



Preamble

The worldwide growth of support for research has presented an opportunity for countries large and small to work in concert across national borders. Cooperation and collaboration can enhance the quality of science and research, avoid unnecessary duplication, provide economies of scale, and address issues that can only be solved by working together. Heads of research councils (HORCs) have a responsibility to meet these objectives on behalf of the research community. It is with that in mind that we join together to establish the Global Research Council (GRC) as an informal organisation pledged to find mutually acceptable paths to greater international research collaboration.

Article 1

Purpose

1.1 The intended purposes of the GRC are:

- a. To improve communication and cooperation between national research councils;
- b. To promote the sharing of data and best practices for high-quality research cooperation;
- c. To provide a forum for regular meetings of the heads of research councils;
- d. To respond to opportunities and to address issues of common concern in the support of research;
- e. To be a resource for those institutions wishing to build and sustain a world-class research landscape;
- f. To explore mechanisms that support the global science enterprise and the worldwide research community, and finally
- g. To remain focused and reach decisions based on scientific merit.

1.2 The GRC will act in accordance with the following core principles and understandings:

- a. The GRC will remain a voluntary and “virtual” organisation with no permanent secretariat and no membership dues or costs.
- b. The participants are expected to pay all costs associated with their participation with GRC activities subject to the availability of funds.
- c. The GRC is not a legal entity and this document does not create binding obligations under international law.
- d. The participants are expected to respect each other’s political frameworks.
- e. The participants engaging in the GRC governance are expected to guarantee politically impartial procedures.
- f. Participants at GRC events and activities are expected to comply with the GRC Code of Conduct.

Article 2

Governance

Governing Board

- 2.1 The Governing Board shall be responsible for providing overall leadership to the GRC. Its responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:
- a. Developing the appropriate processes and identifying procedures required for all GRC activities.
 - b. Identifying priority work areas for GRC activities.
 - c. Determining the host countries for GRC Annual and Regional Meetings.
 - d. Determining the roles and responsibilities of the Chair, Vice Chairs and Executive Secretary.
 - e. Determining the Annual Meeting topics, based on the advice of the Programme Committee.
 - f. Amending the terms of this foundational document by a two-thirds vote of the twelve (12) Governing Board members.
- 2.2 It is anticipated that the Governing Board shall consist of twelve (12) heads of research councils, along with *ex officio* members, as provided in paragraph 2.7.
- 2.3 Nomination and selection of Governing Board members is the responsibility of each of the five world regions according to the following numbers:
- a. Three (3) from the Americas
 - b. Three (3) from Europe
 - c. Three (3) from the Asia-Pacific
 - d. Two (2) from Sub-Saharan Africa
 - e. One (1) from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
- 2.4 Governing Board members should lead organisations active in both Regional and Annual Meetings. They are expected to be fully representative of their region's interests.
- 2.5 Membership is expected to be for three (3) year terms with one-third of the membership rotating on an annual basis. Terms of service start immediately following the Annual Meeting. Members may serve consecutive terms.
- 2.6 In the case of a change in leadership, the new HORC succeeds his or her predecessor as a member of the Governing Board for the remainder of their predecessor's mandate.
- 2.7 Hosts of the next Annual Meeting, if not yet members of the Governing Board, shall be invited as additional, *ex officio* members with full voting rights, as soon as the decision for the Annual Meeting host is taken.
- 2.9 Ex-officio membership is for the duration of one (1) year or until the Annual Meeting has taken place. The Governing Board reserves the right to appoint additional *ex officio* members for a

- term not exceeding one year.
- 2.8 In exceptional cases and at its discretion, the Governing Board may invite observers to the proceedings.
- 2.9 The Governing Board is expected to meet on the day prior to the beginning of each Annual Meeting and virtually at least biannually.
- 2.10 The Governing Board is expected to reach decisions by a two-thirds vote.

Chair and Vice-Chairs

- 2.11 The Governing Board will elect one Chair and two Vice-Chairs from among its ordinary members.
- 2.12 The Chair and Vice-Chairs are expected to serve a two (2) years term. Vice-Chair terms will be staggered, where possible, to ensure consistency.
- 2.13 The Chair and Vice-Chairs will be appointed by secret ballot, to be held from within the Governing Board's members at its meeting preceding the Annual Meeting. A candidate will be deemed elected when they receive the highest number of votes in the first round. In the event of a tie, the current Chair will have the deciding vote.
- 2.14 There should be equitable representation of all five regions and a rotation should be considered when accepting nominations from candidates for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. The Chair and Vice-Chairs should be selected to reflect, over the years, the diversity of research councils worldwide.
- 2.15 Should there be no candidate nominated to be Chair or Vice-Chair, the Governing Board may vote to appoint any HORC they deem suitable, providing that person is heading a participant organisation of the GRC.
- 2.16 Should a Chair lose their HORC status while holding the position or choose to leave the position, the first Vice-Chair would assume the role until the next available election procedure for the Chair is undertaken. The first Vice-Chair is defined as the Vice-Chair who has been on the Governing Board for the longest duration.
- 2.17 Should one of the Vice-Chairs lose their HORC status or depart early, the other Vice-Chair will serve as the sole Vice-Chair until the next Annual Meeting, when a new Vice-Chair will be elected.
- 2.18 Should a situation arise where both Vice-Chair positions become vacant, the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Executive Support Group, will nominate a member of the Governing Board as replacement, based on longevity, taking into consideration Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles and geographical balance. The nomination would require approval by the Governing Board.

Executive Secretary

- 2.19 The Governing Board will appoint an Executive Secretary provided at no cost by a GRC participant organisation. The Executive Secretary should serve for a five (5) year term and should not serve two consecutive terms.
- 2.20 The Executive Secretary will be the main point of contact for participation outside of Meetings. They will be responsible for supervising the implementation of the Governing Board's recommendations, coordinating the GRC businesses, supporting the Governing Board and acting as a source of advice for Annual and Regional Meeting Hosts.

Executive Support Group

- 2.21 To meet the demands of continuity and transparency in its procedures, the Governing Board will establish an Executive Support Group (ESG).
- 2.22 The ESG is responsible for supporting the Executive Secretary in their responsibilities as defined above.
- 2.23 The ESG will consist of experienced senior-level officials from GRC participants and be representative of the five geographical regions of the GRC.
- 2.24 Membership shall be *ad personam* and should reflect, over the years, the diversity of research councils worldwide.
- 2.25 The ESG shall be co-chaired by one of its members and by the Executive Secretary, who will be a full member of the ESG *ex officio*.

Article 3

Other GRC Bodies

International Steering Committee

- 3.1 The Governing Board will also establish, annually, an International Steering Committee (ISC). It is understood that the composition and operation of the International Steering Committee will be as follows:
- a. Membership of the ISC is to include one nominee each from the host and co-host of the Annual Meeting and one nominee each from the host and co-host of the Regional Meetings.
 - b. The ISC will be chaired by the ESG co-Chairs.
 - c. The Executive Secretary and the co-Chairs of the Executive Support Group will be members of the ISC *ex officio* and with full voting rights.
 - d. The Chair of the Governing Board may also name any *ex officio* members to the ISC.

- 3.2 Responsibilities of the ISC include:
- a. Coordinating the hosting of Regional Meetings;
 - b. Contribute to the development of the agendas for the Regional Meetings;
 - c. Contribute to the development of potential outputs for consideration at the Annual Meeting;
 - d. Contribute to the development of the Annual Meeting Agenda;
 - e. Consolidating and endorsing the work products from the Regional Meetings;
 - f. Meeting – whether in-person or virtually – at least once a year.

Programme Committee

- 3.3 The Governing Board shall establish a Programme Committee.
- 3.4 The Programme Committee shall be responsible for considering topics for future Annual Meetings, as suggested by GRC participants. The Programme Committee will in turn provide recommendations to the Governing Board, for their approval.
- 3.5 The membership of the Programme Committee shall normally consist of no more than ten (10) individuals, including:
- a. Two to three (2-3) members of the Governing Board
 - b. Two to three (2-3) HORCs from among participants at the Annual Meeting
 - c. One to two (1-2) hosts of the next Annual Meeting and/or Regional Meeting hosts
 - d. The Executive Secretary
 - e. One ESG member (apart from the Executive Secretary).
- 3.6 The Executive Secretary is a permanent member of the Programme Committee.
- 3.7 The membership of the Programme Committee should reflect an appropriate balance in terms of geographical and gender representation.
- 3.8 The Programme Committee shall be chaired by one Governing Board member nominated to sit on the Programme Committee. The Chair is expected to serve a maximum of three (3) year term, or for the remainder of their term of office on the Governing Board (whichever is shorter).
- 3.9 Should a member be unable to continue their role on the Programme Committee, the Executive Secretary would discuss with the relevant body from which the member was nominated from to identify a suitable replacement, to be approved by the Governing Board.
- 3.10 The Programme Committee will generally work through email correspondence and meet as required virtually. Whenever possible (i.e. at Regional or Annual Meetings), an in-person meeting may be convened.

Working Groups

- 3.11 The Governing Board may decide to establish Working Groups upon recommendation of the

ESG to help develop specific areas of cooperation between GRC participants.

- 3.12 The proposed subject area of the Working Group shall be relevant across the majority of the GRC participants and identified as a key area of cooperation which needs to be addressed collectively and globally by the GRC participants.
- 3.13 The purpose of a Working Group is:
 - a. to discuss and promote sharing and exchange of best practices in a given subject area;
 - b. and to monitor, collect and analyse data, standards and policies in that area to inform GRC participants and help them reflect on their own standards and approaches.
- 3.14 A Working Group shall be given an initial one (1) year renewable mandate and should produce a detailed work programme outlining its activities and plans for the year ahead.
- 3.15 The membership of the Working Group shall consist of a group of experts working together on a specific subject area and is intended to be a forum for cooperation and sharing of knowledge, expertise and best practices.
- 3.16 The membership of the Working Group should reflect an appropriate balance in terms of geographical and gender representation.
- 3.17 The Working Group shall be chaired and co-chaired by representatives appointed among its members.
- 3.18 Should a member be unable to continue in their role in a Working Group, the Working Group's chair and co-chair would identify a suitable replacement, to be agreed by the members of the working group itself.
- 3.19 The Executive Secretary and Executive Support Group shall support the Working Group by ensuring efficient communication between the Annual and Regional Meeting hosts, GRC participants and the Governing Board.

Article 4

Annual Meeting and Regional Meetings

- 4.1 The GRC should involve all interested key players in public research funding and support worldwide. Accordingly, GRC participants are expected to actively take part in Annual and Regional meetings.

Annual Meeting

- 4.2 An Annual Meeting will normally be held in-person or virtually each year, where participants will discuss topics of mutual interest and adopt the statements and standards developed through the Regional Meetings, as well as endorse recommendations for follow-up activities to be implemented by participants within the GRC framework, as appropriate.

- 4.3 Participation in the Annual Meeting should be limited in number to allow for active discussions, while still being sufficiently representative of the world's research potential.
- 4.4 Accordingly, the Annual Meeting should bring together research councils from around the world with the following considerations:
- a. Each country should be represented by a maximum of two organisations.
 - b. Participants should be sufficiently representative of their national and subnational stakeholders, particularly those who cannot be accommodated at the Annual Meeting.
 - c. In order to assure adequate regional representation as well as transfer of knowledge, experiences and demands, organisations from developing research performing countries should also be invited and represented at the Annual Meeting.
 - d. The organisers may invite additional organisations for special purposes.
 - e. Only organisations which actively take part in the Regional Meetings should be invited to the Annual Meeting.
 - f. Participants should be public research funding organisations or similar publicly funded basic research organisations.
 - g. The Hosts should ensure that all participants are made aware of the GRC Code of Conduct.
- 4.5 Regional Meetings of the representatives of the five different regions will also be convened on the occasion of the Annual Meeting.
- 4.6 Any follow-up activities under the auspices of the GRC must be approved by the Governing Board.

Host Country—Annual Meeting

- 4.7 It is anticipated that each year the Governing Board will decide which organisation will host the GRC Annual Meeting, following an annual call for proposals. Successful proposals will be subject to the additional understandings:
- a. The co-hosts of the GRC Annual Meeting should be selected to reflect, over the years, the diversity of research councils worldwide.
 - b. The co-hosts of the GRC Annual Meeting should come from different parts of the world.
 - c. The co-hosts of the GRC Annual Meeting should be active participants in the past GRC Annual and Regional Meetings.
 - d. The co-hosts pay local costs associated with arranging the Annual Meeting.
 - e. The co-hosts should assume that HORCs and one staff member will represent each participating research council.
 - f. It is expected that participants will cover their own costs to attend the meeting.
 - g. The Annual Meeting should be held in May or June and last approximately 2.5 days, with an additional 1-2 days suggested prior to the Meeting for pre-events and side meetings, as appropriate.

Regional Meetings

- 4.8 It is expected that five (5) Regional Meetings are convened each year representing the five GRC Regions in Americas, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) and Sub-

Saharan Africa. Meetings may be in-person or virtual.

- 4.9 The Regional Meetings are expert level meetings open to all interested publicly funded research organisations in the region, as well as other key regional stakeholders, as appropriate.
- 4.10 The Regional Meetings aim to support the preparation of the upcoming Annual Meeting, by providing a platform for the region's participants to discuss the objectives and selected themes for the Annual Meeting from a regional perspective. The Regional Meetings should also be used to maintain ongoing GRC discussions on topics of regional relevance and priority and help building regional networks among research councils.

Regional Meeting - Hosts

- 4.12 The Regional Meeting co-hosts will be approved by the Governing Board, following an annual call for proposals to host the Regional Meetings. Successful proposals will be subject to the additional understandings:
 - a. The co-hosts of the GRC Regional Meetings should be selected to reflect, over the years, the diversity of research councils in the region.
 - b. The co-hosts should be active participants from past GRC Regional Meetings.
 - c. It is expected that the co-hosts will pay local costs associated with arranging the Regional Meetings.
 - d. It is expected that Participants will cover their own costs to attend the meeting.
 - e. The Regional Meetings should be held between October and early December.
 - f. The Regional Meetings should be coordinated so that they all occur on different dates.
 - g. The co-hosts should ensure that all participants are made aware of the GRC Code of Conduct.
 - h. Following completion of the Meeting, the co-hosts will be expected to provide a written report of the meeting to the Executive Secretary, to be shared with the Governing Board, ESG and ISC.