Global Secretariat Hub

Terms of Reference

Future Earth Global Secretariat Hubs¹ constitute the distributed Future Earth Secretariat. The Secretariat Hubs, led by Global Secretariat Hub Directors, and the Global Coordination Hub, led by the Future Earth Executive Director, work as a single unit to deliver the key functions of the Future Earth Secretariat. The funding and hosting institutions of the Global Secretariat Hubs and the Global Coordination Hub 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.

Global Secretariat Hubs also promote, coordinate and advance Future Earth work within their country or region. For example, they coordinate Future Earth global or regional research projects and initiatives, support the production of synthesis products, build capacity and expand the reach of Future Earth's national, regional and global networks.

Staffing and management:

- A full-time Global Secretariat Hub Director, who reports to the governing body of the Global Secretariat Hub. The Global Secretariat Hub Director also serves on the Future Earth Directors Council (see below).
- At least one other full-time staff member (FTE; the position can also be split between two or more part-time staff members) that contribute(s) to the global functions of the Future Earth Secretariat. Global Secretariat Hubs are encouraged to hire more staff and grow their operations.
- A Global Secretariat Hub Governance Structure, functioning either as a Governing Board or Advisory Board, overseeing the work of the Global Secretariat Hub (not mandatory, but recommended). The board should be composed of key national sustainability research leaders and managed by the Global Secretariat Hub Director.

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

- Support to Global Secretariat functions, including:
 - Contributions to the development of Future Earth strategy, approved by the Assembly.
 - Contributions to the Future Earth Secretariat's global functions, including Facilitating Research and Innovation; Coordination and Operations/Finance; Supporting Networks and Regions; Communications and Engagement.
 - Contributions to engagement with national and international science-policy processes, fundraising and partnership management.
- Support to global research networks of Future Earth, including:
 - Promoting outcomes, and facilitating synthesis and integration within and beyond the Future Earth networks.
 - Securing funding opportunities for research, science-policy initiatives, collaborations and other global research network activities.
- Support to national and regional work in collaboration with national structures, including:
 - Coordination of national and/or regional work within their region.

¹ The term "Global Secretariat Hub" is internal to Future Earth. These Hubs would be known externally as "Future Earth Secretariat Hub Stockholm / Sweden", or "Future Earth Secretariat Hub Tokyo / Japan".

- Promotion and advancement of sustainability science within their country / region.
- Support to global operations led by the Global Coordination Hub, including:
 - Support management of the Future Earth governance system (Assembly and the Governing Council) and external representation.
 - Contribute to the management of Future Earth resources and the Future Earth Core Fund.
 - Contribute to the management of program evaluation, and coordination of advancement efforts.

Global Secretariat Hubs are only required to support a specific subset of the Secretariat functions and operations, negotiated with the Global Coordination Hub and funders, and defined through the iterative Global Secretariat Hub application process. Activities of the Global Secretariat Hubs are guided by the Governing Council. This negotiation process is in place to ensure that critical functions and processes are covered by the collective set of Global Secretariat Hubs.

All funders of the Global Secretariat Hub and the Global Coordination Hub will be 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.

Hosting and resourcing arrangements:

- Global Secretariat Hubs are free to establish consortium funding models involving multiple revenue sources and spanning multiple countries in a region.
- Support should include a fixed annual contribution from the Global Secretariat Hubs to the Core fund including any financial or in-kind support for any International Program Offices (IPOs) of the Future Earth Global Research Networks within their country or region. This fund supports some of the Global Coordination Hub key functions, and the Global Research Networks through annual block grants and funding for collaborative activities and initiatives.
- The use of any financial or in-kind contributions to the Core Fund should be at the discretion of the Future Earth Directors Council and Governing Council. The use of the Core Fund contributions will be transparent and follow clear criteria, proposed by the Future Earth Implementation Team and approved by the Governing Council.
- The Global Secretariat Hubs should work with the IPOs to leverage funding for the IPOs within their country or region.
- The Global Secretariat Hubs will agree to transparent accountability and reporting arrangements, defined by the Implementation Team and approved by the Governing Council.
- All Global Secretariat Hubs and the Secretariat Global Coordination Hub will agree to a universal data policy approved by the Governing Council.

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.

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.

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 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.

Applications are reviewed by an external review committee (see below), following the review criteria.. The application and review process will be iterative, and include an interview / Q+A meeting of the applicants with the review committee. This process has been designed to allow 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 Secretariat Hubs, which will then be approved by the Governing Council and/or ratified by the Future Earth Assembly latest by July 2021.

ANNEX B.

Review Committee:

The review committee will consist 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. All members of the review committee will 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 will be nominated by the Future Earth Community. Based on nominations, the Implementation Team will propose a list of candidates to the Governing Council, which will then make the final selection and approve committee members in the month of February 2021. Nominated review committee members will be asked to 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 will also review 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.