



UK Alliance for Disaster Research Draft Constitution

June 2016

Introduction

1. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) presents a unique opportunity for a topical network, deserving of enhanced focus due to its inherently interdisciplinary nature, and the direct influence that science can have on saving lives and livelihoods. It follows that there should be a mechanism through which to foster innovative interdisciplinary research, as well as the community structures to be able to predict or respond to slow and rapid onset hazards with relevant scientific advice. International dialogues, such as the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals demonstrate a global effort in reducing disaster risk, as well as articulating the role that science could play.
2. The risk to sustainable societies, economies and environments associated with hazards rarely proves to be an issue that one scientific community can work on independently. The UK mechanism for scientific advice in emergencies, named Science in Humanitarian Emergencies and Disasters (SHED), has seen an increasing number of scenarios where a multi-disciplinary network would have been useful in providing insight. Examples of major emergencies include the convergence of the geophysical, medical, social and hydrometeorological sciences in responding to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 or in interpreting the post-earthquake cholera outbreak in Haiti.
3. UK Government first called for improved interaction with the disaster science community in its 2011 Humanitarian Emergency Response Review. This was repeated in the 2012 Government Office of Science Foresight Report on Reducing the Risk of Future Disasters. UK Government's responsibilities under: the UNISDR Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; 2015); disaster related commitments associated with the International Climate Change negotiations (COP21; 2015) and the World Humanitarian Summit (2016) place renewed emphasis on science and on evidence based policy and practice.
4. There are currently a number of networks and individual units within the UK research community which focus on various research challenges relating to hazards, disasters, risk and resilience. These currently work independently and in ad hoc collaboration. Consequently, there is a lack of coordination that would make a coherent voice for the DRR community and achieve more than they can by working individually.
5. The UK Disasters Research Group (UK-DRG)¹ proposed the merit of creation of an overarching academic research network. This research network would not replicate existing efforts, but add

¹ The UK Disasters Research Group exists to informally share information on research and investment plans or policy interests and to gain an update on international research initiatives. It mostly comprises UK research funders and users (as opposed to primary researchers), as well as experts linked to international initiatives to promote coordination, networking and collaboration opportunities at the UK and international level.

value through multi-disciplinary approaches and activities that can best be achieved by working together. Consequently the DRG brought together five experts² during the winter of 2014 to assess the added value of a multi-disciplinary research collaboration; the components and activities a national, DRR research collaboration should include; the best model of governance and finance; and resource issues. This group proposed the development of a network. A larger group of researchers met in April 2016 to establish UK-ADR, and to develop a formal Constitution for the provisional period of UK-ADR from April 2016, until the appointment of an elected Chair no later than 1 January 2018.

Scope

6. UK DRR research is recognised as spanning that of universities and other educational institutions, charitable trusts, think tanks and research departments within government agencies, private business, civil society, NGO and humanitarian organisations originating from or based within the UK.
7. UK-ADR understands science on disaster risk and its management to be interdisciplinary. There is an emphasis on integrated and applied dimensions of knowledge production, recognising, however, that applied work rests upon strength in fundamental science. This includes work from the social sciences, engineering and technology, economics, behavioural sciences, medical and health sciences, agricultural science, information technology, arts and humanities, physical and natural sciences.
8. The Alliance is independent and inclusive. Membership is open to individuals employed by or studying at any research and capacity-building institution based in the United Kingdom active in research for disaster risk and its management, as reflected in paragraph 7 above.
9. The focus is on all contexts and systems of disaster risk, its management and relationship to sustainable development across an interconnected world. This includes, but is not limited to work on disaster risk reduction, prevention and preparedness, disaster response, reconstruction, recovery and resilience and transformation.

Aims

10. The UK-ADR goal is to aid the UK government in implementation of initiatives designed to minimise the global impact of disasters, in particular through the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. To achieve this, the primary function of UK-ADR is to represent the research community at government level in the UK.
11. Specific functions of the UK-ADR are to engage the UK government, build a research community and strengthen UK science:

Engaging UK Government

- Advocate for UK science to UK Government
- Serve as a contact point for UK Government seeking the best UK science input

² Paul Bates (University of Bristol); Andrew Collins (Northumbria University); Sari Kovats (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine); Mark Pelling (King's College London) and Susanne Sargeant (British Geological Survey).

- Provide a mechanism for UK Government to communicate emerging needs to the UK science community.
- Drive an increase in funding of multi-disciplinary research by providing a forum for multi-disciplinary collaborations;

Community Building

- Provide a platform to interface with international initiatives, for example the Science and Technology Advisory Committee (STAG) of the UN, Integrated Research for Disaster Risk (IRDR) programme and Global Alliance of Disaster Research Institutes (GADRI);`
- Coordinate members and partner with other associations in response to an emergency/ disaster or call for advice;

Strengthening science

- Identify multi-disciplinary research gaps as well as priorities;
- Share information on research and funding opportunities;
- Develop and recommend processes to facilitate and sustain uptake and impact of DRR research;

Governance

13. Membership of the UK-ADR is open to all UK-based researchers involved in the provision of disasters focused research.

14. Governance for UK ADR will consist of:

- a. Chair, or co-chairs
- b. Treasurer
- c. Secretary
- d. Website and Communications Coordinator
- e. Champion for Junior Researchers
- f. Disciplinary Champions

15. The Chair or Co-Chairs will provide overall strategic leadership, convene board meetings, represent UK ADR on UK DRG and other bodies.

16. The Treasurer will have responsibility for budget planning, financial collection and payment.

17. The Secretary will support other post holders and with the Chair/Co-Chair lead on specific projects as these arise.

18. The Website and Communication coordinator will maintain a membership database, e-list, and dedicated website. Coordination of additional communications tools including policy-briefs, blogs and conference planning and routine communication with members.

19. The Champion for Junior Researchers will liaise with and represent UK ADR with students, post-doctoral researchers and junior research, policy and practice communities to support the aims of UK ADR.
20. Disciplinary Champions will liaise with and represent discrete academic and policy or practice communities to support the aims of UK ADR. These are likely only to be identified following the interim period.
21. Posts will be appointed or nominated in the inception period. Full elected posts will be created no later than 1 January 2018. Elections for post holders will be open to all UK ADR members. Posts will have a three year term and can be held for two terms. Elections in each three year cycle will be :
 - a. Year 1: Chair, or co-chairs; Website and Communications Coordinator
 - b. Year 2: Treasurer, Secretary, Junior and Disciplinary Champions
22. The UK ADR Committee will serve as the decision-making body for UK ADR. It will be chaired by a UK ADR Chair/co-Chair with membership extended to all post holders, observer status will be available to external bodies including academic, government and other groups at the discretion of the Chair. Decision-making will be by majority vote with the meeting chair holding a casting vote. A quorum will be needed of the chair and three committee members, excluding those with observer status. Committee meetings will be every six months and can be held by skype or in person. Exceptional meetings can be held if specific decisions are required.
23. There may be occasions when it will be necessary to establish ad hoc Sub-Groups to complete a specific piece of work, or where data or preparation needs to be undertaken by a specific sector or named partners. These Sub-Groups will only exist for the duration of the task around which they were established. The UK-ADR will usually agree and lead on the strategic direction of the activity being undertaken by a Sub-Group, however, ad-hoc Sub-Groups may be arranged by the Chair/co-Chair or Committee to address short-term issues. Where actions are recommended by a Sub-Group, these must be ratified by the main UK-ADR Committee.
24. The UK-ADR is both multi-institutional and non-departmental; members support the group because they anticipate the benefits of improved DRR delivery that will accrue through collaboration facilitated by the UK-ADR. The UK-ADR is thus self-governing. Whilst the Committee and the post-holders will be supported by particular research institutions, the UK-ADR has no primary sponsoring organisation or department. All members are expected to support the participation of their representatives on the UK-ADR.
25. The UK-ADR and UK Disasters Research Group (UK-DRG) will work closely including observational status for the chairs of each group on their respective boards. This is to provide a direct link between the UK science community, research funders and government.
26. A review of the Constitution and Workplan will be undertaken at least every three years to ensure continuing relevance. At this point an end of period report outlining the group's successes over the previous three years and progress in achieving its objectives will be developed and published. The next review is due three years after the election of the first UK-ADR Chair. A UK-ADR Chair election will occur at the same time.