Overview of the new Future Earth Governance Structure

Information for the First Assembly meeting

Future Earth is establishing its new governance structure. This document provides a concise overview and summarizes the most important points for the community.

The content of this document is drawn from the Terms of Reference for the Future Earth Assembly and Governing Council, available here. This term of reference has been through a consultation process with the entire Future Earth community.

1. New Governance Structure of Future Earth

The new Governance Structure of Future Earth consists of an Assembly and an expanded Governing Council, reflecting the transition to a more inclusive and diverse organization driven by its community (Figure 1). This replaces the current structure, composed of a Governing Council and an Advisory Committee to, respectively, oversee and support the work of the Global Secretariat.

The Assembly is an inclusive body representing the full scope of the Future Earth community (mostly scientific). It provides a platform for broad consultation and enables the full community to participate in the development of Future Earth core agenda, strategies, activities and structures through an annual gathering. It is also the body that elects the Governing Council, and makes regular recommendations to it.

The Governing Council is the elected, operational decision-making body working on behalf of the Assembly. The Governing Council oversees the strategic and scientific direction of Future Earth and supports timely decision processes to advance Future Earth’s agenda, strategies, activities and structures. It meets at least quarterly and reports to the Assembly each year during the Assembly meeting.

2. Composition of the Future Earth Assembly

All Future Earth community groups are represented in the Assembly and allocated (voting) seats as follows:

(2) from each Global Research Network entity (GRPs and KANs)
(2) from each National and Subnational Committee / Entity (NC)
(2) from each Regional Committee / Entity
(2) from each Global Secretariat Hub Board / Funders
(10) from Early Career Researchers Network of Networks (ECR NoN)
(10) representatives at-large from Low and Middle Income Countries
(1) From each Partner Organization

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1 Low and Middle Income Countries (LIC-MIC): the LIC & MIC classification is according to the prior year compared to the election year, as listed by the World Bank
The Future Earth Executive Director, Global Secretariat Hub Directors, Governing Council Members and 1 representative from each Custodian Organization (ISC, UNESCO, UNEP and Belmont Forum) are all non-voting members of the Assembly.

The Assembly elects 2 co-chairs who serve staggered, 3-year terms.

3. Composition of the Governing Council

The Governing Council consists of 17 voting members, serving staggered, 3-year terms, renewable once. The Governing Council’s members are elected by their respective Assembly groups with the following allocation of seats:

(3) from the Global Research Networks Group (representing all GRPs and KANs)
(3) from the National and Subnational Committees / Entities and Regional Committees / Entities Groups
(5) from the Global Secretariat Hub Boards / Funders Group
(3) Early Career Researchers\(^2\), at-large
(3) representatives at-large from Low Income Countries - Middle Income Countries

One representative from each Custodian Organization, the Future Earth Executive Director and the Global Secretariat Hub Directors are all non-voting members of the Governing Council.

4. Establishment of the Assembly

In order to form the Assembly, each Future Earth entity (e.g. a single National Committee, a single Global Research Network, etc.) is asked to select representatives who will serve for 3-year terms, according to the allocated seats (section 2 & figure 1).

Each Future Earth entity decides on how to select its representatives. Please help us create a diverse, inclusive and representative Assembly by considering gender, discipline and geographic diversity in your process.

In order to establish the Assembly, each entity listed in section 2 is requested to send its representatives’ information through this form before 30 July 2021. You can also send an email to assembly@futureearth.org if you need any clarification about this request.

As representatives from Low and Middle Income Countries do not form a specific Future Earth entity or group, nominations of sustainability experts by anyone from LIC-MIC (Future Earth members and beyond) are open through this form. A selection committee, drawn from Future Earth community members from these countries, will then select 10 representatives for this group and ensure a diverse representativity in gender, geographical location and discipline or field of work.

\(^2\) Early career is anyone whose career has started within the last 10 years and who is connected to sustainability. This includes researchers who have received their Bachelor’s or Master’s qualification within the last 10 years or their PhD within the last six years, as well as professionals working at the interface of society, policy, practice, and research.
5. **Election of Governing Council members**

The Future Earth Secretariat will issue a call for nominations to the Governing Council on August 2\(^{nd}\) 2021. Any member from the Future Earth community (Assembly member or not\(^3\)) is invited to apply. Assembly members will be encouraged to share the call with their respective group/entity and to propose names. From these nominations, each Future Earth group (GRN, NC & RC etc.) will elect its representatives to the Governing Council on September 30, 2021 (Day 2) of the Assembly meeting.

The 3 at-large seats for sustainability experts from LIC-MIC and for ECRs will be voted upon by all Assembly members who are from and working within a LIC/MIC country or are ECR.

6. **Assembly meetings**

The first Assembly meeting will be held online on 29 and 30 September 2021.

The agenda for 30 September will be dedicated to the election for Governing Council and is only for voting members of the Assembly who are electing Governing Council's members (GRN, NC & RC, ECR, LIC-MIC, Global Hubs Boards).

The Assembly meetings will take place each year, whenever possible, in conjunction with the Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress (SRI).

7. **Timeline and Milestones for the first Assembly meeting**

- **Deadline for sending Assembly representatives’ information**: 30 July
- **Opening of the call for nominations to the Governing Council**: 2 August
- **Deadline for Governing Council nominations**: 10 September
- **First Assembly meeting, and Governing Council first election**: 29-30 September

\(^3\) If a newly elected Governing Council member is a current Assembly member, the Governing Council member transfers to a non-voting ex-officio Assembly member as soon as s/he becomes a Governing Council member. Its entity would therefore be invited to nominate a new representative to the Assembly.
Figure 1. Future Earth New Governance Structure

Legend

ECR: Early Career Researchers
FE ED: Future Earth Executive Director
GC: Governing Council
GRN: Global Research Network
GSH: Global Secretariat Hub
GSHD: Global Secretariat Hub Director
LIC-MIC: Lower and Middle Income Countries
NC: National and Subnational Committee/Entity
RC: Regional Committee/Entity

Number of seats per entity within the group
Number of seats per group
Voting members
Non-voting members