Guidelines for RCE Applications

RCEs seeking acknowledgement should submit a main application document and a short summary to UNU-IAS, the Secretariat of the Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs. RCEs are networks with clearly defined action plans, which need prior development of a vision, measurable short and long-term objectives, and strategies to achieve these. It is therefore essential that the application includes this information. Moreover, the action plans should include activities that go beyond the everyday business of member organizations. These activities should clearly demonstrate the value-addition of the RCE network.

The application should also be developed keeping in view the four core elements of an RCE – governance, collaboration, research and development (R&D) and transformative education activities.

1. Required Information

RCE candidates should send main applications and application summaries that provide sufficient information on the following issues:

Background information
- ❑ Contact information of main and alternate contact persons
- ❑ Geographical scope (justification on why the geographical scope was selected)
- ❑ Major characteristics of the region – environmental, socio-cultural, demographical, economic, educational characteristics, etc.
- ❑ Maps – two maps, one indicating the location of the region in the country or continent, and the other delineating the geographical scope of the RCE
- ❑ Major sustainable development (SD) challenges of the region

RCE Vision
- ❑ Clear and specific RCE vision
- ❑ Both long-term & short-term objectives
- ❑ Strategies/scenarios to achieve vision and objectives

Governance and management
- ❑ Evidence of mobilization process to develop RCE
- ❑ Identification of key institutions/organizations
- ❑ Governance/management structure of the RCE
- ❑ Short-term, long-term resource arrangements including financial ones
- ❑ Criteria and milestones for monitoring and evaluation
- ❑ Documents proving commitment from key institutions

Collaboration
- ❑ Collaboration among regional/local stakeholders
- ❑ Involvement of higher education institution, local schools as well as non-formal and informal education stakeholders
- ❑ Involvement of stakeholders from different sectors apart from educational institutes

<u>On-going and planned activities</u>
- ❑ Clear description of on-going as well as planned projects relevant to education for sustainable development (ESD)
  - Activities specific to individual organization(s)
  - Collaborative and coordinated activities of the RCE
- ❑ Transformative education component
- ❑ Research and development

2. Guidelines for Main Application Document

UNU does not require RCE candidates to follow a specific format for the application. RCE candidates can send applications in any format as long as sufficient information on the above-mentioned issues is included.

1. ***Contacts***: The application should include designation, organizational affiliation, postal address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses for <u>one main</u> and <u>one alternate</u> contact.

2. ***Geographical scope***: Two maps, one indicating the location of the region in the country or continent, and the other delineating the geographical scope of the RCE should be included. The latter should include information on key cities / districts / municipalities. The land area and size of population in the region should also be indicated. This helps the Global RCE Service Centre compare the scope and scale of RCE activities worldwide. In order to provide a portrait of the region, other major characteristics – environmental, socio-cultural and economic – should be described.

> *IMPORTANT: Before you submit the application, please verify, and confirm whether there are any existing RCEs in the same geographical area or the vicinity. You can find the list of the existing RCEs and their profiles on the RCE portal site (https://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/rces-worldwide). If there would be geographical overlaps, it is strongly recommended contacting the existing RCE(s), explore collaboration opportunities and seek to plan the collective activities. Normally, geographical overlaps are not permissible. However, if there is a strong need to establish a new RCE despite the geographical overlaps, the reasons and justification should be clearly stated in the application. In this case, the submission of a record of communication with the existing RCE(s) and an elaborated plan for cooperation is strongly encouraged.

3. ***Regional challenges***: The threats that the region faces and challenges to sustainable development should be detailed. These should form the basis for outlining the RCE's objectives and activities.

4. ***Process of RCE development***: A history of the RCE development process should be part of the application. This should include information on how consensus for the RCE was developed and details on consultations with stakeholders. If key promoters for the RCE have been identified, the rationale and process behind the identification should be noted. RCE candidates are encouraged to identify several core institutions in the region which will work in collaboration to spearhead the process towards establishing an RCE. A list of key institutions that have committed to the RCE initiative, and background information on each of the promoting institutions should be included. It is desirable that the RCE includes institutions from various sectors – government, education, civil society and business – in its network.

5. ***RCE vision and objectives***: The creation of a global learning space is the vision of UNU for RCEs. However, each RCE may identify a site or region-specific vision in addition to the above. Long and short term objectives should be clearly identified and these should be in response to the regional challenges stated in the application.

6. ***Strategies and scenarios***: Means and strategies to achieve the listed goals and objectives should be detailed.

7. ***M&E indicators***: Milestones and indicators for achieving the RCE vision and objectives should be indicated against a timeline.

8. ***Governance / Management structure***: The application should include a description of the RCE's governance or management structure, keeping in mind that an RCE should serve as a platform for dialogue among regional/local ESD stakeholders. Care should be taken that the structure is not dominated by any single institution, but that a variety of stakeholders are involved. The institutions that are part of the structure should be listed and operational and decision-making methods of the RCE described. *Documents proving commitment from key institutions are essential to this process, and this commitment should be attached in written form.*

A clear explanation of how the RCE will follow governance principles, including that of accountability and transparency, should be part of the application. These principles should be reflected in the management structure of the RCE.

9. ***Resources and commitment:*** It is desirable, but not essential, that key institutions commit resources (financial and personnel) to promote RCE activities over a number of years. *It is recommended that letters confirming institutional commitment be provided.*

10. ***Collaboration among stakeholders:*** A university or higher-education institution should necessarily be a part of the RCE network. It is also desirable that institutions at various levels of formal education are involved. Descriptions on how the RCE will strengthen and utilize collaboration among stakeholders should be included. Stakeholders should be a part of the network regardless of age, gender or social status.

11. ***On-going and planned activities:*** Proposed activities should be relevant and in line with the regional challenges and objectives of the RCE, as well as the three pillars of sustainable development – environment, society and economy.

Existing activities of participating organizations and those activities developed specifically for the RCE should be differentiated. Pre-existing activities that are modified in scope or scale or in any other way to fit the RCE context should be explained. Partner organizations and their responsibilities in implementing activities should be detailed.

Planned activities should include those on research and development and on transformative education. R&D activities should be aimed at improving ESD, and should incorporate science and technology. Collaborative activities should also be listed. Transformative education activities should be aimed at moving education systems towards sustainable living and livelihood. The RCE should address issues of curricula, pedagogy, corporate training and media as part of its activities.

3. Guidelines for Application Summary

In addition to the main application documents, RCE candidates are required to submit application summaries. The form for application summary can be downloaded from the RCE Portal (http://rce-network.org/portal/call-rce-applications).

The application summary should synthesize the main application document and should include only the most important and relevant information. It should be not more than 5- 7 pages in length.

4. Review Process

Interested RCEs should submit both a detailed application and a summary to the Global RCE Service Centre at UNU-IAS (E-mail: rceservicecentre@unu.edu).

Each application and summary will first be reviewed by the Global RCE Service Centre. The Global RCE Service Centre will then correspond with individual RCEs for clarifications or further elaborations of specific sections as needed. The applications will then be reviewed by the Ubuntu Committee of Peers, who will provide recommendations to UNU for RCE acknowledgement.

Background information on the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme of UNU-IAS, and on RCEs is available (http://ias.unu.edu/) and (http://rce-network.org/portal/) respectively.

5. Criteria for Acknowledging New RCEs

When reviewing RCE applications, the Ubuntu Committee of Peers will focus on the following essential elements.

IMPORTANT: Please note that a new application from the region that is already served by an existing RCE(s) is not permissible unless the additional documents specified in 2.2 are duly submitted.

1. Collaboration
   - Involvement of higher education institutions
   - Involvement of schools/school systems
   - Involvement of other stakeholders including non-formal, informal stakeholders

2. RCE Vision
   - Clear and specific vision for the RCE
   - Consideration of all aspects of SD – economic, social and environment
   - Regional challenges and relevance of proposed activities

3. Governance
   - Commitment of key institutions/financial sustainability
   - Governance and management structure
   - Monitoring/evaluation mechanisms

4. Evidence of mobilisation processes to develop the RCE

5. On-going and planned activities
   - Description of previous and on-going activities specific to individual organizations
   - Description of planned collaborative, coordinated activities
   - Research and development component
   - Transformative education component

Should you have any question, please contact the Global RCE Service Centre (rceservicecentre@unu.edu).