

## Proposal for IPA Council Meeting 16 June, 2024

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

#### Constitution and Bylaws

**Draft Authors from the Interim Executive Committee (ExCom)** (alphabetic order): BRARDINONI Francesco, CUSICANQUI Diego, HU Yan, KELKAR Kaytan, PELLET Cécile, ROUYET Line, WEHBE Mishelle.

**Reviewers from the Interim Advisory Board (AB)** (alphabetic order): ARENSON Lukas, DELALOYE Reynald, LIU Lin, MACDONELL Shelley. **And comments from the RGIK Officer:** VIVERO Sebastián.

#### **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 Officer. The content is based on the intention stated in the [Puicerdà Commitment](#) which was signed by 60 people in June-July 2023, and then 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, as 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 utilisation). Concretely, it means that we will keep focusing on rock glacier inventories and kinematics in the near future. However, other tasks may become actual in the longer term, so that it is important that we define a broad mission statement to allow for potential evolution, without requiring changes of the framework set by the Bylaws.

An Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Code of Conduct is included as Addendum. The ExCom believes that it is an important topic to address from the start. However, we are aware that the current version does not solve all the open questions related to this complex topic. We plan to appoint a dedicated working group to keep working on this subject and potentially update/extend the Addendum. In coming years, other policies are expected to be elaborated on other important topics (e.g., durability, sustainability and climate action, as well as open-access data policy). The ExCom may appoint working groups focusing on these questions and drafting Addendums for future votes.

#### **Note on Document Versioning and Timeline:**

The Bylaws have been iteratively developed by the Interim ExCom members in February-March 2024. In March-April 2024, a first complete draft was reviewed by the Interim Advisory Board (AB) and the RGIK Officer, which led to a second version, addressing and incorporating the suggestions. The Bylaws have then been open for review to the whole community between 25 April and 9 May 2024. Based on the received comments, the ExCom made some modifications. The current document is the final version. The electronic vote will take place on 6-7 June 2024.

## Constitution

Rock Glacier Inventories and Kinematics (RGIK) is a scientific community recognised 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 (approval by the General Assembly):

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)*

## 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) parameter Rock Glacier Velocity (RGV);
- To design, implement, and foster a global database compiling rock glacier products;
- To promote and support the dissemination and use 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.

## **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.

### **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 are in charge of communicating and updating valid email addresses to RGIK.

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 or the Executive Committee.

## **Article VI – General Assembly**

### **Section 1 – Definition**

The General Assembly is the legislative body of RGIK, consisting of all RGIK members (see Article V).

### **Section 2 – Rights and Duties**

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 Article VI, Section 4); and
- Communicate its view on ongoing and future RGIK activities.

### **Section 2 – Meetings**

The General Assembly shall meet 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 options 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 shall take place 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.

#### 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.

#### 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 and organisation of the chairing duties shall be communicated to the RGIK members.

Depending on the current needs of RGIK, specific administrative and representative tasks may be allocated: e.g., secretary, web/data management, follow-up of thematic working groups, as well as communication with other organisations, such as the IPA, GTN-P and GCOS. These roles are to be handled flexibly. They 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 options for online attendance.

The ExCom shall organise the General Assembly meetings, election and votes. The ExCom shall appoint the Advisory Board (see Article IX), as well as other councils and working groups (see Article

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, 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 in these positions, to ensure a fair rotation of all members.

The RGIK Chair shall call, set the agenda, and chair ExCom meetings. The Chair shall, in collaboration with the other ExCom members, prepare an annual report of the RGIK activities to be communicated to the International Permafrost Association (IPA) and present RGIK activities at the IPA Council meetings. 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 other ExCom members shall attend the meetings, as well as 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 time zones globally.

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

The ExCom members are elected for a term of 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 RGIK 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 ExCom meetings, but have no voting rights in this capacity.

## **Article VIII – RGIK Office**

### Section 1 – Definition

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

The RGIK Office is an optional body that depends on dedicated funding. The RGIK Office tasks are included in the work specification of a funded position through the institution of any ExCom member. If no funding is available, there is no RGIK Office and the RGIK administrative tasks are performed by the ExCom.

### Section 2 – Rights and Duties

The RGIK Officer 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.

At the invitation of the ExCom, the RGIK Officer may be welcome to attend ExCom meetings, but has no voting rights in this capacity.

### Section 3 – Selection, Renewal, and Termination of RGIK Officer

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

## **Article IX – Advisory Board**

### Section 1 – Definition

The Advisory Board, herein referred to as AB, is the counselling 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 people well-established in the rock glacier community, and shall represent diverse institutions, regions, and backgrounds.

### Section 2 – Rights and Duties

The AB shall provide non-binding advice and recommendations to the ExCom, and assist in determining the RGIK strategy and priorities.

The AB reviews the work of the ExCom and provides recommendations on the present and future developments of RGIK activities.

### 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 review the ongoing RGIK activities and discuss the future directions of RGIK. AB meetings may take place more frequently with or without the participation of the ExCom.

The ExCom shall call upon the AB whenever needed. At the invitation of the ExCom, the AB members may be welcome to attend ExCom meetings, but have no voting rights in this capacity.

### 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 through communication to the ExCom. 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.

### Article X – Additional Councils and Groups

Additional regional council(s) and thematic working group(s) can be suggested by any RGIK member. The ExCom shall decide the creation of additional councils/groups and follow-up their work. The councils and groups are to be handled flexibly. They can be led by any RGIK member. An ExCom member is appointed as representative within each council/group, to ensure communication and coordination.

### 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. Their establishment or modification must be approved by a majority vote of the General Assembly (see Article VI).

## **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. Diverse 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 every voice matters. 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 and 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 ExCom 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. Appropriate 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
- Marital or Civil Partnership Status
- Physical Appearance
- Political or Other Opinion
- Pregnancy or Parental Status
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Socio-Economic Status
- Veteran or Military 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 (A1.3), 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 members, can be used at any time to report incidents of harassment or discrimination. 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 ExCom 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 shall be found (e.g., mediation from a third party).