



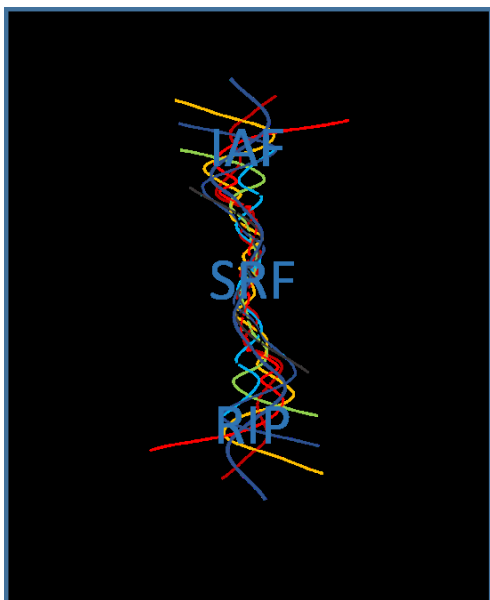
Tomorrow's CITIES

Urban Risk in Transition

The Phase 1-2 Hub Transition: next steps

Context

The central strategy of the Hub, presented as part of the original proposal, is summarised in figure 1. A broad activation across a wide range of research directions, locally organised around pre-identified existing policy or practice initiatives, would allow the Hub to begin to build partnerships, instigate multi-disciplinary, multi-hazard working practices and develop secure impact pathways. The Hub Mission provided high-level direction but allowed cities to explore a range of approaches. The intention was and remains that the outcome of Phase 1 would be assessed, leading to the development of Phase 2, around the most successful approaches and pathways, funded by the Hub Strategic Research Fund.



Graphic from original GCRF interview. The acronyms of the three funds have been added.

The Hub Research Inception Phase (RIP) has been hampered by COVID and, following the withdrawal of RNI, has progressed in an unforeseen way. The work of the Hub risk group was convened to develop an alternative to RNI more centrally focused on the Hub's mission, firmly anchored in in the RIP and with broad engagement across the four cities. The final report of this group, 'Risk-based, pro-poor urban design and planning for Tomorrows Cities' has landed well across most of the Hub and now provides a direction of travel for Phase 2.

Despite setbacks, we are in a very strong position that relates well to the original plan.

We now need to re-energise this work to drive forward a readjustment of research and impact strategies bringing about the required transition and culminating in a fully functioning Phase 2 research program by the end of 2021.

The Phase 1 - Phase 2 transition is critical to the Hub. Phase

2 must provide opportunity across all the cities, but will, as planned in 2018, focus on a subset of activity and involve only a subset of the initial team members, possibly together with external expertise to fill identified capacity and capability gaps. It will involve difficult decisions based on a quality assured programme going forward.

This document is **not** a plan for Phase 2 **nor** is it a direct continuation of the work of the original risk group. The Phase 2 plan is under active consideration and will be communicated as soon as possible. Broadly we have the timelines as outlined in Annex 1 but please note that these are indicative at this stage. Instead, here, we layout the basis of how we might move forward by testing the risk concept with impact partners so that it becomes a grounded framework for action.

Aim

This document describes a transitional strategy and its operational foundations both to quality-assure the risk concept within its various literatures and practices and test its assumptions as an operational framework for reducing risk for the poor in tomorrow's cities. If successful, it will pave the way to Phase 2.

Objectives

The document:

1. Recommends the reorganisation of risk research planning around a Risk Working Group that will quality assure and begin to test and modify the ideas in the risk concept note so that it is fit for purpose for Phase 2.
2. Lays out the structure, role and governance relationships of this group.
3. Describes the Proof of Concept project emphasising the importance of impact partners fully engaged in co-production including the engagement of new global impact partners.
4. Outlines capacity strengthening around the Risk Working Group and calls for the modification of the Hub Theories of Change.
5. Lays out an ambitious timetable and suggests how this work might fit into the path to Phase 2.

Managing the Transition

The document is focused primarily on supporting the transition from Phase 1-2 through accelerating our proposition within the risk concept note that, in turn, must resolve a contradiction in the Hub. On the one hand, the Hub has contracts with researchers, managers and impact partners which terminate at different times but many at the end of 2021. The relationships they have developed are important to the success of the Hub and to its ethos of equitable partnership. On the other hand, much of this activity, including some activity that is well aligned with the Hub Mission, does not align with the direction indicated by the risk concept. We must honour the former, while making every provision to facilitate a reorientation of research to overcome the latter.

Whilst this paper is focused on the risk concept note, we also recognise that there are other elements of transitioning which may be required in the next few months to place us in the best position for rolling out Phase 2. We also know that modifications of pathways to impact and various Theories of Change, may result from the work of the risk group and also the RiPs as they come to an end. Here we focus on the proof of concept for the risk concept.

While a more complete analysis and strategy leading to a Phase 2 launch is in preparation, the time limitations facing our research programs necessitate some preliminary decisions to quality assure our way forward. In the interim SMT have agreed to:

1. Release a Hub Transition fund (HTF)¹ to finance this assurance. It will use operational underspends arising from COVID travel restrictions (held by the various contracted partners

¹ This needs thought through. The introduction of a new fund solves some problems – it cleans up the end of RIP and ensures T&S underspends are used in a constructive way and gives this money back to the cities in a

across the hub) and the RNI departure as well as funding from our Strategic Research Fund. The budget still needs confirmation but will be in the region of £1.5-2m.

2. HTF will fund activities aimed at proof of concept but also at reorientation of existing RIP work so that it better aligns with the Phase 2 planning as well as developing new techniques and partnerships needed to drive this work forward in practice. i.e. we are aware that there is substantive T&S budget with various collaborators and our strategy is to ask colleague to propose how that can be utilised within these terms.

The Risk Concept

3. The risk concept note 'Risk-based, pro-poor urban design and planning for Tomorrows Cities', is now a clear statement of the direction of travel, and while it needs careful placement within existing work, it will guide the transition.
4. Arising from the recent meetings of the Hub Advisory Board, a small external working group has been convened by Mark to ensure that the risk concept is properly framed in terms of the Hub's pro-poor and intersectionality agendas. This may provide a short annex to the note.

The Risk Working Group

5. The original risk group:
 - a. Was convened in an informal manner to develop a work programme to replace the RNI,
 - b. Has taken on a critical role in the thinking around Phase 2.
 - c. Still meets and is currently considering the implementation of the risk concept including framing a Proof of Concept Project that will be an experiment in the application of the risk concept within the Hub.
6. Confusion exists around its role, its membership, its authority and its relationship with the Risk Research College.
7. In view of its emerging importance to the Hub, the group and these issues relating to it must be formalised and its relationship with the rest of the Hub clarified.

way which encourages them to bridge their activity to SRF funding. There are downsides – increased complexity, extra acronym. Obvious alternative is to bring the underspends into the flexible fund and call all of this SRF funding. Cities will feel they are being robbed so HR may give more clarity. Eliane needs to consider this carefully; we may have to consult NERC, noting that any consultation will attract attention at a very unstable funding time!?

8. In recognition of the cross-Hub and academically as well as geographically integrative role, distinct from the role of a Research College, we propose we dissolve both the Risk Research College and the risk working group replacing them with a new **Hub Risk Working Group (RWG)**.

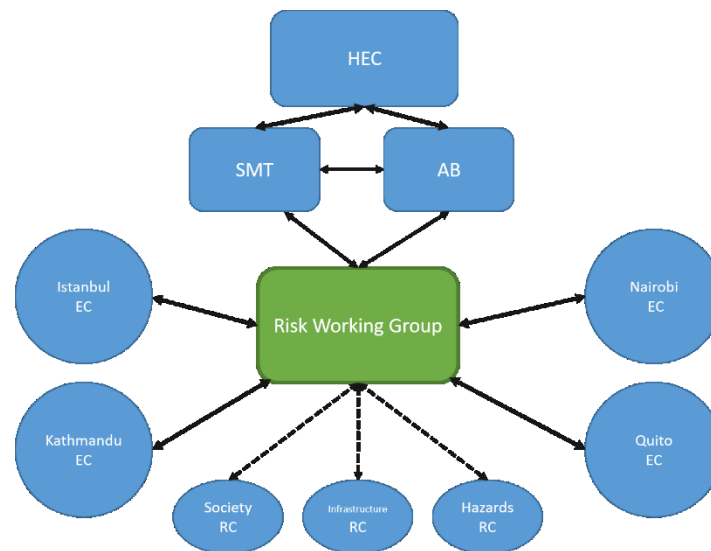


Figure 2. The RWG works with the City executives and research colleges to develop a set of phased proposals based on the risk concept which are reviewed by SMT and the Advisory Board with appropriate external support. Each stage will be signed off by HEC.

9. RWG will:
- Exist for one year in the first instance
 - Have no decision making powers
 - Report directly to SMT.
 - Produce in the first instance a clear plan of action in line with the current planning approaches (Gantt) and support mechanisms, and communicate the plan.
 - Progress reports will be standing items on the agendas of HEC, HRC, HIC and HAB.
 - Its meetings will be recorded and made available across the Hub
10. RWG will be open and inclusive but there is an operational requirement that it stay focused.
11. RWG membership and the communication between the city teams and the group are critical responsibilities of the City teams.
12. The following constraints have been considered:
- The members do not have any individual authority but represent the constituency from which they are drawn.
 - RWG does not subvert or overrule any Hub governance committee.
 - The total number on the group must be manageably small, so that operational decisions can be made and implemented and sufficiently large to represent the Hub.
 - The importance of co-production in the implementation of the risk concept prioritises the inclusion of appropriate impact partners (those with urban development responsibilities²) and representatives of global agencies
 - City executive committees (city leadership teams) must confirm city representation.
 - Cities leadership teams need to formalise 2-way channels of communication with the group to ensure that the city's interests are represented in the RWG.

² Such partners will not be limited in number once they have satisfied criteria including proven engagement with the Hub. Cities have already have had 3 years to develop such impact partners.

13. Given these constraints SMT suggest that the membership should comprise:
 - a. Carmine Galasso (Chair)
 - b. SMT: John and Mark primarily for research, Marina for the appropriate modification of the MEL system and Eliane for advice on management and finance.
 - c. Two Co-I representatives from each city, confirmed by the city executives, at least one from the local team.
 - d. Any number of appropriate impact partners to engage in the process of co-production³.
 - e. A member of the Hub Advisory Group.
14. In addition:
 - a. City leads and UK coordinators may attend any meeting of RWG
 - b. A small number of experts co-opted to provide particular disciplinary support.
 - c. A small number of ECRs with particular expertise will attend all RWG meetings
15. RWG will deputise working groups to carry out particular tasks as necessary. These may include non-RWG members, including expertise external to the Hub.

The Proof of Concept Project

16. RWG's main operational responsibility will be bring forward phased proposals (and plans) for a Proof of Concept Project to test the ideas arising from the risk concept. These will be modified as necessary and approved by SMT with appropriate external advice.
17. The Proof of Concept Project will be a unified cross-hub endeavour.
18. The Proof of Concept Project is not the start of Phase 2 but will inform that transition so is a critical link in Hub development.
19. The unification of Hub research requires the solution to several critical challenges.
 - a. City research teams are not equal, some are in a very strong position with respect to the planned direction and with strong research programmes and existing pathways to impact. Others are not.
 - b. Relationships, particularly with trusted impact partners are precious and delicate. City teams must feel no loss of control and ensure that impact partners are fully consulted in any engagement.
 - c. The Hub is committed to a 70:30 split in overseas : UK spend in Phase 2 providing a significant capacity challenge. (Note: we are constrained to a point with respect to some of our contracted arrangements. Any new finding or adjusted contract conditions will require a contract amendment. Eliane will provide a mechanism for capturing proposals or changes (to existing funding) and ensuring that due diligence and transparency is followed – especially with respect to UKRI ODA terms and conditions.
20. Cities must have a veto on any proposals relating to their work or work including their local stakeholders.
21. We note that impact opportunities across the Hub provide a genuinely global environment for researchers and a global pool of expertise for stakeholders.
22. HRF will attempt to maximise the impact of the Hub and the development of the greatest possible Hub legacy. This will involve closure of unsuccessful activities and non-linear funding of Phase 1 success.

³ Of course, many impact partners will contribute outside the RWG environment. The group will work to ensure that such interactions within city environments are communicated and evidenced with the RWG in agreed ways.

23. The RWG will work openly and inclusively to develop a framework of objectives, aims, work-packages and roles that cities can use to strategize their contributions to Phase 2, including capacity strengthening, and deploying technical expertise from one city in other cities where that is seen as appropriate. Inevitably, some clear and strong decisions will be needed at city level and some current work will terminate at the end of 2021. Note: we need to work through how the themes/work-package Gantt planning is captured for reporting purposes of each collaborator and that will be one area where the Edinburgh team will work with cities and the risk group. Equally considerations of the Theory of Change in city needs to be developed.
24. The SMT and RWG Chair will work with each city so that city strategies are appropriate and agreed.
25. The RWG will attempt to address the following questions:
 - a. What is the current state of the art in the various relevant literatures?
 - b. How can we quality assure the risk concept?
 - c. What impact opportunities have emerged from Phase 1? Which stakeholders are fully engaged with the Hub Mission and City RIP? Which are engaged with the risk concept?
 - d. What research strengths have emerged from Phase 1 that align with the risk concept?
 - e. Around which impact opportunities might the entire Hub coalesce? How can we reinforce engagement while protecting trust and other sensitivities?
 - f. How can each city contribute – particularly where they are required to support non-local impact?
 - g. What gaps exist?
 - h. How can we justify expenditure on filling these gaps in a particular location in a unified Hub project?⁴
 - i. Which expertise (research, policy or practical leadership) could be transferred across the Hub or beyond, by secondments especially into international agencies.
26. RWG will bring a set of phased proposals to SMT who will provide recommendations to the HRC and HIC to approve, in consultation with the Hub Advisory Board, based on fit to the risk concept.
27. SMT will work with RWG to establish a group of external advisors, including members of the Hub Advisory Board, to quality assure their work. This group may be called on by SMT, HRC, HIC, HEC or AB for comment.

Capacity Strengthening

Hub-wide, the SMT has proposed to the HEC that investment in capacity strengthening should happen urgently. A 20% role (Practitioner and Champion) has been approved to lead CS across the Hub and we plan greater investment through the transition fund that will provide a wider range of capacity strengthening activities in particular engaging stakeholder organisations including community groups and municipal and national government staff, as well as local Academics.

28. The development of the Proof of Concept and, ultimately, Phase 2, will identify requirements for capacity strengthening. HTF will provide funding to address these requirements, among others.
29. The Hub will recruit central staff to support and coordinate this process. The Hub team in Edinburgh will modify one of its staff team member's job description to improve support for capacity strengthening.

⁴ HTF will not duplicate activity already funded in the RIP.

30. We envisage that RWG will recommend substantial capacity strengthening to be focused on the delivery of the risk concept in the later part of the Proof of Concept project to be accelerated as appropriate in Phase 2.
31. SMT are keen to consider a wide range of capacity strengthening activities in particular engaging stakeholder organisations including community groups and municipal and national government staff, as well as local academics.
32. There is a clear role for our Research Colleges but it is likely that we require a capacity building champion to engage with each of the college leaders to bring a capacity strengthening strategy forward.
33. One of the minor benefits of the global pandemic may be the amount of material, already recorded across the hub, might easily be adapted to this role. Again, capacity building champion, with strong support from the Edinburgh hub, would be required to collate this information and combine it with other delivery methods.
34. We envisage that these will include online courses, possibly including award-bearing courses, summer schools and training workshops.

Involvement of Global Impact Partners

35. Global impact partners will be a critical part of our longer-term impact strategy and the planned legacy of the Hub.
36. It is strategically urgent that some existing groups and others, particularly the World Bank and the UNDRR, are engaged in the near-term to contribute to the framing of the Proof of Concept project and to quality assurance of its outputs. This is a matter of great importance and urgency.
37. SMT will support RWG in facilitating engagement with existing and potential global partners.

The role of SMT, AB and HEC

38. SMT will attend RWG.
39. SMT will review proposals from RWG for consistency with the risk concept, taking external advice as necessary.
40. RWG suggestions for funding will require formal assessment and SMT will make such arrangements as necessary to facilitate this process, where possible engaging members of the Hub Advisory Board.
41. HRF funding will finally be approved by the Advisory Board Chair or sub-group of the Board and finally by HEC.
42. The risk concept, the Proof of Concept project and any transition to Phase 2 will all have implication for the Hub Theories of Change.
43. Currently, the Hub theory of change is consistent with the risk concept but this tightening of our objectives should be reflected in additional constraints in this document. SMT will facilitate this process.

Timescales

44. The work of the RWG is important and urgent.
45. The initial funding of its work has already begun with the extension of Carmine's contract and the employment of Gemma Cremen in UCL.
46. RWG will:
 - a. Organise a series of meetings with global agencies to secure participation. Ideally by March 12th
 - b. Bring forward a list of recommendations for immediate funding by March 12th.
 - c. Submit a fully costed draft proposal for the Risk Pilot Project by March 26th.
47. SMT will:

- a. arrange external peer review for report to be completed by April 5th
 - b. Convene internal review panel on April 9th
 - c. Report outcome to AB Chair April 9th
48. The outcome will be presented for approval by HEC on the meeting of April 13th.
49. The Pilot project will report to the HEC by September 31st
50. The work of the RWG will run in parallel with the end of the RIP and with further preparation for Phase 2. Obviously these processes are all linked. Figure 3 suggests a possible timeline for the rest of 2021.

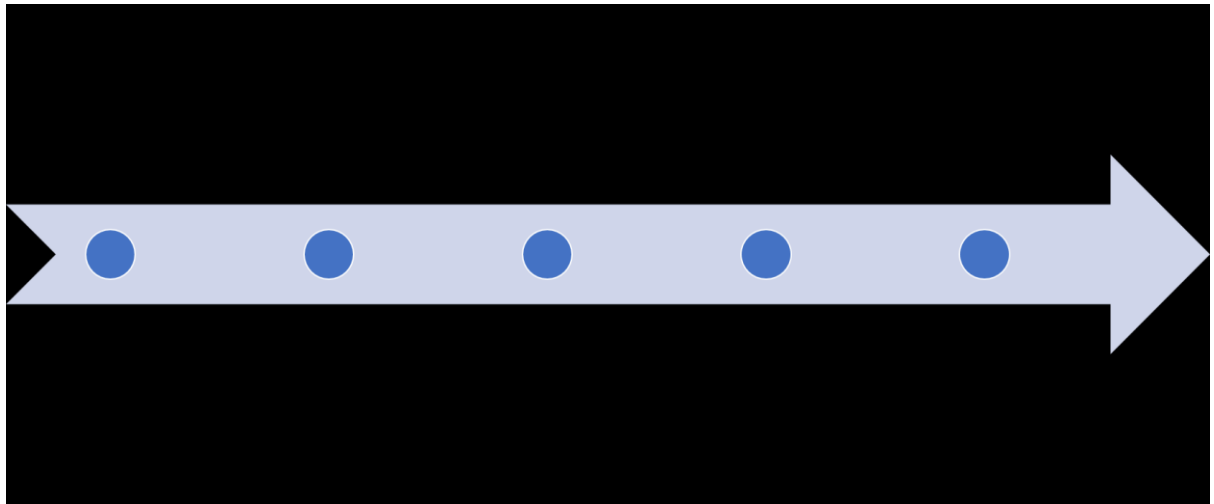


Figure 3. Indicative timeline for 2021.