Applying to become an RCE

First Steps: Drawing a Blueprint for an RCE in your Region

{

1. Identify local problems, local priorities, and existing capacity in relation to the objectives of the DESD.
2. Identify interested parties and strategies to bring them together to build a vision for an RCE in your region.
3. Determine potential governance structure of an RCE. Who will be major initiators and promoters of the RCE?
4. Outline prospective actions to be implemented under the RCE framework in your region.

Core Elements of an RCE

1. Governance
- addressing issues of RCE management and leadership

2. Collaboration
- addressing the engagement of actors from all levels of formal (primary, secondary and higher education), non-formal and informal education sectors in RCE activities

3. Research and development
- addressing the role of research and its inclusion in RCE activities, as well as contributing to the design of strategies for collaborative activities, including those with other RCEs

4. Transformative education
- contributing to the transformation of the current education and training systems to satisfy ambitions of the region regarding sustainable living and livelihood

RCE Stakeholders

An RCE involves school teachers, professors at higher education institutions, local NGOs, scientists, researchers, museums, zoos, botanical gardens, local government officials, representatives of local enterprises, volunteers, media, civic associations or individuals who work in the spheres of sustainable development such as economic growth, social development, and environmental protection, students and learners at all levels.

Geographical Scope of an RCE

A region in the RCE concept is seen as a part of a country having solidarity in economic, social, cultural and/or natural conditions, like Bretagne, Tohoku or Catalunya, or a cross-border area of a similar size. The region should be sufficient enough in size to include various institutions such as universities, museums, zoos, botanical gardens, and more than a handful of primary and secondary schools, and small enough to make regular face-to-face communication possible.

Guidelines for RCE Applications

1. **Contacts:** The application should include designation, organizational affiliation, postal address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses for one main and one secondary 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 proposed 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 is helpful in comparing 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.

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, 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. **Monitoring and evaluation system:** Milestones and indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress in 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. The institutions that are part of the structure should be listed and operational and decision-making methods of the RCE described. Commitments from key institutions are essential to this process. It is advisable to secure confirmation of institutional commitments in written form and submit it with the application as a supporting material.

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.

10. **Collaboration among stakeholders:** A university or other 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 proposed RCE will strengthen and utilise 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 – environmental, socio-cultural and economic. 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.

Format of an Application Summary

In addition to the detailed application, RCE candidates are required to submit application summaries that are 4-6 pages in length. These summaries should synthesize the detailed application and should include only the most important and relevant information. An application summary should include the following information in the order listed.

— geographical scope and major characteristics
— major sustainable development challenges of the region
— process of RCE development and key institutions involved
— RCE vision and objectives
— governance / management structure of the RCE
— collaboration among stakeholders
— short and long term resource arrangements
— on-going and planned activities
— contact information

Criteria for Acknowledging New RCEs

The first meeting of the Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs, held on 5 December 2006 in Pairs, adopted the criteria for acknowledging new RCEs.

1. Collaboration
· Involvement of higher education institutions
· Involvement of schools (formal education stakeholders)
· Involvement of other stakeholders including non-formal and informal education stakeholders

2. RCE Vision
· Clear and specific vision for the RCE
· Consideration of 'three pillars' of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental aspects
· Regional challenges and relevance of proposed activities

3. Governance
· Evidence of mobilization processes to develop the RCE
· Commitment of key institutions to prove financial sustainability
· Governance and management structure
· Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

4. On-going and Planned Activities
· Description of previous and on-going activities specific to individual organizations
· Description of planned collaborative, coordinated activities
· Description of R & D components
· Description of transformative education components

Review Process

Interested RCE candidates should submit both a detailed application and a summary to:

The Global RCE Service Centre
United Nations University - Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)
6F, International Organizations Center,
Pacifico-Yokohama
1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-8502, Japan

Tel: +81-45-221-2300
Fax: +81-45-221-2303
E-mail: rceservicecentre@ias.unu.edu

The Global RCE Service Centre will provide advice on each application and application summary for clarifications or further elaboration as appropriate, based on the Guidelines for RCE Applications. The applications will then be reviewed by the Ubuntu Committee of Peers, who will provide recommendations to UNU for RCE acknowledgement.