

CLIVAR Working Groups / Task Teams ToR Guidelines

Version 1.0

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Introduction

These Terms of Reference (ToR) Guidelines establish the governance framework and operational guidance that support scientific excellence, diversity, respectful collaboration, and continuity across CLIVAR Working Groups and Task Teams, ensuring transparent, inclusive, and accountable functioning. CLIVAR (Climate and Ocean: Variability, Predictability and Change) operates under the overarching scientific, ethical, and community values of the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP). All CLIVAR Working Groups and Task Teams and their members are expected to adhere to the [WCRP Code of Conduct](#).

The following two sections cover ToR guidelines for:

1. CLIVAR Working Group
2. CLIVAR Task Team

Note that the guiding principles and rules are the same or similar for both the WGs and TTs, but for completeness for each, they are all listed in both sections.

1. Terms of Reference guidelines for the CLIVAR Working Group

Purpose: A CLIVAR Working Group is established to provide long-term sustained coordination, collaboration, and strategic support on specific scientific themes and priorities within CLIVAR.

Structure: Each CLIVAR Working Group should be affiliated with at least one CLIVAR Parent Body (PB) - either the SSG, a Panel, or a Research Focus project, depending on the WG's scientific scope and thematic focus. Communication between the WG and its PB should be maintained through the WG's leadership and a PB liaison, appointed by the PB's leadership.

Establishment: A new Working Group (WG) should be proposed by the Working Group's leadership with clear justification, objectives, scope,

anticipated deliverables, structure and membership to a parent body, defined above. A Parent Body can also commission a Working Group, with the same criterion listed above. If the WG's theme encompasses other WCRP Core Project(s) and/or Lighthouse Activities and is proposed as a joint WG, approval from those Project(s)/Activities is also needed.

Term: A CLIVAR Working Group should normally operate for a minimum term of two years with regular reporting and assessments to its parent body. The initial term should be defined at the time of establishment. Extensions may be granted, as appropriate, based on progress toward the Working Group's objectives and the time required to complete its planned activities.

Membership and Leadership: Working Group membership should follow the [CLIVAR Membership Guidelines](#).

Operations: Operational procedures for Working Groups can be found in the [CLIVAR Membership Guidelines](#). The Working Group leadership is responsible for organizing and coordinating these activities, including scheduling and conducting online/in-person meetings. In exceptional circumstances, the CLIVAR ICPO can assist with extra administrative support.

Funding: Funding requests for Working Groups can be found in the [CLIVAR Membership Guidelines](#). CLIVAR has very limited funds from WCRP, and requests for these funds are through their respective Parent Bodies.

Reporting and Liaison: To maintain active coordination with its parent body, each Working Group should provide regular updates on its activities, progress, and outcomes at the parent body's meetings or through other agreed reporting mechanisms. Working Group leadership or designated liaison is responsible for ensuring consistent communication and reporting to its affiliated parent body.

Deliverables: Each Working Group should define clear objectives, expected deliverables, and timelines, in its ToR created at the WG's establishment. Deliverables may include recommendations, assessments, reports, strategic guidance, or proposals for future CLIVAR activities.

Review and Closure: Each Working Group should undergo an annual review by its parent body to assess progress against its objectives and determine whether it continues to serve its intended purpose. The outcome of the review should be reflected in the parent body's annual report. When the Working Group has fulfilled its objectives, or is no longer effective to reach the objectives, the WG leadership or its parent body may recommend closure, reconfiguration, or other appropriate action. Inactive WGs should be marked "Closed" on the CLIVAR websites.

Conduct: All Working Group members are expected to operate in accordance with the [WCRP Code of Conduct](#) and the CLIVAR principles of scientific excellence, inclusivity, and respectful collaboration.

2. Terms of Reference guidelines for the CLIVAR Task Team

Purpose: A CLIVAR Task Team is established to provide time-limited, focused coordination and response to urgent, emerging, or targeted strategic, scientific, or technical issues.

Structure: Each CLIVAR Task Team (TT) should be affiliated with at least one CLIVAR Parent Body - either the SSG, a Panel, a Research Focus project, or a Working Group, depending on the scope and thematic focus. Communication between the TT and its parent body should be maintained through the TT's leadership and a PB liaison, appointed by the PB's leadership.

Establishment: A new Task Team (TT) should be proposed by the TT's leadership with clear justification, objectives, membership, scope, anticipated deliverables, structure and membership to a parent body, defined above. A Parent Body can also commission a TT, with the consent of the Parent Body's upstream management. When endorsed by the parent body, the TT proposal should be reviewed by the CLIVAR SSG for approval. If the TT's theme encompasses other WCRP Core Project(s) and/or Lighthouse Activities, or other CLIVAR Panels, RFs, and is proposed as a joint TT, approval from their leadership is also needed.

Term: A CLIVAR Task Team should normally operate for no more than 18 months from the date of its formal establishment, as determined by the parent body, to address specific urgent, emerging, or time-sensitive issues, with regular reporting and assessments to its parent body. If its activities or objectives require continuation beyond this period upon progress review, extension can be considered by its parent body.

Membership and Leadership: Task Team membership should follow the [CLIVAR Membership Guidelines](#).

Operations: Operational procedures for the Task Team can be found in the [CLIVAR Membership Guidelines](#). The TT leadership is responsible for organizing and coordinating these activities, including scheduling and conducting online/in-person meetings. In exceptional circumstances, the CLIVAR ICPO can assist with extra administrative support.

Funding: Funding requests for Task Teams can be found in the [CLIVAR Membership Guidelines](#). CLIVAR has very limited funds from WCRP, and requests for these funds are through their respective Parent Bodies.

Reporting and Liaison: To maintain active coordination with its parent body, each Task Team should provide regular updates on its activities, progress, and outcomes during its parent body's meetings or through other agreed reporting mechanisms. Task Team leadership or designated liaison is responsible for ensuring consistent communication and reporting to its parent body.

Deliverables: Each Task Team should define clear objectives, expected deliverables, and timelines at its establishment in its ToR at the time of its establishment. Deliverables may include recommendations, assessments, reports, strategic guidance, or proposals for future CLIVAR activities.

Review and Closure: At the end of its term, each Task Team should undergo review by its parent body to assess progress against objectives, determine whether its mandate has been fulfilled, and recommend closure, extension in rare cases, or through formal transition to a Working Group, or other

appropriate action. Inactive TT should be closed and removed from CLIVAR websites.

Conduct: All Task Team members are expected to operate in accordance with the WCRP Code of Conduct and CLIVAR principles of scientific excellence, inclusivity, and respectful collaboration.

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Version 1.0: Virtually/online reviewed with consent by CLIVAR SSG members by 15 August 2026.