

Calls for proposals to host the International Project Office (IPO) of the Regional Information for Society (RifS) Core Project

This is a call for applications to host an International Project Office (IPO) in support of the Regional Information for Society (RifS) Core Project of the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP).

The RifS Core Project¹ represents an exciting new dimension to WCRP activities that leverages the work of existing Core Projects² and Lighthouse Activities³, expands their scope of influence, and coordinates the new research required to provide actionable climate information at the regional scale.

The focus of RifS is to grow the foundations for effective links between climate research and the information needs of society. This builds on the core research principles of providing actionable information through integrating the best available science that is aligned with the scales of relevance to society's decision contexts, and that is enabled within a co-creation/co-production framework. The activities of RifS will adaptively respond over time to the changing needs of society.

The RifS Core Project will address the challenges of how to reconcile and integrate multiple lines of climate information (distillation) to produce context-relevant knowledge for decision makers. It will also help foster the dialogue with stakeholders to incorporate methods of context-relevant co-design and co-development of climate information, including storylines (narratives), and their effective communication.

A key scientific pillar in this new Core Project is the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX), which will continue to advance and coordinate the science and application of regional climate downscaling. CORDEX activities are coordinated by the CORDEX IPO, hosted by the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI). Along with contributions from other WCRP activities this will provide RifS with the necessary tools to advance the understanding of primary climate drivers of risk for specific sectors on multiple temporal and spatial scales, and their relation to regional climate change and variability. It is expected that the RifS IPO and the CORDEX IPO will work closely together within the wider RifS framework.

The RifS IPO's role will be to support this work on all related levels in close cooperation with the RifS co-chairs and Scientific Steering Group, the WCRP leadership, and the WCRP Secretariat in Geneva.

¹ Officially approved at the Joint Scientific Committee (JSC) session of WCRP in November 2020

² <https://www.wcrp-climate.org/core-projects>

³ <https://www.wcrp-climate.org/lha-overview>

Hosting the RfS International Project Office (IPO)

The RfS IPO will consist of a Director and other additional staff as needed. To support the vision, mission and activities related to RfS, the Host Institution is expected to provide the funds required to support and run the IPO from its inception. The Host institution will work jointly with WCRP's Joint Scientific Committee (JSC), the WCRP Secretariat and RfS co-chairs to establish an administrative plan that will ensure that the appropriate governance is in place, including required IPO lines of authority, and management and reporting policies.

Benefits to the Host Institution

The Host Institution will significantly benefit from hosting the RfS IPO by having a close interaction with this critical domain of research in support of climate information for society. In addition, the host institution will have the benefit of:

- Enhancing their international profile through clear identification with the WCRP international community,
- Association and participation with a range of international meetings, workshops, and regional activities,
- Collaboration with other networks including those of early career scientists.

Further, development of an active scientific partnership between RfS and scientists at the Host Institution is encouraged, with the aim of increased international exposure and scientific publications.

Expected qualifications of the Host Institution

Organizations submitting a Proposal to host a RfS IPO must fulfil the requirements outlined below and have the qualifications to cover the Terms of Reference detailed in ANNEX 1:

- Willingness and ability to host an IPO of WCRP, providing secretariat, administrative, financial, technical, and scientific support to RfS.
- Commitment to financially support the IPO for at least 5 (five) years, and demonstrable ability to secure funding to support additional operations and activities.
- Ability to attract high level candidates for the post of Director through open, international recruitment, in consultation and mutual approval with the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee, the WCRP Secretariat and the RfS co-chairs. The recruitment of other professional office staff will be delegated to the Project Office once the Director is appointed to the role.
- Ability to provide office space and IT resources for an operational secretariat.
- Technical capacity to organize virtual and physical meetings and make travel arrangements for participants from nations and agencies around the world.

Minimum requirements of a Proposal

All proposals must be backed by a commitment for at least 5 (five) years to include the following:

- Salaries for a Director, one Programme Officer and one Science/Communication Officer positions (3 full-time equivalent)
- Dedicated administrative support for the office
- Associated office space and necessary facilities
- Operating costs for communication and outreach
- Provision of IT resources for IPO staff
- Annual activity budget to support travel and subsistence expenses of RIFS IPO staff

Equivalent combinations of personnel and financial resources are allowed to a certain extent. Offers beyond the above requirements, such as additional staffing, particularly for website design and development, additional activity funds, and longer commitments will enhance the chances of final selection.

We will also give full consideration to proposals which partially meet the above requirements or which have not yet received a complete funding commitment by the deadline, but this must be clearly stated in the proposal and will be evaluated accordingly. We recommend proposers provide regular updates on progress of pending funding commitments after the submission.

All financial amounts shall be expressed in local currencies and in US dollars (USD) with a clear indication of exchange rates applied at the time of submission and include all applicable overheads.

Selection Process

WCRP will establish a Selection Committee to assess the Proposals with due consideration of any potential conflicts of interest. The Selection Committee will be chaired by the WCRP JSC Chair and will include the WCRP JSC Vice-Chair, RIFS Co-chairs and a WCRP Secretariat representative.

The Selection Committee might come back to individual proponents for clarification, questions and/or confirmations of commitments during the selection process. If a proposal is ultimately accepted, detailed terms of the contract will be negotiated with the selected host institution and will be established through a Memorandum of Understanding between the host institution and the World Meteorological Organization.

Timeline

Call for Proposals - **October 2021**

Submission deadline - **31st March 2022**

Enquiries, negotiation and notification selection - **June 2022**

Expected start of the RIFS Project Office - **September 2022**

Proposals that cannot meet the submission deadline may still be accepted after the deadline if there are justifiable reasons (such as delays in institutional approval) but the intent to submit and reasons for delay should be provided in advance. Late bids will only be considered if no other suitable bid is identified and will be treated on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the Selection Committee.

Proposals must remain valid for a period of at least 180 days after the submission deadline. However, a submitting organization may withdraw its proposal by sending a written notification.

Content of Proposals

Proposals shall address all points in ANNEX 2 and be forwarded by email to Nico Caltabiano (avazcaltabiano@wmo.int) in the WCRP Secretariat as a single pdf document. The size of the document shall not exceed 15 Mb nor 20 pages.

Additional supporting materials, brochures, letters of endorsement, *etc.* may be forwarded in separate emails in the same way.

Communication and enquiries related to this call

All communication, material and enquiries regarding this call shall be directed in English to Nico Caltabiano (avazcaltabiano@wmo.int) in the WCRP Secretariat. Unless stated otherwise, enquiries and replies will be posted publicly on the call web page for the benefit of all interested parties.

Thank you for your interest in WCRP!

ANNEX 1 - Terms of Reference - RIFS International Project Office

1. *The RIFS IPO consists of a Director, qualified professionals and support staff. The RIFS IPO will work closely and under the direction of the RIFS Scientific Steering Group, with oversight from the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC) and the support of the WCRP Secretariat in Geneva.*
2. *The RIFS IPO is located in ##### (city, country) and hosted by ##### (institution).*
3. *The Director of the RIFS IPO shall report to the RIFS SSG for the overall activities to be developed.*
4. *The Director of the RIFS IPO shall report to its host institution for administrative matters.*
5. *The primary function of the RIFS IPO is to provide overall support to planning and implementation of RIFS priorities, infrastructure and overall governance, to ensure appropriate international coordination and communication between RIFS and the other WCRP Core Projects and Lighthouse Activities (LHAs), and other international programmes.*
6. *In close consultation with the RIFS SSG, the RIFS IPO will take due consideration of the outcomes of RIFS meetings to develop and coordinate the implementation of RIFS activities, in close collaboration with the CORDEX IPO.*
7. *The RIFS IPO supports the work of RIFS in the coordination, organizational, communication, and dissemination aspects of RIFS. This includes the following responsibilities:*
 - a. *To provide secretariat, administrative, financial, technical and scientific support to the RIFS SSG and projects under RIFS;*
 - b. *To work with the RIFS SSG on the coordination and planning of RIFS activities, in close liaison with the CORDEX IPO;*
 - c. *To lead the logistical organization of relevant sessions, meetings, workshops, conferences, training sessions, teleconferences and other activities relevant to RIFS;*
 - d. *To prepare corresponding reports, correspondence and publications;*
 - e. *To coordinate associated communication and outreach, including newsletters;*
 - f. *To provide oversight, update maintenance of associated web pages;*
 - g. *To assist in mobilizing funds for RIFS activities;*
 - h. *To secure resources for RIFS IPO staff and operations;*
 - i. *To promote recruiting secondments to join the RIFS IPO;*

ANNEX 2 - Expressions of Interest template (selection criteria weights in %)

1. Cover page with full name and contact details of legal representative of organization submitting the proposal (1 page)
2. Executive summary (max 1 page)
3. Vision and strategy for the *RifS* Project Office (max 1 page) – 10%
4. Host institution (max 3 pages) – 20%
 - a) Full address
 - b) Duration of commitment
 - c) Employees benefits (work permits for foreigners, taxation, wages, health coverage, etc)
 - d) Administrative capacity to run the office
 - e) Area and number of offices
 - f) Meeting rooms (area, capacity, teleconference)
 - g) Catering service and/or nearby restaurants
 - h) Visitor's support (travel, accommodation, visa, local transport, help-desk)
 - i) IT (hardware, software, internet bandwidth, web site, conference call tools)
 - j) Accommodation options nearby (location, rooms, average cost and negotiated rates)
 - k) Transport (International access, local transports)
5. *RifS* relevance of the host institution (max 2 pages) - 10%
 - a) Experience of current *RifS*-related activities
 - b) Experience in hosting and managing large science programmes
 - c) Local ecosystem relevance
 - d) Potential to contribute to *RifS* outreach
6. Benefits for the host institution (max 2 pages) - 10%
 - a) International exposure
 - b) Scientific added-value
 - c) Financial leveraging potential
 - d) Partnerships
7. Staffing plan commitment (max 3 pages) - 30%
 - a) Director, programme officer, science communication officer and any other staff
 - b) Dedicated or in-kind administrative support
 - c) Seconded experts (full-time equivalent, expertise, role)
 - d) Fluency in English and other WMO languages (well, moderate, poor)
8. Operating funding commitment (max 3 pages) - 20%
 - a) Annual budget for office facilities and operations
 - b) Annual budget for *RifS* activities (meetings and travel - including office staff)
9. Free section with relevant material (max 4 pages)