

INSTRUCTIONS

Below is a first draft of the **Guidelines on Producing Terms of Reference for WCRP Core Activities**. We welcome your comments.

Please note that anything related to Membership that is applicable to all Bodies should be included in the [Guidelines on Membership of WCRP Bodies](#), rather than in point 3 below, to avoid duplication. These Membership Guidelines will be updated at a later stage.

The **WCRP Procedural Terms and Definitions** (below) will become an online resource.

If you have comments on this document, please fill out the following form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/DNTnDqUVJh>

World Climate Research Programme
Guidelines on Producing Terms of Reference for WCRP Core Activities

8 May 2025, Draft v2

Please use the following guidelines when producing Terms of Reference (ToR) for WCRP Bodies, including the steering groups¹ of the WCRP Core Projects, Lighthouse Activities, Academy, and any other Body convened by the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC), regardless of its size and when the duration of its mandate exceeds six months.

Please refer to **WCRP Procedural Terms and Definitions** (below) for definitions of terms used in this document.

The ToR should outline the following terms of a WCRP Body:

1. **Purpose** – The objectives, scope, and expected outputs/outcomes/products of the work of the Body should be listed. The intention to produce any reports or plans (scientific/strategic/implementation) and how regularly these should be updated, if applicable, should be noted.
2. **Governance** – Which governing body approves the membership and the budget of the Body. In the case of Bodies overseen by more than one entity, how is this co-sponsorship organized.
3. **Membership** – The number of members (can be a set number or a range) and any special requirements for Membership should be outlined. The [Guidelines on Membership of WCRP Bodies](#)² outlines responsibilities, membership, length of appointment, and size and diversity of WCRP bodies. If there are different types of Membership (regular member, *ex-officio* member, emeritus members, etc.), these should be listed. Detailed procedures for the nomination, review and appointment of new members (including Chair/Co-Chair/Vice Chair positions) and for voting should also be included.
4. **Duties and Responsibilities of Members** – Any duties and responsibilities that are additional to those outlined in the [Guidelines on Membership of WCRP Bodies](#) should be listed. How often the Body is expected to meet, both in person and virtually, should be detailed.

¹ Usually called either a 'Steering Group' or a 'Scientific Steering Group.'

² Duplication of the content of the [Guidelines on Membership of WCRP Bodies](#) should be avoided, as the text may be periodically updated. When the Guidelines on Membership of WCRP Bodies and a ToR are not in agreement, the text in the Guidelines on Membership of WCRP Bodies will prevail unless the difference has been approved by the JSC.

5. **Subsidiary Bodies** – If the Body will set up subsidiary bodies, this should be noted and the duration and mechanisms for overseeing these subsidiary bodies should be outlined.
6. **Liaisons** – If the Body will have formal liaison roles with other bodies, these should be listed.
7. **Duration** – The formation and dissolution dates of the Body should be listed. If there is no dissolution date provided, the Body will remain in place until the WCRP JSC provides written notice of the dissolution date to the Chairs (and any related Office) of the Body.
8. **Resources** – The resources, including financial and in-kind support, that the Body will receive to do the work should be detailed.³ If the Body will be supported by the WCRP Secretariat, an International Project Office, or a Support Unit, this should be mentioned.
9. **Code of Conduct** – It must be noted that all WCRP Body members must adhere to the [WCRP Code of Conduct](#) at all times.
10. **Carbon Footprint** – Any measures undertaken by the Body to adhere to the [Guidelines on reducing carbon emissions from travel](#) should be listed.
11. **Terminology** – Definitions of any special terms that are particular to the activity should be defined. Note that the List of **WCRP Procedural Terms and Definitions** (below) contains definitions of common terms and these do not need to be redefined.
12. **Approval of the ToR** – The ToR must be approved by the JSC. The date that the JSC approves the ToR should be listed in the document and it should be published on the JSC website.

³ The exact amount of financial support may be known, or it may fluctuate from year to year. In the latter case, the main mechanisms for obtaining support should be listed.

World Climate Research Programme

WCRP Procedural Terms and Definitions

8 May 2025, Draft v2

- **Body** – A group of people with a specific purpose or function.
- **Chair** – The leader of a body, usually elected by the members of the body.
- **Co-Chair** – Where there are two or more chairs of a body, they are all equal and known as co-chairs.
- **Core Activities** – WCRP Core Projects, Lighthouse Activities and the Academy
- **Core Projects** – Perpetual research communities that operate a programme of work, with many projects, panels and activities, on one of more research areas.
- **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 [body], or ii) create an unfair advantage for any person or organisation. 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](#)]
- **Emeritus member** – A former member of a body who retains an honorary membership of the body in an advisory capacity. Emeritus members do not vote. The duration and rules related to this type of membership must be stipulated in the Terms of Reference of the governing body concerned.
- **Ex-officio member** – A member of a body by virtue of occupying an existing position within another organization/body of importance or relevance to the body. Membership is by virtue of the position the individual holds and the is not by election or appointment of the individual. Ex-officio members do not vote. The duration and rules related to this type of membership must be stipulated in the Terms of Reference of the governing body concerned.
- **International (Project) Office (IPO)** – An office set up to support a WCRP Core Project or, when approved by the JSC, the work of any other body. IPOs generally support large projects.
- **Joint Scientific Committee (JSC)** – The highest-level committee of WCRP.
- **JSC Officers** – The WCRP JSC Chair, Vice Chair and three other JSC Members, all elected by JSC Members.

- **Liaison** - A person who acts as a link to assist communication or cooperation between two or more bodies, usually having membership of one of those bodies.
- **Lighthouse Activities** – Limited lifetime activities that aim to make critical near-term progress towards meeting WCRP’s strategic priorities.
- **Regular Member** – A member of a body with voting rights.
- (Scientific) Steering Group – The body that directs and is responsible for delivering the work of an activity.
- **Support Unit** – An office set up to support the work of any WCRP body. Support Units usually support administration, logistics, capacity development and
- **Task Team** – A subsidiary body that is convened to accomplish a specific task/set of tasks within the planned program of work of a body.
- **Tiger Team** – Another name for a Task Team.
- **Vice Chair** – The vice chair supports the chair of a body and is usually elected by the members of the body.
- **Working Group** – A subsidiary body that is convened to study and report on a particular work package within the planned program of work of a body.