

As the end of the Decade rapidly approaches and preparations for key meetings and celebrations gather pace, the RCE community is encouraged to recognise – and to take – the unique opportunity presented: we are invited to engage fully in the tasks necessary to make the outcomes of the events *count*. For we are celebrating not only the end of the (first) Decade, but – and arguably more importantly – consolidating our foundations for the next. It is important that the RCE community emerges more visible, more clearly understood and more accessible, in order that we can maximise our opportunities and impact in the next decade.

With this current opportunity in mind, and based on the series of reported regional meetings and discussions with European RCEs over the past 2 years, we have identified the following three strategic priorities for our immediate collective attention, in order to prepare European input to the forthcoming high level (UN agencies et al.) decision-making events, and to prepare effective tools for our own, individual RCEs', future use:

1. *Priority Concerns*: current priority concerns of strategic importance for RCEs – to bring these to the attention of those who wish to support us but do not sufficiently understand how and where their support can most effectively be given (amongst others, UNU and EU bodies);
2. *USP*: The characterisation and communication of our difference / uniqueness (our so-called 'USP', or 'Unique Selling Point') – this quality of RCEs has proven extremely difficult to capture in a few words, and yet it is essential that we do so if we are to attract and maintain influential and resourced support;
3. *Evaluation and Reporting*: clarification, development and streamlining of our evaluation and reporting activities – to ensure that arrangements for our future governance and our substantive work are transparent, trusted and fully conducive to our purpose.

With these strategic themes for guidance, **we would like to invite responses from the European RCEs to the following questions:**

1. *Priority concerns*

- 1.1 What are the three most important issues that pose a threat to the continued operation of your RCE?
- 1.2 What are the three most significant barriers that prevent your RCE from achieving its desired work? Please explain *how* they cause difficulty.
- 1.3 How could UNU support your RCE to counteract these points?
- 1.4 What is working well?

2. *USP*

- 2.1 How do you/would you describe the USP of your own RCE?
- 2.2 How do you/would you describe the USP of the European RCE community?

3. *Evaluation and Reporting*

- 3.1 Why / why not, and to what extent, do you believe that there should be a reporting and / or an evaluation process in place for RCEs? Please explain your ideas. For example, what should be the purpose of any such scheme(s); who should design and operate it/them; should individual input to it/them be compulsory or discretionary?
- 3.2 What do you understand to be the purpose to which the information about our RCEs, hitherto gathered by the RCE Service Centre via the RCE Portal each year, is put? Do you have any comments about current or future annual reporting?
- 3.3 How would you describe the purpose of the proposed 'Evaluation' scheme for RCEs? Do you have any comments or ideas about the scheme as currently proposed, or suggestions for its future development/design?

3.4 The RCE Award aims to highlight excellence in ESD and to incentivise improvement. Do you have any comments about what aspects of the Award work well for this purpose, or how it could do so more effectively?

You will need to login to the RCE Portal before being allowed to post comments. If you have not yet received login information for the Portal, please contact the Global RCE Service Centre (rceservicecentre@ias.unu.edu).

When responding, please:

- post your views on the dedicated discussion space provided on the RCE portal, to help us reinvigorate our online, transparent, forum;
- make clear whether your responses are a summary of the views expressed by your RCE participants, or whether they are your own views, as your RCE representative?

We aim to use the space for facilitating detailed discussion on such strategic and governance questions. For example, we might ask, “How could we learn from your own RCE’s governance strategies and arrangements?” We know that such online discussion opportunities have been initiated in the past, but have been poorly used.

Do you have any comments or ideas about how we might best ensure and facilitate a more active and effective online discussion forum for European RCEs?

Thank you.

Detlev Lindau-Bank@uni-vechta.de

J.Claricoates@swansea.ac.uk