

World Climate Research Programme

Guidelines on Membership and Responsibilities of WCRP High-level Steering Committees

1. Goal:

To set in place transparent, accountable, and effective procedures for appointing members of WCRP high-level steering committees which define member responsibilities, honor the commitment and contribution of volunteering individuals, and ensure fairness, inclusion, and equity.

2. Applicability:

These guidelines are applied to all high-level steering committees¹ of WCRP core activities, which are the:

- WCRP Core Projects
- WCRP Lighthouse Activities
- Any other formal WCRP project, panel, activity, working group, committee, or similar, that is established with the approval of the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC), as explained in the footnote¹ below.

Membership and responsibilities of the WCRP JSC are provided separately in the [WCRP Co-sponsors Agreement \(1993\)](#). Membership and responsibilities of any bodies that sit under a WCRP high-level steering committee are the responsibility of that committee.²

3. Responsibilities:

All WCRP core activities are required to establish a high-level steering committee that is responsible for:

- Steering all scientific and organizational work within the activity, including setting strategic research priorities, in accordance with the WCRP Strategic Plan and under the leadership of WCRP's Joint Scientific Committee, and managing working groups or other committees, including their membership.
- Ensuring effective, fair, and transparent governance³ of the WCRP core activity, taking into consideration WCRP's principles as well as relevant strategic and planning documents.
- All financial management within the core activity, including the budgeting, allocating, and accounting of any funds provided to the WCRP core activity for any purpose.
- Reporting to the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC) on the WCRP core activity as required.

Each WCRP high-level steering committee will have at least two co-chairs, who are appointed due to their scientific excellence, suitability to the role, and their diversity in relation to the other chair(s) and members of the committee. The co-chairs are responsible for:

- Chairing meetings of the WCRP high-level steering committee and ensuring the committee fulfils its responsibilities, as described above.

¹ This is the highest-level steering committee of a Core Project, Lighthouse Activity, or other WCRP core activity. It may be called a Scientific Steering Group, Scientific Steering Committee, or similar. It does not apply to panels, working groups etc. formed within a core activity, which remain the responsibility of the activity's steering committee.

² WCRP encourages all WCRP high-level steering committees to adopt these guidelines for their own panels and working groups, as appropriate.

³ The term governance is used here to refer to the key elements of the organization of the core activity, including its internal structure and leadership; accountability and reporting; membership rules and expectations.

- Overseeing the work of any international office or support unit attached to the WCRP core activity (working closely with the WCRP Secretariat).
- Ensuring continued membership of the high-level steering committee of the WCRP core activity.
- Liaising with the WCRP JSC and Secretariat, as required, and working with the WCRP leadership to implement and evolve its Strategic Plan in order to achieve its goals.

4. Membership:

Each year, the co-chairs of a WCRP high-level steering committee must determine (a) the number of members who are able and willing to renew their membership and (b) the number of members who will rotate off the committee. This will determine the number of new appointments required, of both chairs and ordinary members.

A widely publicized call for new members of the WCRP high-level steering committee must be open for sufficient time to ensure visibility to the climate science community and the selection process must be documented (see the timeline in Annex 1).

For each open position, names of *two candidates should be provided* to the JSC (a primary and an alternative) by the chairs of the WCRP high-level steering committee, taking full consideration of WCRP diversity requirements (Section 6). Reasons for the ranking or for an inability to find an alternative candidate should be documented.

The appointment and renewal of chairs and ordinary members of the WCRP high-level steering committee are decided by the JSC, typically at the annual JSC Session. In special cases, WCRP high-level steering committee membership changes may be decided by the JSC out of session (such as when a committee co-chair steps down before the end of their membership term).

All newly appointed or renewed chairs and ordinary members of WCRP high-level steering committees are notified of their appointment by email (an official letter of appointment can be provided on request), which outlines their responsibilities and the length of the appointment. All members who rotate off a WCRP high-level steering committee receive an official email or letter of thanks for their service.

5. Length of appointment:

All appointments of WCRP high-level steering committee members are initially for 4 years, with up to two 2-year extensions possible. It is important to note that:

- When moving up to chair or co-chair, the appointment length “clock” is reset, with the expectation that only in rare circumstances (which would need JSC approval) would any individual serve on the same committee for longer than 10 years.
- For an outgoing chair, a 1-year extension as a committee member is possible.

6. Size and diversity of WCRP high-level steering committees:

There are no rules regarding the size of WCRP high-level steering committees, except that the JSC must be satisfied that the size of the committee is sufficient for it to undertake its responsibilities; that it is sufficiently diverse across scientific disciplines, career stage, geography and gender; and that it can function efficiently. To align with WCRP’s goals, it is expected that a single gender should not dominate the membership by more than 60%, and at least one third of all members should be resident in countries not designated as high-income economies.⁴ Any change to the size of the committee must be approved by the JSC.

Annex 1: Timeline for membership changes

Annex 2: A template for nomination

⁴ According to the [World Bank](#).

Annex 1: Timeline for membership changes

In months ahead of the next JSC Session:

1. **9 months:** WCRP high-level steering committee publishes an **open call** of membership vacancies (for 4 months). The result from this call needs to be documented.
2. **5 to 3 months:** All WCRP core activities (either through their dedicated coordination office or directly from the current co-chairs/leaders) send the WCRP Secretariat the nominations for members to be renewed or extended and indicate members who are rotating off the committee, with documentation of the results from any open call, and **two candidates for each vacancy** (a primary and an alternative). Reasons for a ranking or the impossibility to find an alternate should be briefly stated.
3. **3 to 1 months:** consultation between co-chairs, JSC liaisons and WCRP Secretariat regarding the nominations (e.g., by teleconference) with the goal of agreeing on a balanced proposal that complies with the guidelines.
4. **1 month:** The WCRP Secretariat provides to the JSC a summary document of the successful nominations (agreed by consensus) and associated information required for JSC review and endorsement.

Documentation:

- Letter from WCRP bodies' leadership to the WCRP Secretariat explaining the current situation and the reasons for the nominations and proposals.
 - WCRP bodies send CVs in standardized form for the proposed members and the alternates.
5. **0.5 months:** Documentation:
 - The WCRP Secretariat produces a summary table, including: Name; Gender; Year of PhD obtained; Affiliation, Country; Citizen Country; Expertise; Member since & until (year); Membership recommendation; with statistics per committee of: Gender, Year of PhD obtained, and region of origin.
 6. **JSC session:** JSC decision/endorsement/recommendation.

Months after the JSC Session:

7. **Up to 3 months:** WCRP Secretariat issues all membership letters (invitation, extension, separation).

Example for a JSC Session in May 2022

Aug 2021	WCRP high-level steering committee membership call opens (1. above)
Dec 2021	WCRP high-level steering committee membership call closes; applicants assessed
Feb 2022	Membership nominations report sent to the WCRP Secretariat (3. above)
Mar 2022	Consultation on the nominations to produce a final proposal for the JSC (3. above)
Apr 2022	Summary document of membership nominations sent to the JSC officers (4. above)
May 2022	JSC Session: decisions, endorsements and recommendations made (6. above)
July 2022	WCRP Secretariat issues all membership emails/letters (7. above)

Annex 2: Nomination for [Appointment/Extension]

Nominated for: [Name of the WCRP high-level steering committee]

As: [role of the nominated person, e.g., co-chair, member...]

1. DETAILS OF CANDIDATE NOMINATED

- Title:
- First Name:
- Last Name:
- Gender (Woman/Man/Non-binary/Prefer not to say/Prefer to self describe):
- Year of birth:
- Year of PhD (or the final academic degree) obtained:
- Nationality (citizenship):
- Residing country:
- Main working languages:
- Affiliation:
- Postal address:
- E-mail Address:
- Telephone:
- Nominee's professional homepage or website:

2. MEMBER SINCE & UNTIL (year, in case of extension)

- Expertise vis-à-vis the role of the [WCRP core activity] (maximum of 8 lines):
- Science Background (maximum of 8 lines):
- Positions held (maximum of 8 lines):
- 5 most relevant publications
- Why is this individual particularly suited to this [steering committee]? (maximum of 5 lines)

3. SUBMITTED BY

- Title:
- First Name:
- Last Name:
- Organization: