

# **Eleventh Steering Committee 19-21 May 2025**

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## **Decisions of the SOFF Eleventh Steering Committee meeting**

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Systematic Observations  
Financing Facility

**Weather  
and climate  
data for  
resilience**



# Decisions of the SOFF eleventh Steering Committee meeting 19-21 May 2025

## **Decision 11.1: Adoption of the Agenda**

The Steering Committee adopts the Agenda for the SOFF eleventh Steering Committee meeting.

## **Decision 11.2: ECMWF SOFF Impact Experiments: A scientific case for scaled-up SOFF investments**

The SOFF Steering Committee

**Welcomes** the SOFF impact experiments undertaken by European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to quantify how new Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) observations reduce uncertainty in short-range weather forecasts.

**Notes** that the experiments provide

- The strongest scientific evidence to date demonstrating targeted investments in GBON infrastructure in under-observed regions dramatically improve forecast accuracy, both locally and globally.
- Rigorous, comparable metrics for demonstrating the impact of SOFF investments, providing a strong evidence base for the need for scaled-up SOFF investments.

**Requests** the SOFF Secretariat to

- Widely communicate the results of the study, including with potential additional contributors to the SOFF UN fund
- Widely communicate the results of the study in its engagement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process and the 30<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP30) Presidency.
- Reach out to potential public and private partners and philanthropies, in collaboration with ECMWF and WMO, and jointly prepare a proposal for a potential third phase of SOFF Impact work with a focus on the importance of SOFF-supported data for Artificial Intelligence forecasting.
- Present this proposal for consideration at the 12<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting.

### **Decision 11.3: Extension SOFF First Implementation Period and Preparation of the Expansion and Sustaining Period**

The SOFF Steering Committee

**Reiterates** the unique operational and funding model on which SOFF has been created to support countries in achieving sustained Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) compliance.

#### **Notes**

- That SOFF has been operating at speed and scale in response to high country demand but that the targets set for the First Implementation Period have not yet been fully met.
- That more time is needed to mobilize the resources to deliver on the operational targets set for the First Implementation Period.
- That building a closely knit SOFF operations community of practice has been a notable initial success.

**Welcomes** that SOFF has been operating at low overhead costs.

#### **Decides**

- To extend the SOFF First Implementation Period by two years until June 2027.
- To adopt the work programme and budget for the extended First Implementation Period and to review it in June 2026.
- To prepare the Expansion and Sustaining Period including by capturing operational lessons learned; strengthening the role of World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Technical Authority; finalizing the SOFF Compliance Framework; advancing the SOFF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework; and undertaking an external evaluation.

**Requests** the SOFF Secretariat

- To inform SOFF countries, their operational partners and SOFF stakeholders about the extension of the First Implementation Period.
- To coordinate the preparation of the Expansion and Sustaining Period as outlined in this document.

## Decision 11.4: SOFF Resource Mobilization Track Record, Requirements and Actions until June 2027

The SOFF Steering Committee

**Acknowledges** the SOFF resource mobilization track record to date and the efforts to achieve the Updated Resource Mobilization Action Program until June 2025 adopted at the 8<sup>th</sup> SOFF Steering Committee meeting.

**Notes** the resource mobilization requirements and scenarios to deliver on the extended First Implementation Period work programme until June 2027.

**Adopts** the proposed actions through June 2027, taking into account that decisions on SOFF Secretariat resource mobilization capacity and SOFF Impact Bond are taken through separate decisions.

**Agrees** to take stock of resource mobilization actions at the 14<sup>th</sup> SOFF Steering Committee meeting.

**Requests** the SOFF co-founders (World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Environment Programme), supported by SOFF Steering Committee members, Advisory Board members, operational partners and SOFF countries to actively champion the SOFF resource mobilization efforts.

## Decision 11.5: SOFF Impact Bond

The SOFF Steering Committee

### Notes

- High country demand with so far 101 countries requesting SOFF support, of which 66 countries have been programmed, 61 countries have approved Readiness funding requests, and 15 countries have approved Investment funding requests.
- Successful SOFF resource mobilization so far with pledges amounting to USD 107 million from twelve initial funders, which is a significant achievement but not sufficient to respond to country demand.
- A rapidly changing and increasingly challenging global fundraising environment.

### Welcomes

- Initial actions undertaken to develop the SOFF Impact Bond as a complementary and innovative vehicle for stepped up fundraising, including the creation of a senior bond development team and initial exchanges with potential partners and stakeholders.

- The confirmation from the Nordic Development Fund to support SOFF Impact Bond development with a booster grant, in addition to the two contributions to the SOFF UN Fund already made.
- The interest of the World Bank in potentially issuing and structuring the bond.

## **Decides**

- To pursue the development of the bond with utmost importance and urgency with the vision to announce the bond at 30<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP30) as an innovative contribution to the new climate finance goal established at COP29.
- To further engage potential public, private partners and philanthropies to seek their contributions to the bond.
- To take a final decision on the bond structure and bond governance arrangements at an extraordinary Steering Committee meeting, to be held in virtual format, as soon as partners have confirmed their interest in contributing to the bond, before any formalities are completed with any partners.

## **Requests** the SOFF Secretariat

- To further develop the bond structure and the proposed governance, including proposed adjustments to the existing SOFF governance arrangements, in collaboration with the World Bank, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office and potential bond contributing partners.
- To keep the Steering Committee informed about bond development efforts and to provide opportunities for interested Steering Committee members to provide feedback.
- To update the Steering Committee on the status of bond discussions before COP30.
- To present the proposed bond structure and governance arrangements to the Steering Committee for its consideration as soon as partners have confirmed their interest in contributing to the bond.

## Decision 11.6: Approach to Managing Country Funding Requests

The SOFF Steering Committee

### Acknowledges

- The commitment of countries to deliver their share to the Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) with SOFF support.
- The efforts of SOFF to respond to country demand, while recognizing the current financial constraints affecting the SOFF UN Fund.

### Recalls

- Decision 8.4.2 that endorsed an approach for responding to Investment funding requests in the context of limited financial resources.
- The request from the SOFF Steering Committee to further develop the approach to prioritizing all country funding requests.

**Recognizes** the importance of ensuring that funding is prioritized in the SOFF UN Fund to support Compliance activities, while balancing the needs of current investments in Readiness and Investment phases.

**Endorses** the approach to managing country funding requests for the remainder of the First Implementation Period, namely:

- To put programming of new countries on hold until further decisions by the SOFF Steering Committee.
- To put approval of new Readiness funding requests on hold until further decisions by the SOFF Steering Committee.
- To create a SOFF Investment phase pipeline following the prioritization criteria and process.
- To outline the details of Compliance Phase in a Compliance Framework, which will be presented for consultation at the 12<sup>th</sup> SOFF Steering Committee meeting and endorsement at the 13<sup>th</sup> SOFF Steering Committee meeting.

**Requests** the SOFF Secretariat

- To seek inputs from countries and operational partners about the approach to managing country funding requests, with possibility of further refinement of the approach at a future Steering Committee meeting.
- To make the SOFF Investment phase pipeline publicly available on the SOFF website.

## Decision 11.7: Adoption of the SOFF Secretariat Budget July 2025 – June 2026

The Steering Committee

**Appreciates** that the SOFF Secretariat has been managing the approved Secretariat budget July 2022 – June 2025 in a prudent manner, with estimated savings by June 2025 amounting to USD 312,497.

**Approves** the SOFF Secretariat Budget July 2025 - June 2026 amounting to USD 2,324,084 which shall be partially funded from the estimated savings from the budget for the period July 2022 by June 2025.

### Requests

- The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office to disburse the amount of USD 2,011,587 to the World Meteorological Organization.
- The SOFF Secretariat to keep managing the Secretariat budget in a prudent manner.

## Decision 11.8: Adoption of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Serving as SOFF Implementing Entity

The SOFF Steering Committee

**Recalls** that as stated in the SOFF Operational Manual, major multilateral development partners that play an important role in supporting countries' hydromet development are eligible to serve as SOFF Implementing Entities after a decision of the SOFF Steering Committee.

### Notes

- That the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) contributes its expertise in agricultural resilience and food security, helping to generate risk knowledge and tailor early warning systems to the specific needs of farming communities and that FAO is a partner to the UN Early Warnings for All initiative.
- The request from FAO to serve as SOFF Implementing Entity.

**Adopts** the inclusion of FAO as a SOFF Implementing Entity.

### Requests

- FAO to seek affiliation with the Alliance for Hydromet Development as a criterion for SOFF Implementing Entities.
- FAO to sign the addendum to the SOFF Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office

## Decision 11.9: Country Funding Requests

The SOFF Steering Committee

**Recalls** the conditional approval through Decision 8.4.2 of three Investment funding requests, in the following order: Samoa, Nauru, and Malawi.

**Notes** the approach to managing country funding requests for the remainder of the First Implementation Period outlined in Decision 11.6.

### Acknowledges

- Engagements and efforts among countries, peer advisors and Implementing Entities in the preparation of country funding requests
- The three submitted and reviewed Readiness funding requests for Cook Islands, Guinea, and Niue, as presented in INF 11.3.
- The three submitted and reviewed Investment funding requests for Bangladesh, Cuba, and Zambia, as presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting in INF 10.3.
- The three submitted and reviewed Investment funding requests from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guyana, and Sao Tome and Principe, as presented in INF 11.4.

### Decides

- To put the approval of the Readiness funding requests for Cook Islands, Guinea, and Niue on hold.
- To include the Investment funding requests in the SOFF Investment phase pipeline according to the prioritization in INF 11.4, in the following order: Zambia, Cuba, Bangladesh, Guyana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sao Tome and Principe.

**Requests** the SOFF Secretariat

- To engage with countries and their operational partners that submitted the country funding requests.
- To make the SOFF Investment phase pipeline publicly available on the SOFF website.

**Decision 11.10: Appointment of SOFF Steering Committee Co-Chair Representing the Funders**

The SOFF Steering Committee appoints H.E. Ambassador Willem van de Voorde, Special Envoy of Belgium for Climate and Environment at the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Belgium, as Co-Chair of the SOFF Steering Committee representing the funders, for a period of twelve months, starting 1 July 2025, renewable subject to Steering Committee agreement.

**Decision 11.11: Adoption of Dates and Format of the 12<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting**

The SOFF Steering Committee adopts the 12<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting to be held 28 October 2025 in virtual format.

**Signed by**

**UN Steering Committee Co-Chair**

23 May 2025



Celeste Saulo  
Secretary-General,  
World Meteorological Organization

**Co-Chair of the Steering Committee**

23 May 2025



Sinead Walsh  
Climate Director  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,  
Ireland