

# **Earth System Sustainability Initiative**

## **Transition Team Working Group 1: Draft Terms of Reference**

Working Group 1 is charged to elaborate the research part of the overall strategic framework for the Initiative, as well as to ensure that a data and information system strategy is included.

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Develop a research strategy for the initiative (TT ToR task 1)**

Develop a vision document for the Initiative that:

- reconciles the Belmont and Grand Challenge documents;
- better elucidates the research vision;
- highlights: the Earth system approach, the importance of fundamental science, the challenge of capacity building;
- entwines global environmental change to social science/humanities agenda;
- links global environmental change and human development questions (energy, food, water security, equity, etc...);
- shows compelling human questions upfront (societal drivers);
- articulates the audience (science and society);
- includes examples to make the agenda exciting;
- is written in an accessible language.

Within this task, propose a set of up to 10 societally driven questions, drawing from Grand Challenges and Belmont documents, as well as existing databases of questions, and ensuring that those questions appeal to a variety of users.

In addition, ensure that an overview on challenges for integration of data and potential solutions is included. A consultant may be commissioned to work on this part of the project.

#### **2. Identify gaps and then reach out to potential partners (TT ToR task 2)**

- Ensure that the Vision document is formulated in a way to secure the necessary high-level commitment from governments, business and civil society.

#### **3. Facilitate the design of a research and implementation plan for the first three years of the Initiative (TT ToR task 5)**

- Identify research priority areas for the first three years of the Initiative;
- work with the other WGs and the EG to propose an implementation plan for the first three years of the Initiative.

#### **4. Define a work-plan for the Working Group 1**

### **Expected outcome**

A vision document for the Initiative:

- Outline by: 15 September 2011;
- Draft 1 for second Transition Team meeting: end November 2011;
- Draft 2 for consultation at the Planet Under Pressure Conference: 1 March 2012;
- Draft 3 for consultation at the Rio+20 Conference: 15 May 2012;
- Final: by September 2012.

## Annex: Transition Team ToR and establishment of Working Groups

### Transition Team ToR

The TT is charged with the following tasks, to be completed during its 18-month lifetime:

1. **Develop a research strategy for the initiative.** This will draw on the outputs of the ICSU visioning process, the Belmont forum White Paper and the strategies of the other main partners in the Alliance to set out the critical research challenges, the required thematic priorities and capabilities, desired outcomes, impacts and success measures, and how progress will be evaluated.

2. **Identify gaps in the partnership, and then reach out to potential partners** to encourage them to join the initiative and secure the necessary high-level commitment from governments, business and civil society.

3. **Find ways to build on existing capability and investments.**

Develop a plan for greater and more effective integration of GEC programmes. The TT will probably progressively replace the current Scientific Committee of the ESSP. Supported by the outcomes of a SWOT analysis, the TT will carry out discussion with GEC programmes and projects regarding the integration of programmes into the new structure, in a transition that would ensure continuity of existing commitments.

4. **Identify mechanisms for funding and models for delivery focussing on open, flexible approaches,** considering:

- Processes and mechanisms that would allow the scientific community to move forward faster and deliver more effective research need to be identified. Options for funding could include bilateral, multilateral, or coordinated actions.
- Implementation of preferred network design and development of a procedure to identify possible regional ‘nodes’ for the network, through dialogue with relevant players and taking into account strengths and weaknesses of existing regional activities.
- Options for knowledge management systems, that would enable cost-effective interaction and information exchange across the network and beyond to broad research user and provider stakeholder groups.

5. **Facilitate the design of a research and implementation plan for the first three years of the Initiative, setting out the early phase priority areas.** Based on the strategy for the initiative, develop a specific action plan. As a first step in this effort, a small number of priority areas/directions must be established. The implementation plan should also include a communication strategy.

6. **Make recommendations for the governance for the initiative.** The TT has a life time of 18 months, after which it will be replaced with a more permanent governance structure.

## Establishment of Working Groups

At his first meeting, the Transition Team (TT) established three Working Groups (WGs) to take forward the operational work needed to address the TT ToR tasks during the transition phase:

- Working Group 1: Research strategy, data, knowledge system
- Working Group 2: Institutional Design
- Working Group 3: Education, Communication and Interaction with stakeholders

The WGs work on behalf of the TT. Each of the WGs will address specific tasks from the TT ToR, and their collective effort will cover the full TT ToR. The WGs will liaise with other entities of the transition process (Executive Group, other WGs, TT). Between meetings of the TT, the WG chair(s) will report to the EG, which will help coordinate their overall efforts. To ensure consistency and coordination across working groups, it is expected that WG co-chairs and TT co-chairs will be in communication, as needed.

The working groups will mostly be composed of Transition Team members, and each Group has the option of adding additional members if needed. The WGs should allow for a greater outreach to and input from the larger community.

## Working methodology

The WGs are expected to work over email and teleconference and reconvene at the physical meetings of the TT. Representatives of the WG are also expected to meet physically as needed.

## Working Groups composition

### WG1

*Co-Chairs: Karen O'Brien and Martin Visbeck*

*Members: Bertha Becker, Heide Hackmann, Isabelle Niang, Gretchen Kalonji, Jakob Reyner, Paul Rouse, Robert Watson*

*Staff: Roberta Quadrelli, Maria Uhle*

### WG2

*Co-Chairs: Rik Leemans and Peter Liss*

*Members: Joseph Alcamo, Lidia Brito, Hal Mooney, Steven Wilson, Tandong Yao, Stephen Zebiak*

*Staff: Leah Goldfarb, Helen Beadman*

### WG3

*Chair: Rohan D'Souza*

*Members: Tanya Abrahamse, Karl Jones, Hermann Requardt, Roberto Sanchez*

*Staff: Richard Meylan, David Allen, Vivien Lee*