

**Side Meetings of the Societal and Economic
Research and Applications Working Group of the
World Weather Research Programme and IRDR
at the IRDR Science Conference 2011**

Discussion Summary

Beijing, China (October 30 & November 1, 2011)

The WWRP-SERA Working group convened two side meetings in conjunction with the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Conference 2011 held 31-October to 2-November in Beijing, China. The purpose of the meetings was two-fold: 1) establish the basis for implementing a memorandum of understanding between IRDR and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) World Weather Research Programme (WWRP), in particular related to societal and economic research and applications; and 2) commence planning for the next WWRP-SERA WG meeting to be held in Melbourne, Australia in 2012. The list of participants and agenda are provided as Appendices 1 and 2 to this summary, respectively.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WMO-WWRP and IRDR

The original MOU has been re-termed a “working arrangement” and was signed by the designated representatives of IRDR (www.irdrinternational.org) and WMO-WWRP (www.wmo.int/pages/prog/arep/wwrp/new/wwrp_new_en.html) following the Beijing conference. The draft presented at the meeting is included as Appendix 3 to this summary.

The arrangement provides an official acknowledgement that cooperation makes sense given overlapping interests and aims of IRDR and WWRP. While this extends to the entire set of WWRP working groups, it is particularly relevant to the SERA WG because societal and economic research and applications cut across all types of hazards. In practical implementation terms, the arrangement will facilitate the slow but steady expansion of our WG both in membership and in opportunities for meetings and collaborative research. In a positive sense, the collaboration will also enable the WG to capitalize on ideas, innovations, networks, and support outside of the traditional WMO culture which to date has been less conducive for securing involvement from social science expertise.

At present, Angelika Wirtz participates as a member on both the IRDR Science Committee and the SERA-WG. David Johnston (Massey University) attended and actively participated in the Beijing side meeting and has expressed a desire to join the SERA-WG. Other IRDR Science Committee members, such as Susan Cutter (University of South Carolina), could not attend the side meeting due to other conflicts, but communicated an interest in learning more about potential cooperation. Conversely, SERA-WG members may serve as future focal points for national and regional IRDR committees and programs (e.g., Australia).

Potential shared meeting opportunities were briefly discussed, including the next planned SERA-WG meeting and session in Melbourne. Gordon McBean, whose term as Chair of the IRDR Science Committee just expired, presented a proposed program of action for the IRDR Centre of Excellence (CoE) based at the Academy of Sciences in Taipei, Taiwan. The activities, jointly supported and implemented with the international START program (www.start.org) are oriented to capacity development (young and early career scientists) through focused sessions involving local and visiting scientists. This and future IRDR CoEs may provide meeting and capacity-building opportunities focused on SERA-related interests across different hazards.

Action 1: *All SERA-WG members and interested IRDR Scientific Committee members are asked to review their respective activities (e.g., SERA-WG warning demonstration project, IRDR working group projects) and identify possible joint meeting opportunities and potential points for collaboration (April 2012, on-going).*

Action 2: *SERA-WG chair (Brian Mills) and secretariat (Nanette Lomarda) to work with David Johnston to confirm and secure his membership (January 2012).*

Planning for next WWRP-SERA WG meeting, Melbourne

The next full meeting of the SERA WG is being planned for Melbourne, Australia during one of the last 2 weeks of July 2012. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology (Linda Anderson-Berry) will be our hosts and the intent is to couple the standard meeting with a special interactive session (workshop) focused on a topic of interest to SERA. Discussion during the Beijing meetings was aimed at defining the topic and reviewing practical logistics.

Several potential topics were mentioned by participants, but the following garnered the greatest interest:

- Methods to assess the economic benefits of meteorological products and services and applications
- Issues surrounding the liability of organizations, enterprises and individuals producing risk information or making decisions based on such knowledge (including intentionally ignoring information)
- Communication and interpretation of risk information and associated uncertainty

It was generally observed that such themes cut across a spectrum of hazards, including the wildfire, landslide, flooding, and tropical cyclone threats that were repeatedly noted as being worthy of attention. The communication theme was eventually selected as the primary topic with people noting how aspects of the other two could easily be incorporated (e.g., economic value is largely dependent on the communication/interpretation of the forecast; liability implies some level of responsibility based on advanced notification of a risk or pending event). All participants were encouraged to think of how their interests and research could fit into the selected theme over the next several weeks following the meeting.

It was observed that it may be possible to combine this meeting with others to make the event more efficient and effective; the WWRP Thorpex Southern Hemisphere Regional committee and to-be-defined IRDR regional Australian/New Zealand committee were possible candidates for collaborative meetings. Regardless, a number of steps and associated actions were identified to advance the planning for Melbourne:

- Develop a session description and plan, including objectives, outcomes (e.g., report, paper, plan of action, etc.), and timeline
- Confirm timing, WMO budget, and local arrangements
- Establish joint meeting opportunities
- Identification of and invitations for contributing expert and stakeholder participants
- Send out invitations and general notification of meeting

Action 3: *Linda Anderson-Berry, Nanette Lomarda, and Brian Mills to confirm local arrangements, WMO budget, draft meeting description/agenda, and distribute to WG (January 2012).*

Action 4: *Each SERA WG member to identify 2-3 key invitees to the meeting and their potential contribution (January 2012).*

Action 5: *Brian Mills to confirm interest of the Thorpex Southern Hemisphere regional committee in holding a joint meeting. David Johnston and Linda Anderson-Berry to examine similar prospects with the IRDR national/regional committees in Australia/New Zealand (January 2012).*

Action 6: *Nanette Lomarda and Brian Mills to develop a web page for meeting (March 2012).*

APPENDIX 1: List of Participants

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION AND ADDRESS
Dr. Linda Anderson-Berry (Member, SERA WG)	Disaster Mitigation Policy and Emergency Management Coordination Weather and Ocean Services Policy Branch Bureau of Meteorology 700 Collins St, Docklands, Melbourne, VIC 3008, Australia Tel: +61 3 9669 4585 Mobile: +61 418 157515 Fax: +61 3 9669 4695 E-mail: lab@bom.gov.au
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Mr. Brian Mills (Chair, SERA WG)	Adaptation and Impacts Research Section Environment Canada c/o Faculty of Environment, University of Waterloo 200 University Avenue West Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1 Tel: +1 519 888 4567 ext. 35496 Fax: +1 519 746 2031 E-mail: Brian.Mills@ec.gc.ca
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Ms. Angelika Wirtz
(*Member, SERA WG &*
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APPENDIX 2: Agenda

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30 (18:00-20:00)

Second Floor, Mu Dan Hall, Beijing Grand Continental Hotel (beside BICC)

Attendance: Current SERA WG members

1. INTRODUCTIONS

2. PLANNING FOR NEXT SERA WG MEETING AND SPECIAL SESSION/WORKSHOP (MELBOURNE, 2012) *(Brian Mills, Linda Anderson-Berry, Nanette Lomarda)*

- Review relevant action item (17) and discussion from SERA WG Meeting #2 (Toulouse)
- Proposed topic(s), goals, and invitees
- Logistics and budget
- Opportunities for collaboration with IRDR

3. GENERAL UPDATES *(all)*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1 (13:30-15:30)

Second Floor, Mu Dan Hall, Beijing Grand Continental Hotel (beside BICC)

Attendance: Current SERA WG members plus interested IRDR members

1. INTRODUCTIONS

2. WWRP-SERA WG AND IRDR OVERVIEW AND PATH FORWARD

- IRDR overview *(Jane Rovins/Gord McBean)*
- SERA WG overview *(Brian Mills)*
- General open discussion *(all)*
 - Rationale for a joint working group/committee and review of IRDR/WMO-WWRP agreement
 - Round table discussion of common interests and objectives
 - Potential joint membership
 - Proposed Melbourne meeting/workshop
 - Other upcoming meetings and events
- Actions/decisions

3. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION (15:30-17:30)

- Informal discussion and review of the meeting for any IRDR or SERA members who could not attend from 13:30-15:30 *(Brian Mills)*

Materials for meeting

- Final/draft IRDR/WMO-WWRP agreement
- SERA WG meeting #2 report
- IRDR Science Plan and relevant steering committee report(s)

APPENDIX 3: Draft IRDR-WWRP working arrangement



WORKING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE INTEGRATED RESEARCH ON DISASTER RISK AND THE WORLD WEATHER RESEARCH PROGRAMME OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

Introduction

The Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) is a decade-long, interdisciplinary research programme sponsored by the International Council for Science (ICSU) in partnership with the International Social Science Council (ISSC), and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR). It is a global initiative seeking to address the challenges brought by natural disasters, mitigate their impacts, and improve related policy-making mechanisms.

The World Weather Research Programme (WWRP) is a programme established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), to advance society's ability to cope with high impact weather through research focused on improving the accuracy, and to lead time and utilization of weather prediction.

The International Project Office of the IRDR and the Atmospheric Environment and Research Department of the WMO (hereafter the Parties) have decided to conclude a Working Arrangement between the IRDR and the WWRP of the WMO and have agreed as follows:

Working Arrangement

I. IRDR and WWRP will cooperate in the following areas:

1. WWRP will assist IRDR with the characterization, understanding, and prediction of weather-related hazards (i.e., floods, storms, and typhoons) whose physical aspects manifest themselves at nowcasting through to sub-seasonal scales, thus contributing to IRDR Programme Objective 1—the characterization of hazards, vulnerability and risk.
2. IRDR will assist WWRP in defining and exploring critical natural and social science research questions based on an understanding of disaster risk and the implications of extreme weather or climate events for society and economy, thus contributing to the implementation of the WWRP Strategic Plan.
3. WWRP and IRDR will jointly support the activities of the Working Group on Societal and Economic Research and Applications (SERA) of the WWRP for which the research priorities include:

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- Estimation of the societal (including economic) value of weather and disaster risk reduction information;
- Understanding and improving the use of weather-related hazard information in decision making;
- Understanding and improving the communication of weather-related hazard information and forecast uncertainty;
- Development of user-relevant verification methods; and
- Development of decision support systems and tools.

The Working Group will be co-chaired by representatives from both WWRP and IRDR with additional membership from each programmes and suitable expertise.

4. IRDR and WWRP will collaborate in the provision of scientific information, guidance, and associated interactions with relevant international bodies, conventions, protocols, and agreements, concerning weather-related hazards and their role in disaster risk management.

This cooperation will be carried out through mutual information exchange, the participation of representatives of the programmes in respective meetings, workshops, symposia and demonstration projects, as appropriate, and working together to address societal concerns regarding weather-related hazards. This common approach will encourage the international support for relevant research to further the objectives and goals of both programmes.

II. This Working Arrangement shall be reviewed regularly by the parties with the object of further improving and extending it as deemed necessary. Any changes to this Working Arrangement shall be made in writing and signed by the parties to this Arrangement.

III. This Working Arrangement may be terminated by either party on 31 December of any year by notice given not later than 30 June of that year. This Working Arrangement shall enter into force upon signature by both parties.

Dr. Jane Rovins
Director, International Programme Office,

Integrated Research on Disaster Risk

Dr. Deon Terblanche
Director, Atmospheric Environment and
Research Department
World Meteorological Organization

Date:

Date: