

Intersessional Steering Committee

11 January 2024

SOFF Regional Workshops

Intersessional Decision 2.1

Systematic Observations
Financing Facility

**Weather
and climate
data for
resilience**



Intersessional Decision 2.1: Approval of funding request for SOFF Regional Workshops

The Steering Committee

Acknowledges that the Updated SOFF Work Programme 2022-2025 adopted at the 6th Steering Committee includes a budget in the amount of USD 200.000 for the organization of SOFF Regional Workshops

Approves the disbursement of USD 200.000 for regional workshops and engagement

Requests

the UNMPTF Office to disburse the funds to WMO for the SOFF Secretariat to pursue the outlined regional workshops and engagement

the SOFF Secretariat to identify cost-sharing and co-financing opportunities from SOFF partners to ensure delivery of the outlined regional workshops and engagement

Ref.: 02168/2024.1.1.1

The 6th SOFF Steering Committee in its Decision 6.6 (Updated Work Programme 2022 – 2025) allocated USD 200,000 for regional workshops to foster regionally coordinated SOFF implementation. This document lays out purpose, principles and approach for SOFF regional workshops and engagement, envisioned to be carried out under the leadership of the SOFF Secretariat and in collaboration with SOFF partners until June 2025.

SOFF Regional Workshops Project Document

Ref.: 02168/2024.1.1.1

<p>Project Title: SOFF Regional Workshops</p>	<p>Recipient UN Organization: World Meteorological Organization</p>
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<p>Project Description: SOFF Regional Workshops</p>	<p>Total Project Cost for SOFF Regional Workshops USD 200,000 (including WMO 7% indirect costs)</p>
	<p>Project Start Date: 12 January 2024 Proposed Project End Date: 30 June 2025 Project Duration: 1.5 years</p>
<p>Recipient UN Organization and signatory: Celeste Saulo Secretary-General World Meteorological Organization Signature:  19.02.2024</p>	<p>Chair of the SOFF Steering Committee: Aage Jørgensen Co-Chair of the SOFF Steering Committee Signature:  19.02.2024</p>

SOFF Regional Workshops

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1. Context

On the 27th of November 2023, the 6th Steering Committee adopted with [Decision 6.6](#) the updated Work Programme for the first SOFF Implementation Period between July 2022 and June 2025. This updated Work Programme includes an allocation of 200,000 USD for regional workshops to foster regionally coordinated SOFF implementation. These workshops are in support of implementing the SOFF programming criteria ([Decision 1.4](#)), specifically the criteria on opportunities to create economies of scale and optimize the design of the observing networks through multi-country/sub-regional implementation. The 2023 [Independent External Review](#) of SOFF further emphasized the importance of regional approaches, in particular for coordinated implementation, procurement and sustainability of investments.

2. Purpose

The SOFF regional workshops aim at fostering regionally coordinated SOFF implementation, leveraging investments and climate finance opportunities beyond SOFF, and knowledge sharing and consultation on technical issues relevant to the respective regions. The workshops will prioritize:

1. Coordinated SOFF implementation:

- a. Coordination between countries within geographical regions e.g. on the placement of upper air and surface stations to ensure cross-border efficiency.
- b. Identification of opportunities for standardized procurement and GBON operation and maintenance practices which will facilitate economies of scale, avoid fragmentation and enhance the effectiveness of SOFF investments.
- c. Alignment of SOFF investments with existing regional coordination mechanisms and institutions and the activities of the other partners of the UN Early Warnings for All initiative in the region.
- d. Identification of regional training and learning opportunities to ensure interaction and consultations among SOFF partners.

2. Leveraging investments and climate finance opportunities beyond SOFF:

- a. Foster investments from partners, including SOFF Implementing Entities, for potential co-financing and parallel financing for the latter parts of the meteorological value chain.
- b. Foster collaboration between SOFF and the other multilateral climate funds, i.e operationalize the [Framework for Collaboration \(Decision 6.4\)](#) within the region. This will also ensure sustainability of previous international partners' investments in GBON infrastructure.

3. Knowledge sharing and consultation of technical issues relevant to the respective regions

3. Principles

1. **Partnership** building between SOFF partners, regional entities and initiatives within and across regions
2. **Flexibility** in approach and priorities of the regional workshops and engagements depending on the needs and technical requirements of the regions and financing opportunities
3. **Capitalize** on existing initiatives and efforts in the regions, including through cost-sharing and coordination with other events and engagements

4. Regional Workshops and Engagement

An overview of the tentatively planned regional workshops and SOFF-related engagements is outlined in the sections below.

4.1. Asia and the Pacific

4.1.1 Pacific

The coordinated regional approach in the Pacific will tap into the existing strong regional collaboration in the region. Regional coordination will align with existing Pacific regional architecture, such as the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC), and will allow countries to explore options for a standardized approach to bulk procurement of equipment and technologies.

The SOFF Regional Workshop is tentatively planned for 10-12 April 2024 in Fiji aligned with the UN-organized Advisory Action workshop and the CREWS Pacific SIDS Steering Committee. Cost-sharing with CREWS is envisioned.

The SOFF Regional Workshop is expected to cover the following items:

1. **Coordinated SOFF implementation** to identify opportunities for regionally coordinated procurement, operations and maintenance of the GBON network and regional training.
2. **Leveraging collaboration and investments in the region** including with CREWS to enhance the effectiveness of Pacific Islands and Regional Early Warning Systems. UNEP with GCF funding is implementing the project *Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean*, and the sustainability of GBON infrastructure investments through this project will require SOFF support. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology is engaged in the Climate and Oceans Support Program (COSPPAC) and the Weather-Ready Pacific Programme, which supports NHMSs in the Pacific to strengthen their hydro-meteorological, ocean, and other related environmental infrastructure networks and systems. SOFF is covering an important part of the infrastructure component of the Weather-Ready Pacific Programme.
3. **Consultation on technical issues important for the region** to ensure engagement of Pacific countries in the development of WMO guidance material for GBON marine observations and corresponding potential future SOFF support.

Table 1: SOFF operations overview in the Pacific¹

Countries	Peer advisors	IE
Kiribati	Australia	UNEP
Fiji	Australia	World Bank
Samoa	Australia	World Bank
Solomon Islands	Australia	UNDP
Nauru	Australia	UNEP
Papua New Guinea	Australia	UNDP
Tuvalu	New Zealand	UNEP
Tonga	New Zealand	World Bank
Vanuatu	New Zealand	World Bank
Federated States of Micronesia	United Kingdom	UNEP
Marshall Islands	United Kingdom	UNEP
Palau	United Kingdom	UNEP

¹ A potential inclusion of Cook Islands and Niue as SOFF beneficiary countries is pending SOFF Steering Committee decision

4.1.2 South Asia

The World Bank, in collaboration with several partners, is organizing the South Asia Hydromet Forum in February 2024 in Sri Lanka. The SOFF Secretariat has been invited to present SOFF progress in the region.

The SOFF Secretariat plans to tap this opportunity, including having all heads of national met offices present, to organize a tailored SOFF regional coordination meeting with the SOFF beneficiary countries. SOFF coordination will explore alignment with the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) project in South Asia.

Table 2: SOFF operations overview in South Asia

Countries	Peer advisors	IE
Bangladesh	Norway	IsDB
Bhutan	Finland	UNEP
Maldives	Finland - Indonesia	UNEP
Nepal	Finland	UNEP

4.2. Africa

SOFF is engaged across the African continent with currently 23 countries benefitting from SOFF support. SOFF’s engagement with Africa will take into consideration the specific regional circumstances and capitalize ongoing work in the region.

A priority for SOFF will be engagement with its partners in the region, including AfDB through leveraging synergies with its Climate Action Window launched at COP28.

The following tentative engagement is foreseen in the region:

- 4.2.1 **Western African francophone workshop** with AfDB to identify priority areas for co-financing through AfDB’s Climate Action Window and opportunities for maximizing SOFF investments. The workshop will also target regionally coordinated SOFF implementation with a focus on sharing technical facilities (such as validation, calibration and backup services) and expertise, regional capacity building activities for operation and maintenance and data processing.

- 4.2.2 **East Africa engagement through Water at the Heart of the Climate initiative** funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and led by IFRC, UNDRR, and WMO. The initiative is currently starting operations focusing on strengthening the whole value chain from observations to humanitarian action. It supports four to five African countries, all of them already benefitting from SOFF Readiness support.
- 4.2.3 **Atlantic SIDS engagement** in which the SOFF Secretariat will facilitate regional coordination and collaboration. In line with leveraging of investment opportunities, preliminary SOFF engagement in the region identified interest in a complementary GCF regional programme on climate services and early warning systems to be led by UNEP, based on the results of the Country Hydromet Diagnostic assessments in these countries, currently being undertaken as part of the SOFF Readiness phase in Cabo Verde, Sao Tome et Principe and Guinea Bissau. Follow up engagement in the region will expand on the SOFF approach for regional implementation, such as training, calibration of instruments, procurement, operations and maintenance.
- 4.2.4 **Indian Ocean coordination** will align with existing initiatives and institutions such as the Indian Ocean Commission promoting economies of scale and optimal coordination. A GCF-financed project in the Indian Ocean implemented by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) supports Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles to implement a multi-hazard early warning system and increase capacity in the region to manage risks and impacts of climate-induced disasters. SOFF is expected to play a critical role in ensuring observation infrastructure investments funded through this GCF-supported project.

Table 3: SOFF operations overview in Africa

	Countries	Peer advisors	IE
West Africa	Burkina Faso	Spain - Nigeria	AfDB
	Senegal	Netherlands	IsDB
	Liberia	Nigeria	AfDB
	Niger	Nigeria	AfDB
	Djibouti	Austria	UNDP

East Africa	Ethiopia	Norway - Finland	UNDP
	Malawi	Norway - Iceland	UNDP
	Mozambique	South Africa	WFP
	Rwanda	Finland	UNDP
	South Sudan	Austria	AfDB
	United Republic of Tanzania	Denmark	UNDP
	Uganda	Netherlands	IsDB
Central Africa	Zambia	United Kingdom	WFP
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Switzerland	AfDB
	Chad	Austria	WFP

Table 4: SOFF operations overview in the Atlantic SIDS

Countries	Peer advisors	IE
Cabo Verde	Netherlands	UNEP
Guinea Bissau	Portugal	UNEP
Sao Tome and Principe	Netherlands	UNDP

Table 5: SOFF operations overview in Indian Ocean countries

Countries	Peer advisors	IE
Mauritius	South Africa - India	AfDB
Madagascar	Germany	AfDB
Seychelles	South Africa	AfDB
Comoros	Morocco	AfDB

4.3. Caribbean

The SOFF Caribbean Program aims at streamlining GBON implementation in the region with a focus on coordinated SOFF implementation and leveraging of existing networks and investments in the region. A SOFF Regional Workshop is tentatively planned for 2024 with the following priorities:

1. **Coordinated implementation** will aim to standardize equipment procurement, enhancing spare parts availability, pursuing economies of scale as well as exploring options for regional operation and maintenance practices. Caribbean countries can leverage support from regional organizations like the Caribbean Meteorological Organization (CMO), the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC). Alignment and collaboration with a planned additional CREWS investment in the region will be ensured through regional engagement.
2. **Technical consultation and engagement** of Caribbean countries for the WMO technical specifications for GBON marine observations and potential future SOFF support.

Table 6: SOFF operations overview in the Caribbean

Countries	Peer advisors	IE
Belize	United Kingdom	IADB
Antigua and Barbuda	United Kingdom	UNDP
Grenada	Spain	
Cuba	Spain	UNDP
Dominican Republic	Spain	WFP
Guyana	Austria	IADB
Dominica	Austria	WFP
Saint Lucia	Austria	WFP
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	Austria	WFP
Bahamas	Finland	IADB
Barbados	Finland	IADB
Jamaica	IADB	

Saint Kitts and Nevis	IADB	
Trinidad and Tobago	Finland	IADB
Suriname	Netherlands	UNDP
Haiti	Switzerland	IADB

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5. Budget

The budget to support the SOFF Secretariat on the envisioned regional workshops and engagement will cover participants travel costs and contractual services related to the organization of workshops.

To deliver on all envisioned regional activities outlined above, there is a need to mobilize additional resources through cost-sharing with or co-financing from SOFF partners (e.g. with CREWS for Pacific regional workshop, with the World Bank for South Asia, or with AfDB for francophone Africa workshop). The SOFF secretariat will continue to identify additional sources of funding.

Cost Category	Cost (USD)
Non-staff Participants Travel	155,000
Contractual Services	31,916
Indirect support costs (7%)	13,084
Total	200,000

* Costs in USD and decimals rounded to the nearest whole number

6. Reporting

The SOFF Secretariat will report to the Steering Committee on the progress of the SOFF regional workshops and engagement in its regular SOFF Secretariat update at each Steering Committee meeting. Additionally, it is proposed that the SOFF Action Report 2024 will showcase the results of the SOFF regional workshops and engagement carried out during 2024.