

The International Science Reserve Announces Executive Board and Unveils its First Crisis Activation on Wildfire Prevention and Management

The ISR network unites 1000+ scientists from around the world in a collaborative effort to solve some of the most pressing global challenges with support from New York Academy of Sciences, Google, IBM, Pfizer, UL and others



NEW YORK, April 14, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- The [New York Academy of Sciences](#) (NYAS) and its founding members — including Google, IBM, Pfizer, and UL — today announced the official activation of the International Science Reserve (ISR). Recognizing that our world's scientific capacity exists across borders, institutions, and sectors, the ISR brings together global scientists across government, academia, and industries to collaborate across geographies and sectors to prepare for and help mitigate potential global crises – from future pandemics to the consequences of climate change.

As part of its ongoing mission, the ISR will facilitate access to specialized scientific and technical resources around the world; conduct scenario planning readiness exercises to increase preparation and anticipation of global impacts, and convene scientists from a wide range of countries to build institutional memory in crisis management and response. This initiative builds on the success of the IBM-led [High Performance Computing Consortium](#) (HPCC), which was established in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the helm of the organization is a newly created Executive Board with recognized science leaders from multiple sectors:

- **Nicholas Dirks, PhD**, President and Chief Executive Officer, New York Academy of Sciences and Co-Chair, ISR Executive Board
- **Darío Gil, PhD**, Senior Vice President and Director, IBM Research and Co-Chair, ISR Executive Board
- **Aida Habtezion, MD, MSc, FRCPC, AGAF**, Senior Vice President, Chief Medical Officer, and Head of Worldwide Medical & Safety, Pfizer Inc.
- **Philip Nelson**, Research Lead, Google
- **Robert Slone, PhD**, Senior Vice President and Chief Scientist, UL

- **Rick Bright, PhD**, CEO, Pandemic Prevention Institute and Senior Vice President, The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Lorna Thorpe, PhD**, Professor and Director of the Division of Epidemiology, NYU Grossman School of Medicine in the Department of Population Health Grossman School of Medicine, Department of Population Health

The Board will conduct detailed research and analysis to advise on the nature and scope of the crisis area that the ISR will address. When a crisis of transnational scale and sufficient urgency occurs, the Executive Board mobilizes the ISR. Additionally, **Mila Rosenthal, PhD**, was recently announced as the Executive Director for the ISR.

*"Science in the time of crisis is rapid, requiring quick decisions, on the basis of limited information," says **President and CEO of NYAS, Nicholas Dirks**. "Scientists should and indeed must play a critical role in the development of effective strategies for responding to crises -- from evaluating the multiple effects of different kinds of crises to providing possible solutions and directions for mitigation, immediate and short term as well as long term. We are creating a collaborative entity in the International Science Reserve that will help us to anticipate and prepare for what might be needed to respond to the next global crisis in the best possible way."*

*"The world needs the International Science Reserve," says **IBM Senior Vice President and Director of IBM Research, Darío Gil**. "Great crises have often been catalysts for institutional innovation in science and technology. The National Science Foundation and the U.S. National Laboratories were created after WWII. NASA and DARPA emerged during the Cold War. Our current crises demand that we innovate again, and this time, an international network of scientists spanning the private sector, academia, non-profits, and government, all united in a commitment to share expertise, prepare, and serve, is the right recipe to address the needs of the world."*

*"Pfizer applauds the creation of the International Science Reserve (ISR). The Covid-19 pandemic and climate change have demonstrated the urgent need for crisis-preparedness in the scientific community. We believe that the principles of "science without borders," "pre-wired circuitry," and open cross-collaboration will allow scientists to come together, provide innovative solutions and move "at the speed of science," says **Aida Habtezion, Senior Vice President, Chief Medical Officer and Head of Worldwide Medical & Safety, Pfizer Inc.** "Pfizer has been at the forefront of the pandemic response, aligning with ISR's focus on preparing and mobilizing scientists to augment existing response organizations in times of crisis. We are proud to be among the founding partners of this important initiative."*

*"The work of the International Science Reserve aligns with UL's mission of working for a safer world," says **Senior Vice President and Chief Scientist at UL, Robert Slone**. "We believe that anticipating and planning for high-risk events such as wildfires, pandemics and electrical grid failures are key to responsible corporate citizenship."*

The structure of the ISR is flexible and able to adapt to needs before, during, and after a complex global crisis. To explore and plan responses to possible crisis scenarios, a widespread network of 1000+ scientists is engaged in the ISR community. In addition to the scientists, executive board and funders, the ISR is building a [global network](#) of collaborators and members to augment and accelerate crisis response.

For the first readiness exercise, the ISR has engaged scientists to address the increasing devastating wildfires around the world. Recently, a first-ever United Nations scientific [assessment](#) on wildfire risks concluded that crippling wildfires could grow by nearly 60% by the end of this century – largely due to consequences of climate change. In the last two decades, there has been a [sharp increase](#) in wildfire season length, wildfire frequency and acreage burned.

The network of scientists directly recruited by the ISR are well-equipped to rise to this challenge due to their deep expertise and knowledge around crisis resolution. As a first test of the operating model of the ISR, the [ISR Readiness Exercises](#) for its pilot crisis area, Wildfires, has begun, and the ISR team has been synthesizing findings which will be shared with the scientific community at a later date.

About the International Science Reserve

The International Science Reserve (ISR) is a network of open scientific communities, bringing together specialized resources from across the globe to prepare for and help mitigate complex and urgent global crises. We focus solely on preparing and mobilizing scientists to augment existing response organizations. The New York Academy of Sciences is the coordinating hub of the ISR.

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