

Proposal for IPA Council Meeting 16 June, 2024

International Permafrost Association (IPA) Standing Committee for Rock Glacier Inventories and Kinematics (RGIK)

Constitution and Bylaws

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Note on Document Objectives, RGIK Name and Mission:

On 16 June 2024, at the ICOP Conference in Whitehorse, Yukon (Canada), the IPA Council will vote on the request of the RGIK to become a Standing Committee. To support our request, we need to present a formal RGIK structure and rules, described in Bylaws. The current document is the proposition made by the Interim Executive Committee (ExCom), with support from the Interim Advisory Board (AB) and the RGIK Office. The content is based on the intention stated in the [Puicerdà Commitment](#) which was signed by 60 people in June-July 2023, and further reworked to fit a Bylaws-format. The authors aspired to provide a clear structure, based on the current objectives of the group, while remaining broad in the scope assuming potential future evolution of the concrete priorities/tasks. With the objective of being as pragmatic as possible, the authors suggest here the frame to keep performing our work, while allowing for enough flexibility to function efficiently without requiring too frequent updates, limiting our action.

We suggest keeping the “Rock Glacier Inventories and Kinematics (RGIK)” name. RGIK is now a known and cited acronym. Changing the name would lead to several practical and communication issues. In addition, we believe there is still important remaining work to do to fulfil the initial objectives of the initiative (in respect to RoGI and RGV product compilation, dissemination and exploitation), so that we will keep focusing on rock glacier inventories and kinematics in the coming years. However, other tasks may become actual in the future, so that it is important that we define a wide enough mission to allow for potential evolution, without requiring changes of the frame set by the Bylaws.

As an Appendix to this document, we suggest a first Addendum on an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Code of Conduct. However, if the comments from the community show a wide spread of opinions on the content and treatment of this important topic, we may decide to discard this part for the 2024 vote and appoint a dedicated working group to rework the Addendum. In coming years, other policies are expected to be elaborated on (e.g. regarding durability, sustainability and climate action, as well as on open-access data policies). The ExCom may appoint working groups focusing on these questions and drafting policies for future votes.

Note on Document Versioning and Timeline:

This proposition of Bylaws has been iteratively developed by the Interim ExCom members in February-March 2024. In March-April 2024, it was reviewed by the Interim Advisory Board (AB) and the RGIK Officer. The current document is an edited version, addressing and incorporating the suggestions received by the reviewers. The Interim ExCom approved this version on 22 April, 2024. The review to the whole community is starting on 25 April, 2024. The deadline for commenting on this document is 9 May, 2024. The electronic vote on the final RGIK Bylaws will take place at the end of May 2024.

Constitution

Rock Glacier Inventories and Kinematics (RGIK) is a scientific community recognized by the International Permafrost Association (IPA) as a Standing Committee. The mission of RGIK is to coordinate the global compilation and distribution of standardised rock glacier products, and to foster international collaboration and advancement in the understanding of rock glaciers.

RGIK Constitution Date (number of RGIK members who accepted the Bylaws):

xx.xx.2024 (xx) *(the date and numbers of voters who approved the final document will be added here)*

IPA Constitution Date (approval by the IPA council):

xx.xx.2024 *(the date of IPA approval will be added here)*

Do you have any comments on the previous points? Please use this box.

[Comment box 1](#)

Bylaws

Article I – Organisation Type and Name

The International Permafrost Association (IPA) Standing Committee for Rock Glacier Inventories and Kinematics (RGIK) is a non-profit organisation, herein referred to as RGIK.

Article II – Territory

RGIK is international and open to all territories worldwide.

Article III – Location

The RGIK headquarters shall be the address determined by the designated Chair (see Article VII). In case of co-chairing, the co-Chairs agree on the selected headquarters.

Article IV – Mission Statement and Objectives

Section 1 – Mission Statement

RGIK mission is:

- To coordinate the global compilation and distribution of standardised rock glacier products; and
- To foster international collaboration and advancements in the understanding of rock glaciers.

Section 2 – Objectives

RGIK aims:

- To develop international standards and guidelines for inventorying and monitoring rock glaciers;
- To coordinate and encourage the global compilation of standardised rock glacier products, including, but not limited to, Rock Glacier Inventories (RoGI) and the Essential Climate Variable (ECV) Rock Glacier Velocity (RGV);
- To design, implement, and foster a global database compiling rock glacier products;
- To promote and support the use and dissemination of RGIK standards, guidelines and products, and communicate novel results internationally; and

- To foster a network and provide a common forum in which to communicate and exchange ideas related to rock glacier research.

Do you have any comments on the previous points? Please use this box.

[Comment box 2](#)

Article V – Membership

Section 1 – Definition

Membership is free and open to anyone interested in the mission and objectives of RGIK (see Article IV). Membership is acknowledged by website registration and does not require affiliation with an institution and/or organisation. The members are in charge of communicating and updating valid email addresses to RGIK.

Section 2 – Rights and Duties

Members are entitled to participate in RGIK activities, to nominate themselves or be nominated for any position within the RGIK organisation structure, and to propose new activities by contacting any member of the Executive Committee (Article VII), the RGIK Office (Article VIII), the Advisory Board (Article IX), or additional active councils and working groups (Article X).

Members shall not speak on behalf of RGIK, or claim their views as a representative of RGIK without explicit approval from the General Assembly or the Executive Committee.

Section 3 – Termination of Membership

Members have the right to terminate their membership at any time by using a contact form on the website, or by emailing the RGIK Office.

Do you have any comments on the previous points? Please use this box.

[Comment box 3](#)

Article VI – General Assembly

Section 1 – Definition

The General Assembly consists of all RGIK members (see Article V).

Section 2 – Rights and Duties

The General Assembly is the legislative body of RGIK.

The General Assembly shall:

- Elect the members of the Executive Committee;
- Vote on any change of the Bylaws;
- Vote on new RGIK policies and Addendums (see Article XI), or other topics, when the majority of the Executive Committee finds it necessary (see Section 4); and
- Communicate its view on ongoing and future RGIK activities.

Section 2 – Meetings

The General Assembly shall meet, at least once a year, online or in-person during scientific conferences, such as International Conferences on Permafrost (ICOP) or Regional Conferences on

Permafrost (RCOP). In-person General Assembly meetings must always provide hybrid solutions for online attendance.

The Executive Committee is in charge of organising and communicating the programme of the General Assembly meetings to the members. During these meetings, the Executive Committee informs about their activities and gets feedback from the members.

Section 3 – Election Procedure

Elections of the Executive Committee take place at least every two years.

Elections shall be organised electronically by the Executive Committee and last a total of 48 hours to ensure equity in different time zones globally.

The call for candidates shall be sent at least six weeks before the election date. Candidates must communicate their candidature at least one month before the election date. Information about the candidates and instructions on the voting process shall be provided by email to the RGIK members at least two weeks before the election date.

The election results are decided by the majority of the voting members. If more than nine candidates get the majority, the nine candidates with the most votes are elected. The election is valid if a minimum of 20 members (quorum) has voted. If the quorum is not reached, a new election must be organised.

Section 4 – Vote Procedure

Votes occur when the Bylaws must be changed or on other topics when the majority of the Executive Committee finds it necessary. Any RGIK member can suggest a vote by contacting the Executive Committee. For topics not requiring changes of Bylaws, the Executive Committee is responsible for deciding if the topic requires a vote by the members.

Votes shall be organised electronically by the Executive Committee and last 48 hours to ensure equity in different time zones globally.

Requests on vote topics can be communicated to the Executive Committee at any point during the year. Information on the topic and instructions on the voting process shall be provided to the RGIK members by email at least two weeks before the vote date.

The vote results are decided by the majority of the voting members. The vote is valid if a minimum of 20 members (quorum) has voted. If the quorum is not reached, a new vote must be organised.

Do you have any comments on the previous points? Please use this box.

[Comment box 4](#)

Article VII – Executive Committee

Section 1 – Definition

The Executive Committee, herein referred to as ExCom, is the governing body of RGIK.

The ExCom shall consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of nine members, elected by the General Assembly. A majority of the ExCom should be from IPA member countries, defined by their professional affiliations or countries of residence.

The ExCom self-organises. The following roles shall be allocated: one Chair and one vice-Chair, or two co-Chairs. These two positions are designated by the elected ExCom. The (co-/vice-)Chairs should be from IPA member countries, defined by their professional affiliations or countries of residence. The (co-/vice-)Chair names, role, and organisation of the Chairing duties shall be communicated to the RGIK members.

The following roles may be allocated depending on the current needs of RGIK: secretary, treasurer, web/email-manager, data manager, thematic/regional representatives, representative(s) within other organisations (IPA, PYRN, GTN-P, GCOS). The ExCom self-organises. These roles are to be handled flexibly. These roles can alternate or be combined among the ExCom members. For each term, the ExCom roles and organisation shall be communicated to the RGIK members.

Section 2 – Rights and Duties

The ExCom shall manage and coordinate the day-to-day RGIK activities.

The ExCom shall meet regularly online or in person, such as during International Conferences on Permafrost (ICOP) or Regional Conferences on Permafrost (RCOP). In-person ExCom meetings must always provide hybrid solutions for online attendance.

The ExCom shall organise the General Assembly meetings, election and votes. The ExCom shall appoint the Advisory Board, other councils, and working groups (see Articles IX and X). It shall propose new activities and implement the strategic and scientific decisions of the General Assembly and recommendations of the Advisory Board. The ExCom shall report on the RGIK activities and communicate with the International Permafrost Association (IPA). Individual members of the ExCom can serve as liaisons between RGIK and other national/international organisations with complementary focuses and objectives.

Section 3 – ExCom Members

The ExCom members are elected by the General Assembly. One term lasts two years, with the possibility for re-election. ExCom members can serve a maximum of three consecutive terms, each term spanning no more than two years, to ensure a fair rotation of all members.

The (co-/vice-)Chair(s) are designated by the ExCom for each term, and can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms, each term spanning no more than two years, to ensure a fair rotation of all members.

The RGIK Chair shall call, set the agenda, and chair ExCom meetings. The Chair shall perform all other duties incident to the Committee. The Chair shall, in collaboration with the other ExCom members, prepare an annual report of the RGIK activities to be presented to the annual meeting of the International Permafrost Association (IPA). The Chair acts as the primary point of reference for maintaining dialogue and coordination with the IPA.

The Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the chair in the temporary absence or disability of the Chair, and serve as the Chair's principal assistant in conducting the business of RGIK.

Co-chairing can replace the Chair/Vice-Chair structure. In case of co-chairing, the co-Chairs self-organise and share the duties of Chair and Vice-Chair. The co-chairing organisation shall be communicated to the ExCom in writing.

The other ExCom members shall attend the meetings, and share the roles and tasks of the Executive Committee (see Article VII, Sections 1 and 2).

Section 4 – ExCom Meetings

The (co-/vice-)Chair(s) of the ExCom shall be responsible for ensuring that the meetings are run in an orderly manner. ExCom members may overrule any particular decision of the (co-/vice-)Chair(s) by majority vote.

Unless otherwise specified by these Bylaws, each decision shall be made by the consensus of the ExCom. The quorum requirement is that at least two-thirds of the ExCom be present for consensus decisions. If consensus cannot be reached, the fallback decision-making procedure shall be a majority vote of all ExCom members. The vote can be organised electronically and, in that case, shall last at least 48 hours to ensure equity in different regions globally.

Section 5 – Selection, Renewal, and Termination of ExCom Members

The ExCom members are elected for two years by the General Assembly. Any RGIK member can be nominated or self-nominated to the ExCom.

In case of a resignation of a (co-/vice-)Chair within the two-year period, the ExCom designates a new (co-/vice-)Chair and communicates this change to the members. If an ExCom member resigns within the two-year period, the ExCom shall announce the opening of a position and organise an election at the next General Assembly. An interim member may be nominated by unanimous vote of the ExCom to serve until the next election. The ExCom can appoint interim members until the maximum quota of nine members has been met (see Article VII, Section 1).

Section 6 – ExCom Ex-Officio Members

To ensure the transition between elected and former ExCom, incumbent ExCom members shall assume the role of ExCom Ex-Officio members for a duration of one year.

ExCom Ex-Officio members, herein referred to as Ex-Officio members, are non-voting, past ExCom members that continue to provide support on tasks and duties when requested by the current ExCom.

Ex-Officio members shall advise and provide feedback to the current ExCom. At the invitation of the current ExCom, Ex-Officio members may be welcome to attend meetings, but will not participate in consensus or voting procedures.

Do you have any comments on the previous points? Please use this box.

[Comment box 5](#)

Article VIII – RGIK Office

Section 1 – Definition

The RGIK Office is the administrative body of RGIK supporting the ExCom in coordinating and managing all RGIK related activities.

When possible, the RGIK Office is included in the work specification of a funded position through the institution of the (co-/vice-)Chair(s) or another ExCom member. If no funding is available, the tasks and duties of the RGIK Office are performed by the ExCom.

Section 2 – Rights and Duties

The RGIK Office shall support the ExCom in carrying out the overall coordination, reporting and day-to-day RGIK activities. This includes the coordination and management of the network, data

management including the collection, control, and distribution of data, the periodic reporting and release of RGIK products, as well as the coordination of educational and outreach activities, and the regular dialogue with other organisations.

Section 3 – Selection, Renewal, and Termination of RGIK Office

The RGIK Office is appointed following the hiring criteria and procedure of the host institution with the support of the ExCom.

Do you have any comments on the previous points? Please use this box.

[Comment box 6](#)

Article IX – Advisory Board

Section 1 – Definition

The Advisory Board, herein referred to as AB, is the body providing non-binding strategic advice and scientific expertise to the ExCom.

The AB shall consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of nine members appointed by the ExCom. The AB shall be composed of representatives from different institutions, regions, and backgrounds.

Section 2 – Rights and Duties

The AB provides non-binding advice and recommendations to the ExCom on activities regarding present and future developments of rock glacier research, and assists in determining the RGIK strategy and priorities.

The AB evaluates the work of the ExCom on an annual basis. The evaluation and formal recommendations from the AB to the ExCom shall be communicated to the General Assembly on an annual basis.

Section 3 – Advisory Board Members

There are no defined roles in the AB. The AB shall self-organise.

Section 4 – Advisory Board Meetings

The AB and ExCom shall meet at least once a year to evaluate the ongoing RGIK activities and discuss the future direction of RGIK. AB meetings may take place more frequently with or without the participation of the ExCom.

The ExCom shall call for meetings with the AB whenever needed.

Section 5 – Selection, Renewal, and Termination of Advisory Board Members

The AB members are appointed by a majority vote of the ExCom. Any RGIK member can be nominated or self-nominated to the AB. Efforts will be made to ensure that the AB provides broad and effective representation of RGIK members. Individual board memberships may be terminated at the request of the individual, or by majority vote of the ExCom.

Do you have any comments on the previous points? Please use this box.

[Comment box 7](#)

Article X – Additional Councils and Groups

Additional regional council(s) and thematic working group(s) can be suggested by any RGIK member. They are appointed and coordinated by the ExCom. These groups are to be handled flexibly.

Article XI – RGIK Policies and Addendums

The RGIK Constitution and Bylaws shall contain the general organisation structure and formal procedure of the Standing Committee. They shall contain information sufficiently important to require a formal approval to change, but sufficiently malleable that the rigidity of the RGIK Bylaws modification procedure would be inappropriate.

Additional RGIK Policies and Addendums shall govern in all cases where they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Bylaws. New RGIK policies can be suggested by the ExCom or any RGIK member within the deadline set in Article VI. Their establishment or modification must be approved by a majority vote of the General Assembly.

Do you have any comments on the previous points? Please use this box.

[Comment box 8](#)

Addendum 1: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Code of Conduct

RGIK is committed to provide a collaborative environment that allows for open dialogue and constructive debates, while fostering equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

Equity is defined as the removal of systemic barriers, enabling all individuals to have equitable opportunity.

Diversity is defined as the variety of unique dimensions, identities, qualities and characteristics individuals possess that should be respected equally.

Inclusion is defined as the practice of ensuring that all individuals are valued and respected for their contributions and are supported equitably in a culturally safe environment.

The code of conduct set in this addendum applies to all RGIK members, all attendees at RGIK events, and all people and institutions that wish to collaborate with RGIK.

A1.1 Freedom of Speech

All members shall have equal right to communicate their views. Diversity opinions are valued, as long as they do not threaten the EDI principles, and do not discriminate (see A1.2) and harass (see A1.3) other members of the RGIK community.

Members shall not speak on behalf of RGIK, or claim their views as a representative of RGIK without explicit approval from the General Assembly or the Executive Committee (see Bylaws Article V, Section 2).

A1.2 Communicating Ideas, Critiques, and Complaints

RGIK is committed to creating an environment where any opinion is taken into account. For this reason, a system shall be implemented in which anyone who has a complaint regarding any RGIK decision/action, is able to communicate it openly or anonymously.

The RGIK email address, addressed to the RGIK Officer selected ExCom members, can be used at any time to communicate ideas and report complaints. The list of the people having access to this email address must be clearly stated on the website. A further option for members is to reach out to an individual Executive Committee member. All members of the ExCom accept the responsibility to receive ideas, critiques, or complaints and deal with them in a responsive, respectful, and effective manner.

A form to report ideas, critics and complaints shall be available on the RGIK website. The form can be sent nominally or anonymously. Anonymity and privacy shall be ensured upon request. The received forms shall be discussed at the ExCom meetings. Adapted treatments and actions shall be adapted to each specific case, accounting for anonymity and privacy requirements.

A1.3 Discrimination

Discrimination is defined here as any unequal or unfair treatment in professional opportunities, education, benefits, evaluation, and employment (such as hiring, termination, promotion, compensation) as well as retaliation and various types of harassment.

RGIK does not tolerate any form of discrimination within the organisation, at its events or its activities, and will not cooperate with organisations or institutions that promote any form of

discrimination. Discriminatory practices can be explicit or implicit, intentional or unconscious. RGIK rejects discrimination by any means, based on factors including (but not limited to):

- Age
- Citizenship
- Country of residence
- Disability
- Ethnicity or national origin
- Gender identity
- Indigenous or tribal affiliation
- Language
- Physical appearance
- Political or other opinion
- Pregnancy or parental status
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic status

The factors are listed here in alphabetical order, which does not imply any level of importance.

All RGIK members as well as attendees, speakers, guests at RGIK events and possible staff of any RGIK event location are to be treated with respect and consideration.

RGIK values a diversity of views, opinions, and cultures among its members. RGIK is a diverse network with members of many different cultures, heritage, and languages. Members may communicate with other members in their non-primary language, and certain expressions may be understood differently in other cultures. Any communication should demonstrate respect for others; critique should be aimed at ideas rather than individuals.

A1.4 Harassment

Harassment is a type of discrimination. It consists of acts that are unwanted, unwelcome, demeaning, abusive, threatening, or offensive. Harassment can happen as a single instance and severe act, or as multiple persistent or pervasive acts. Harassing someone can be an intentional act, or stem from ignorance (the harasser does not realise that what she/he is doing is harmful).

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Any form of degrading comments, verbal or otherwise, related to any of the factors listed above, or others that can be considered discriminatory
- The inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images
- Threats or coercion
- Unwanted touching or other hostile acts
- The circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates an individual or a group
- Minimising or intentionally taking actions to reduce the credibility of a harassment victim

RGIK is committed to providing a safe, productive, and welcoming community for all of its members.

Any instance of harassment or any sort of unwanted behaviour as specified above is not tolerated within the organisation or its activities.

A1.5 Reporting Discrimination and Harassment

RGIK is committed to creating a safe environment where victims of harassment or discrimination, as well as witnesses, feel empowered to report such activity. For this reason, a system shall be in place in which anyone who feels that they have been subject or witness to harassment has multiple reporting mechanisms to choose from, depending on their preference and level of comfort.

The RGIK email address, addressed to the RGIK Officer and selected ExCom member Chairs, can be used at any time to report incidents of harassment or discrimination. A further option for members is to reach out to an individual Executive Committee member. All members of the ExCom accept the responsibility to receive reports of harassment and deal with them in a responsive, respectful, and effective manner.

A form to report incidents shall be available on the RGIK website. The form can be sent nominally or anonymously. Anonymity and privacy shall be ensured upon request. Incident reports shall be dealt with care and respect. Procedures and actions shall be adapted to each specific case, accounting for anonymity and privacy requirements. If the reports are targeting one or more members of the ExCom, solutions to provide a fair and independent assessment will be found (e.g., mediation from a third party).

Do you have any comments on the Addendum 1? Please use this box.

[Comment box 9](#)