

Rules of Procedures for the Digital Belt and Road Program

1 Introduction

The Digital Belt and Road Program (DBAR) has established the following as part of its Governance Structure:

Science Committee, the structure with the highest authority in DBAR Governance responsible for determining the Program’s general policy and overseeing its managerial and research operations;

Secretariat, the office established to provide management and support services to all other structures of DBAR, working under the supervision of the Science Committee;

Working Groups, the collaborative networks committed to planning, organizing, and reporting research in their specific pre-defined domains focusing on big Earth data to promote science, technology, and innovation for the SDGs, and together constitute a global network;

Task Forces, the special groups approved by the Science Committee to focus for a limited time on a specific research or technical challenges related to the vision of DBAR over a defined time period, carrying out research, academic, or technical/advisory activities as appropriate; and

International Centers of Excellence (ICoEs), which facilitate data and information sharing and promote academic exchange, scientific interactions, networking, and collaboration on the stated objectives and mission of DBAR.

This document provides the “Rules of Procedures” to guide the creation, operations, reporting, outreach, and miscellaneous activities of each of the above-mentioned organs.

2 Science Committee

- 2.1 The Chair of the Science Committee shall lead DBAR with the official title of DBAR Chair.
- 2.2 The Chair, in addition to the mandate provided to the Science Committee in statement 5.3 of the DBAR Terms of Reference, shall also be responsible for supervising and approving the financial and management operations of DBAR.
- 2.3 The members of the Science Committee shall be appointed following acceptance of a formal invitation made by the Chair.
- 2.4 The Science Committee shall be composed of a maximum of fifteen members, including the Chair, two Vice-Chairs, and up to twelve other members.
- 2.5 A single “Term of Service” (Term) for Science Committee Members, excluding the Chair, shall be four years. Each Vice-Chair and Member can consecutively serve on the DBAR Science Committee for a maximum of two Terms.

- 2.6 The Vice-Chairs will be appointed on a rotating basis every two years.

3 Constitution of DBAR Secretariat

- 3.1 The Secretariat will be led by a Secretary-General, who shall be appointed by the Chair.
- 3.2 The Secretary-General will be supported by a Deputy Secretary-General appointed by the Chair.
- 3.3 The Secretary-General with the support of the Deputy Secretary-General will be tasked with organizing, guiding, and leading all activities of the Secretariat for the implementation of the DBAR Program under the direct supervision of the Chair of the DBAR Science Committee.

4 Establishment and Constitution of New Groups

- 4.1 All Working Groups and Task Forces (hence forth collectively termed Groups) shall be established following approval from the Science Committee.
- 4.2 All Groups shall be established upon recommendation by the Science Committee or by recommendation of other Groups, or through approval of an expression of interest submitted by internal or external scientific organizations.
- 4.3 Expression of interest for new Groups shall be submitted to the Secretariat for formal review and submission to the Science Committee. The proposal should state the relevance, purpose, key objectives, and deliverables of the proposed Group and include a list of members and proposed Co-Chairs to lead the new Group. The application form for proposing new Groups is included in Appendix 1.
- 4.4 Each Group shall be led by a minimum of two Co-Chairs.
- 4.5 An individual cannot hold the position of Co-Chair for more than one Group.
- 4.6 Co-Chairs may be responsible for promoting and carrying out research on specific topics relevant to the scope of the Group.
- 4.7 The members of each Group shall be formally recognized after that Group's Co-Chair formally notifies the Secretariat of the appointment.
- 4.8 The membership of any Group shall not be restricted. However, if the total membership of a Group exceeds 50 members, the Co-Chair of the Group shall seek special approval from the DBAR Science Committee before appointing any new members, to maintain the complexity of Group operations within manageable bounds.

5 Responsibilities of Working Groups and Task Forces

- 5.1 All Working Groups and Task Forces (henceforth collectively termed as Groups) shall be responsible for undertaking research relevant to their domain. They

- shall have the authority to set priorities, organize research, and coordinate their outcomes. They shall have the authority to develop their strategy and design research and other activities in order to meet the objectives of the DBAR Science Plan they choose to address.
- 5.2 All Groups shall be encouraged to secure funds through projects, grants, or negotiations with donors to ensure provision of necessary financial and material resources to achieve their work to reach the objectives of the DBAR Science Plan they have chosen to target.
 - 5.3 All Groups shall be responsible for maintaining a catalogue of research outcomes and documentation on research exclusive to the DBAR Program and ensure its access to the DBAR Science Committee.
 - 5.4 All Groups shall be responsible for ensuring access to their publications, data, and information relevant to the research and activities of DBAR through a dedicated website, link on the official DBAR website, or a dedicated DBAR data portal.
 - 5.5 All Groups shall have the authority to initiate engagement with external organizations. However, any short- or long-term agreements, collaboration, and cooperation commitments under the DBAR framework shall be undertaken following the approval of the DBAR Chair and following notification of the Science Committee and Secretariat.
 - 5.6 All Groups shall submit a written report and orally present their progress and plans during the annual Science Team Meeting, and the Science Committee will evaluate the performance of all Groups based on operations they had committed to undertake and outcomes they are expected to deliver.
 - 5.7 All Groups shall annually provide a formal report on their progress towards all stated objectives and deliverables to the Science Committee via the Secretariat.
 - 5.8 All Groups shall provide a report for their assessment at the end of each official phase of DBAR according to the template provided to them by the evaluation committee for a comprehensive assessment of their performance.

6 Establishment and Constitution of New International Centers of Excellence

- 6.1 External organizations and entities interested in hosting an ICoE, independently or upon invitation from the DBAR Program, shall prepare and submit an “Expression of Interest” (EoI) to the Secretariat, providing traceable information on a focal person, details of the host organization, a potential list of expert participants, the scope and mission of the proposed ICoE, the DBAR Group(s) they intend to engage in the activity of the ICoE, and all relevant details of expertise and experience of the team active within the ICoE. The EoI Form is included in Appendix 2.

-
- 6.2 Final approval of every ICoE is a prerogative of the Science Committee.
 - 6.3 The Secretariat shall evaluate the proposal and, in the absence of any preferences specified by the proponent(s) in the EoI, identify the most relevant Co-Chair from among the existing DBAR Groups to initiate communication and assess the proposed ICoE's relevance to the DBAR Program, its vision, and mission.
 - 6.4 If the Co-Chair of the Group is satisfied with the proposal and potential of the proposed ICoE, that Co-Chair will then nominate the ICoE during the annual Science Committee meeting for final review and any further suggestions and possible approval by the Science Committee.
 - 6.5 The ICoE shall be led by a Director to be nominated by the ICoE host institution and appointed by the Science Committee.
 - 6.6 Following the approval of the ICoE, the Director may organize a formal launch event of the ICoE.
 - 6.7 All ICoEs shall thematically be associated with a special Working Group; however, they are encouraged to communicate, collaborate, and cooperate with other Groups and their members to achieve their research objectives.

7 Communication, Information Accessibility, and Engagement

- 7.1 All Groups and ICoEs shall designate a focal person responsible for ensuring effective communication with all other organs of DBAR.
- 7.2 The Secretariat shall publicly maintain a list of focal persons accessible on the official website for both internal and external communication.
- 7.3 All entities are encouraged to promote and engage in internal collaboration.
- 7.4 ICoEs may engage relevant Groups to aid in development of data products and support development of resources to promote scientific investigation and research.

8 Modification of Program Commitments

- 8.1 All decisions on modifications or redundancy of deliverables stated in the Science Program shall exclusively be made by the Science Committee in light of prevalent global trends, consideration of accessible resources, unsatisfactory progress and/or in response to official recommendation by the concerned Groups, supported by a satisfactory explanation of the modification or redundancy of the deliverable.
- 8.2 A Group or ICoE shall be delisted from the DBAR Program based on the exclusive decision of the Science Committee in response to a formal request by the Group or ICoE, unsatisfactory progress, and/or lack of funding and resources to maintain its activity.

9 Data Rights and Confidentiality

- 9.1 Groups and ICoEs shall have the exclusive rights to the data, data product, digital capacity, or resource developed by that Group or ICoE under a project or activity specific to the Program through external funding.
- 9.2 DBAR shall have exclusive rights to the data, data product, digital capacity, or resource developed by any Group or ICoE under the project/activity funded by the DBAR Program. All other Groups or ICoEs of the DBAR Program shall have the right to access and utilize data for projects and activities specific to the DBAR Program.
- 9.3 Groups and ICoEs shall duly acknowledge the work, materials, or research outcomes and ideas of the other DBAR Groups and ICoEs if used in any of their work.