

# **Constitution of** **the Centre for Invasion Biology (C·I·B)** **at Stellenbosch University**

## **1. GENERAL**

### **1.1 Name of the Centre**

The “Centre for Invasion Biology” <<https://blogs.sun.ac.za/cib/>>, known as **C·I·B**.

### **1.2 Status and Scope**

The C·I·B is a Type 2 academic and research entity of Stellenbosch University (SU) with a national, regional, and international scope and mandate. The Centre resides within the School for Climate Studies (a Type 3 entity at SU, standing alongside the ten faculties; referred to as the “SCS” in this document). As a Type 2 Centre, C·I·B’s activities are significantly interdisciplinary in nature, and it aims to enhance its activities and contribution within Africa, especially through scientific risk assessment in national and multi-lateral forums and global scientific and policy bodies, advancing technical guidance, and implementation of response actions. The constitution of C·I·B serves as a guide for the high-level management and strategic decision-making of the Centre. The constitution applies to all staff, associates, and projects regarding Centre-specific activities.

### **1.3 Vision and Mission**

#### **1.3.1 Vision**

The raison d’être of the C·I·B is to provide the scientific understanding required to manage the rate and impacts of biological invasions in a manner that will improve the quality of life of all Africans.

#### **1.3.2 Mission**

The mission of the C·I·B is to:

- undertake research and education that focuses on investigating the changes in biological diversity that are a consequence of biological invasions, the consequences for ecosystem functioning of these invasions and their remediation, and the longer-term effects of invasions on ecosystem services under climate, land-use, and other relevant environmental changes;
- pioneer internationally leading research regarding biological invasions, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning by pursuing research excellence, inter-disciplinarity, and local, regional, and international exchanges, with particular consideration where appropriate of the interrelationship between climate change and biological invasion processes;
- enhance the national and international standing of the Centre by means of a coordinated programme of innovative research, the products of which are broadly disseminated in the international literature; graduates who are sought after for their knowledge, expertise, and creative and critical thinking; a well-supported core and associated staff who are respected and trusted by their peers, clients and community;

- conduct policy- and management-relevant independent research that has impact, supporting managers, policymakers, and those tasked with monitoring and reporting on biodiversity change;
- be relevant to the needs of the community, focusing on South Africa in the context of trends shaping Africa and the global community;
- help build an Africa-wide community of practice on biological invasion;
- foster linkages within broader thematic (e.g., One Health and One BioSecurity) and institutional partners.

#### **1.4 Indication of viability and sustainability of entity**

This entity will maintain and grow the now internationally recognised reputation of the previously NRF-funded C-I-B Centre of Excellence, which has developed over more than two decades. The scientific and academic momentum of this entity has been maintained through the process of transitioning to an SU Type II entity while consolidating its staffing and implementing greater integration of activities and objectives with those of the School for Climate Studies.

The viability of the entity is strongly supported from a number of perspectives, including; 1) its ongoing engagement with its distributed core team (over 20 affiliated researchers and institutions, nationally and internationally), who provide substantive supervisory and academic capacity in exchange for the collaborative and synergistic value provided the entity, 2) growing links with national and international policy-related activities, evidenced by renewed funding from the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), direct engagement with senior government policy makers in the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, and leading roles in assessment processes such as the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Convention on Biological Diversity, 3) continued secondment of fully SANBI-compensated and financially supported senior SANBI scientific staff to the entity, 4) growing external funding sourced from national donors such as the Millennium Trust, EU-Horizon and other international funders of science and implementation for ecological sustainability 5) growing recognition of the value of predictive knowledge and management guidance derived from this entity especially in the face of increasing risks due to development and climate trends, and especially the need for continued inclusion in Stellenbosch University Science curricula, and 6) the natural fit between the theory and practice in managing alien biological invasions and nature-based solutions to climate change challenges, making this entity, together with the School for Climate Studies, the only Centre in the world deliberately engaging in research on the intersection between climate change and invasives risks to human society.

The financial sustainability of the entity will be assured, in conjunction with the School for Climate Studies, by building on its currently viable fiscal position with sustained and expanding 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stream income (post graduate throughput, some undergraduate and structured post graduate tuition fees, and publication subsidies), and 3<sup>rd</sup> stream income (funded research chairs, strategic contractual relationships with key national entities, sustained and growing relationships with donor funders, and international funding flows).

#### **1.5 Core Activities**

In line with the vision and mission of C-I-B, the Centre focuses on the following core activities:

### **1.5.1 Cutting-Edge Research**

The C-I-B's research targets all aspects of the phenomenon of biological invasions and species range changes, across all taxonomic groups, and all ecosystems. Better understanding of invasion patterns and processes is required, and options for management and remediation of the impacts and processes relating to endemic and introduced alien species need to be explored. Each stage of the invasion process (pre-introduction; initial incursion; expansion; and dominance) demands its own tools, insights, and types of study. The C-I-B undertakes work in several overarching themes: Biological or biodiversity foundations; model systems (e.g., invasion syndromes); human dimensions; basic inventories; modelling capacities; policy formulation; and risk analysis (including impact assessments). This suite of themes provides the scope for cutting-edge, innovative work in invasion science, while providing opportunities to draw in students and collaborators from diverse biological fields (from fundamental to applied) and many other disciplines.

C-I-B research spans all biomes in South Africa, including Sub-Antarctic Marion Island, and is geared to understanding invasions across southern Africa and more broadly across Africa, elucidating rules that apply to biological invasions globally. C-I-B investigates how biological diversity is altered by invasive plants, animals, and other organisms, and the effects these have on the functioning of ecosystems and the services such ecosystems deliver. Through research, the Centre makes scientific information available in the primary literature, and to assist policy makers and managers with rational decision-making options regarding invasive alien species and endemic species undergoing range changes.

### **1.5.2 Teaching and Training**

A core function of the Centre is to advance post-graduate teaching and training, including through:

Co-delivering post graduate degrees with the Faculties, as well as co-teaching on modules and co-supervise students as part of degree programmes in the Faculties.

Opportunities for knowledge exchange and student training workshops.

Post-experience training, including for government officials.

### **1.5.3 Knowledge Co-Production and Social Impact**

The activities of the Centre are premised on a transdisciplinary, knowledge co-production approach, and are conducted in active collaboration with diverse partners and stakeholders, including government, communities, and various external partners.

### **1.5.4 Fund-raising**

The Centre will actively raise external funds to support its research program and has had great success to date in this regard. The majority of C-I-B staff will be funded via external funds. Funding to support postgraduate studies, and integration of post-graduate students into C-I-B's research programs, are actively pursued as part of the fund-raising initiatives. Income from PG co-supervision and research outputs will accrue to C-I-B on a pro-rata basis.

### **1.5.5 Transformation**

The Centre will actively pursue transformation by prioritising the employment and promotion of research staff from historically disadvantaged groups; the recruitment of postgraduate students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds; and interactions with a range of institutions within

South African and Africa more broadly. C-I-B has a strong tradition of internal mentoring and support and a focus on excellent science and transformation. Important areas of focus will be developing the leadership skills of junior scientists, and working to expand capability in invasion response and translational science.

### **1.5.6 Reporting lines**

C-I-B is an independent unit reporting to the Director of the School for Climate Studies (SCS). As the School does not have a Faculty Board\*, the Research Committee of Senate will serve to channel C-I-B-related matters to Senate when required. (\*The School does have its own Governing Board).

## **2 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

Responsibility for advising on, monitoring and approval of the overall strategic direction, academic performance and budget of the Centre lies with the Governing Board; responsibility for the strategic management of the Centre lies with the Management Committee; and responsibility for the operational and managerial responsibilities lies with the Director of the Centre. The decisions, functions, and competencies of these bodies, as set out below, are subject to the general policies of the University.

### **2.1 Governing Board**

#### **2.1.1 Mandate**

The Governing Board is responsible for providing advice, monitoring and recommendations on the overall strategic direction, academic performance, and approval and monitoring of the budget of the Centre.

#### **2.1.2 Composition**

The Governing Board consists of the following 12 members:

- a. The Director of the School for Climate Studies (ex officio), who will act as Chair.
- b. Vice-Rector: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies (ex officio) who will act as deputy Chair.
- c. The Director of C-I-B (ex officio).
- d. The head of scientific support of C-I-B.
- e. A Dean's representative from the Faculty in which the C-I-B Director is co-appointed.
- f. An appropriate C-I-B administration staff member (ex officio), who serves as a non-voting attendee in order to serve as the secretariat.
- g. Between one and five representatives of different Faculties.
- h. Between one and five local and international stakeholders/experts in biological invasions.

Faculty and expert representatives are nominated by the C-I-B Management Committee and appointed by the Chair of the C-I-B Governing Board. The members of the Governing Board, other than the ex officio members, each serve for a three-year term. Members may be re-appointed in accordance with the procedures described above.

#### **2.1.3 Functions**

The functions of the Governing Board are to:

- a. Advise on the overall strategic direction of the Centre.
- b. Monitor, evaluate and comment on the academic performance of the Centre.

- c. Advise and recommend on policies, strategies, business plans and budgets of the Centre for approval by annual faculty environmental planning processes.
- d. to approve and monitor the budget of the Centre.
- e. Recommend the Annual Report of the Centre for approval to the Board of the School for Climate Studies.

#### **2.1.4 Meetings**

- a. The Governing Board meets twice a year, around March/April (to reflect on the past year and approve the annual report from the previous year) and September/October (to provide strategic input on the coming year). Notice of meetings will be sent at least two months in advance.
- b. Special meeting(s) of the Governing Board may be convened by the Chairperson or by the C-I-B Director, or if 50% of the members request it.
- c. If the Chair is not able to attend a meeting, the deputy Chair will act as Chair.
- d. 50% + 1 of the members constitute a quorum.
- e. Decisions are taken by majority vote.
- f. The Chair has a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- g. Proper minutes of the proceedings shall be kept of each meeting. The C-I-B Centre Manager &/or the appropriate C-I-B administration staff member serving as secretariat per 2.1.2. f), above will be responsible for arranging meetings as well as keeping minutes thereof.

## **2.2 Management Committee**

### **2.2.1 Mandate**

The Management Committee is responsible for the strategic management of the Centre, including the Centre's finances.

### **2.2.2 Composition**

The Management Committee consists of:

- a. The Director (ex officio) of the Centre, who serves as Chair, and the Director of the entity (deputy-chair).
- b. The head of scientific support of C-I-B.
- c. one of the C-I-B appropriate administration staff (ex officio), who serves as the secretariat.
- d. Between one and four C-I-B staff members or associates representing key functions within the Centre, particularly contracts-related.

C-I-B representatives on the management committee may be either ex officio or nominated and voted for by C-I-B staff (all permanent staff plus any staff on fixed term contracts of greater than 1 year), depending on the function being represented. C-I-B representatives serve a term of two years. Members may be re-appointed in accordance with the procedures described above.

### **2.2.3 Functions**

The Management Committee is responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that the Centre makes progress towards achieving its Vision, Mission, and Core Activities.
- b. Provide input on the alignment of student supervisory activities with core research foci of the Centre.
- c. Provide input on policies and strategies of the Centre.
- d. Provide input on the business plan of the Centre.
- e. Provide input on the budget of the Centre.

- f. Provide input on and approve the assignment of supervisory and administrative responsibilities.
- g. Provide input on and assist with the strategic management of the Centre, including various internal management committees and the C-I-B website.
- h. Approve PG applications, ensuring that suitable supervisors have been identified.
- i. Approve nominations for C-I-B Research Fellows and Extraordinary academic staff appointments.
- j. Build and maintain relationships with SU partners in other Departments and Faculties, as well as with other national and international partners.
- k. Formulate and submit reports to the Governing Board for advice, monitoring and approval.

#### **2.2.4 Meetings**

- a. The frequency of meetings is determined by the Director(s), but must be at least twice year.
- b. A quorum comprises at least three members.
- c. Attendance by the Director (the Chair) is mandatory.
- d. Decisions are taken by consensus, and by a majority vote where consensus is not reached.
- e. An appropriate C-I-B administration staff member will be responsible for keeping minutes as well as arranging meetings.

### **2.3 Director**

#### **2.3.1 Mandate**

The Director will lead and manage the Centre to achieve its Vision, Mission and Core Activities, in consultation with the Management Committee. The Director will be replaced by the Director of the School for Climate Studies during director's absences.

#### **2.3.2 Appointment**

The Director of the Centre is appointed by the Director of the School for Climate Studies in consultation with the C-I-B Governing Board. The C-I-B Director is appointed for a 5-year term and may be re-appointed in accordance with these procedures.

#### **2.3.3 Responsibilities**

The Director is responsible for:

- a. Providing overall scientific guidance to the Centre.
- b. Developing the strategic business plan of the Centre.
- c. Developing the budget for the Centre.
- d. Implementing the decisions taken by the Management Committee, considering the advice of the Governing Board.
- e. Managing the human resources and finances of the Centre.
- f. Liaising with the University central administration to ensure that the human resources development, contracting, and financial activities of the Centre are in accordance with standard University practice.
- g. Ensuring financial responsibility in accordance with the current rules and policies of the University.
- h. Compiling annual reports to be submitted to the Governing Board.
- i. Liaising with other role-players inside and outside the University to advance the role of the Centre.

The Director reports to the Governing Board with respect to the functions and performance of the

Management Committee and the Centre, and to the Director of the School for Climate Studies with respect to human and financial resources.

### **3 HUMAN RESOURCES, APPOINTMENTS AND REMUNERATION**

The C·I·B will consist of the following staff:

- a. The Director
- b. The head of scientific support
- c. A C·I·B Operations Manager
- d. Administrative staff (permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time)
- e. Externally funded research and teaching staff (permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time)
- f. SU-funded research and teaching staff (full-time permanent, full-time or part-time contracts)

All human resource matters of the Centre will be managed according to the policies and procedures of SU:

- a. Appointments will be done by SU on recommendation of the Director and approval by the Director of the School for Climate Studies;
- b. Employment conditions will be in accordance with SU's then-current policies;
- c. Remuneration will be according to SU's policies and scales.

### **4 FINANCES**

All funds of the Centre will be controlled, managed, and accounted for according to the policies and procedures of SU.

- a. C·I·B will be funded through a combination of externally leveraged research funding, and internal subsidies earned (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stream funding) channelled through the main SU budget.
- b. The C·I·B Director in consultation with the Management Committee will be responsible for the allocation of funds within the Centre.
- c. The C·I·B Operations Manager will be responsible for daily management of finances, and daily administration of finances will be handled according to current SU rules. The relevant project leader/cost centre owner will be responsible for approval of expenditures, including approval of travel and accommodation costs of personnel, in accordance with SU policy and funder/project guidelines.
- d. On recommendation by the Management Committee, the Governing Board will recommend the Centre's annual report and integrated audited financial statements for approval at the first School Governing Board meeting of each year, reporting on the previous year.
- e. The Centre will enter into agreements with participating departments and other funding organisations on a case-by-case basis regarding formulas for sharing income associated with research projects and activities coordinated by the Centre.

### **5 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Quality assurance of the Centre is done in accordance with SU's quality assurance policy, relevant processes, and the quality assurance review of the Centre.

## 6 RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

In addition to compliance with the relevant SU Intellectual Property policies, the following guidelines apply:

- a. All students of the Centre who wish to publish research related to their studies at the Centre must do so under the banner of the Centre and shall use the address “SU-Centre for Invasion Biology (C-I-B), Department of X, University of Y” where the department &/or institute, university refer to the student’s home institution.
- b. If any person who is not a staff member of the Centre undertakes research with the Centre’s support, such research must acknowledge the Centre. All publications thus generated must list the affiliation with C-I-B, for publication subsidy purposes.
- c. All intellectual property generated by C-I-B remains the property of SU, subject to the stipulations of the research funder. Where a research funder requires ownership or licensed ownership of IP, this must be negotiated formally with regard to the IPO Act and SU Policy.

## 7 LEGAL COMPETENCE

- a. In terms of Section 20(4) of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, SU is a statutory body and the juristic person with separate legal personality which regulates the establishment and function of all matters connected with the faculties, departments, centres, institutes, schools or other bodies that form part of the centre, institute or school (known as CIS entities). Neither the C-I-B nor any other CIS can act as a juristic person: SU is the juristic person.
- b. Signing powers and accountabilities are determined by the current rules of SU.
- c. Liability claims are dealt with in accordance with the applicable liability policy of SU.

## 8 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

In the event of conflict that cannot be resolved by the Management Committee and the C-I-B Governing Board, the Director of the School for Climate Studies will appoint a committee or an individual to act as a mediator or arbitrator depending on the context and nature of the conflict.

## 9 AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be amended on the recommendation of a two-thirds majority of the Governing Board to (in this order):

- a) Management of the School for Climate Studies
- b) Academic Planning Committee, only for comments on academic and technical aspects
- c) Research Committee of Senate for recommendation to Senate
- d) Senate for approval.

## 10 DISSOLUTION

In the event of a need to dissolve the Centre, a motivation for dissolution will be submitted to SU’s Academic Planning Committee (APC) for consideration, including a signed statement by the Finance Division on how the financial balances of the Centre will be dealt with. This submission will also include a prescribed process according to Stellenbosch University guidelines and regulations for how



some or all the resources and functions of the Centre will be transferred to other SU entities, where applicable. The APC will either agree with the dissolution or refer it back for further clarification and resubmission.

A recommendation for final dissolution should be recommended by the Governing Board to (in this order):

- a) Governing Board of the School for Climate Studies
- b) Academic Planning Committee, only for comments on academic and technical aspects
- c) Research Committee of Senate, for recommendation to Senate
- d) Senate for approval.