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4th session of the
SAHF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Climate Services Working Group: Rationale, Terms of Reference and Activity Planning

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DISCUSSION OUTLINE / OBJECTIVES

- I. Background and rationale
- II. Objectives and priorities
- III. Governance and coordination
- IV. Next steps and actions



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Background and rationale



Rationale

Climate variability and change pose significant challenges to societies, economies, and ecosystems across South Asia.

Effective climate services provide reliable, user-centric, and actionable climate information to support decision-making in key sectors such as agriculture, health, water resources, energy, and disaster risk reduction.

Given the interconnected nature of climate risks, a **regional approach to climate services is essential** to enhance data accessibility, cross-border knowledge exchange, and sectoral coordination.



SAHF Linking to Working Groups

Working Group	Role
Impact Based Forecasting	Supports National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) to transition from traditional meteorological and hydrological forecasting to impact-based forecasting to ensure NMHSs remain relevant to stakeholders, responders, and civil societies
Numerical Weather Prediction	Ensures the use of numerical weather prediction, including tools to derive additional products, bias correction, and systematic errors as part of objective forecast verification, pattern recognition and algorithms, multi-hazard vulnerability
Observational Networks	Creates a strategy for baseline regional observing networks to optimize and maximize the benefit
Capacity Building	Supports the staff of NMHSs to acquire new skills above the basic meteorological and hydrological competencies
Hydrology	Supports efforts to address the growing importance of hydrology in sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and disaster management
Climate Services	A regional platform to strengthen the delivery and application of climate services, ensuring that NMHSs and key stakeholders can effectively anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate-related risks, as well as inform long-term policy and interventions to adapt to climate change.



Timeline and key milestones

2018-2022: Scoping for a South Asia Climate Forum under the ARRCC programme

November 2023: SAHF Executive Council declaration endorsed broadening the role of SAHF in priority areas (**Climate Services**)

February 2024: SAHF IV declaration included scoping new activity and working group focusing on climate services

December 2024: Online consultation to scope priorities for a new working group focusing on climate services

January 2025: In-person workshop for planning the working group: Priorities, Stakeholders, Ways of working

May 2025: SAHF Executive Council to endorse Working Group Terms of Reference and activity planning





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Objectives and priorities



SAHF IV side session on Climate Services

February 2024, Sri Lanka



Key takeaways

- A broadening of SAHF to cover longer-term information as well as ‘users’ of climate information and services
- SAHF as a mechanism to tackle ‘siloing’, and bring producers and users together, connecting those working across different timescales
- Current emphasis in SAHF has focused on shorter timescales, but lessons learnt on these timescales can be applied at longer timescales

Recommendations

- A coordinated regional approach, such as through a Regional Framework for Climate Services
- To understand how a SAHF WG on Climate Services will work with other regional mechanisms such as SASCOF

Online consultation

December 2024

What should the initial priorities be for a SAHF working group on climate services?

✦ 5 groups found



Regional coordination

12 responses

"Map existing initiatives and mechanisms (Inc. dev..."



Needs and gap analysis

4 responses

"Need and gap analysis", "Identify clear needs, ga..."



Capacity building

8 responses

"Capacity building", "Capacity building for the Use..."



Impact-based services

7 responses

"Impact-based climate services", "Multi sectoral L..."



Data sharing

7 responses



SAHF planning workshop on impact-based forecasting and climate services

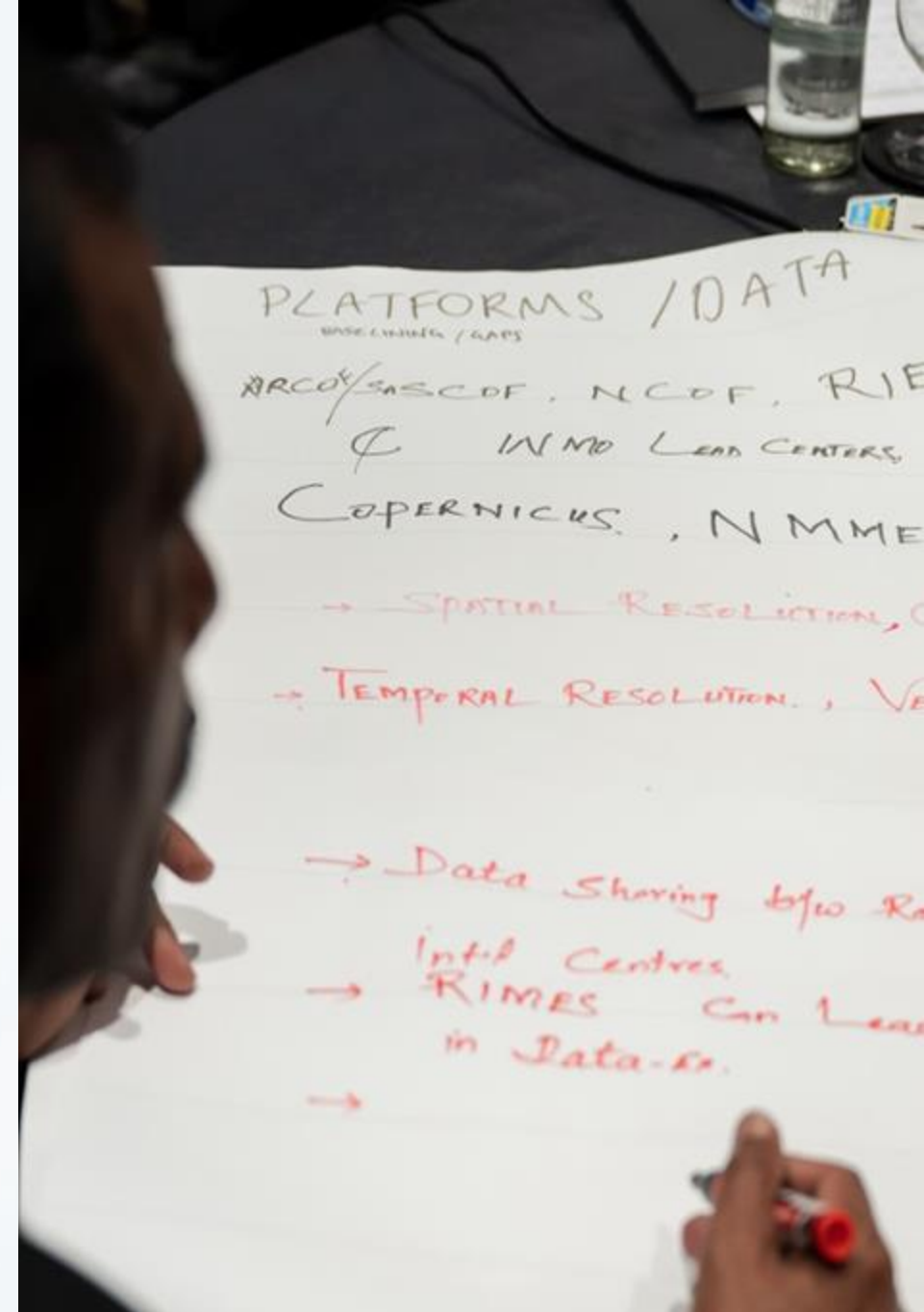
21-24 January 2025

Day 4: A series of interactive sessions to explore the current landscape and future priorities for a SAHF Climate Services WG



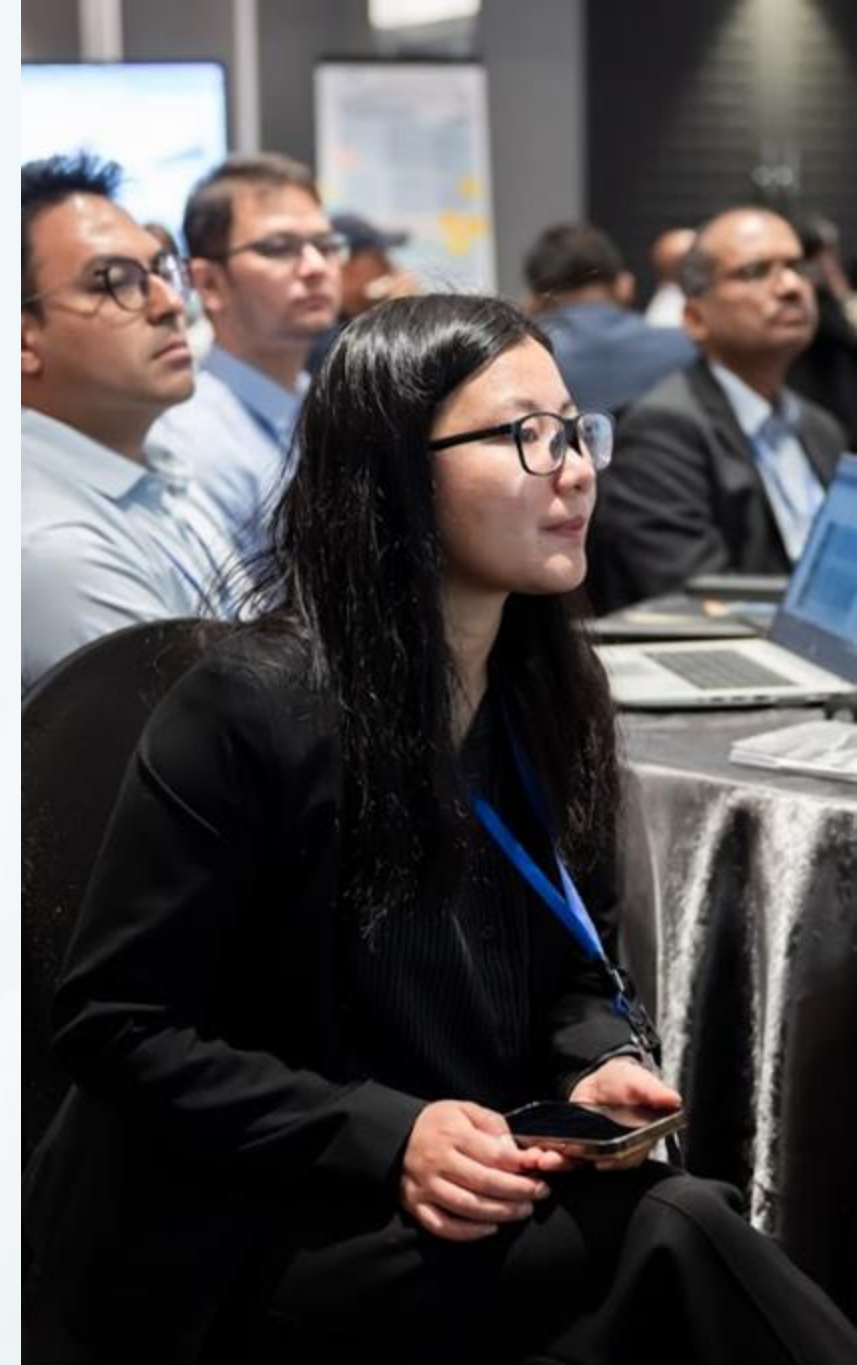
Emerging priorities

- Establishing a Regional Climate Services Framework
- Improving Climate Data Access, Uptake and Standardization
- Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Development
- Mobilizing Resources and Ensuring Sustainability
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Work Plan Implementation



Working Group objectives

1. Strengthen regional collaboration to enhance climate services and promote cross-border knowledge exchange.
1. Improve access to climate data and forecasting tools for better service delivery.
1. Strengthen NMHS and stakeholder technical expertise, infrastructure, and operational capabilities to deliver robust and user-driven climate services.
1. Ensure climate services are integrated into national and regional adaptation and resilience strategies.
1. Establish a phased WG work plan, identifying near-term and long-term actions for implementation.



Expected Outcomes

1. A structured work plan with priorities for short-term (years 1–2) goals, ensuring phased and achievable implementation.
1. A well-coordinated regional climate services framework supporting national initiatives.
1. Improved accessibility and standardization of climate data across South Asia.
1. Enhanced support for tailored, user-driven climate services for agriculture, health, water, energy, and DRR.
1. Strengthened institutional and technical capacities of NMHSs and stakeholders.
1. Sustainable funding mechanisms and partnerships to support long-term climate services delivery.

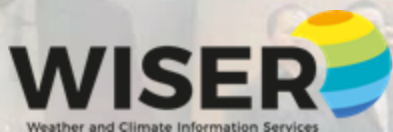


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Governance and coordination



Governance and coordination

- The working group will be composed of representatives from NMHSs of South Asian countries, technical experts, sectoral agencies, and development partners.
- Nominations received from SAHF Member Countries.
- Coordination with secretariat support from RIMES and technical support from Met Office and relevant international-regional partners.
- Rotational chairing system will be established to ensure shared leadership and accountability.
- Working group will convene periodic meetings (quarterly or bi-annually) and report progress to the SAHF Executive Council.
- Resourcing initially provided under the UK Government, Met Office WISER Asia Pacific Programme.
- Requirement to mobilize additional resources, and investment at regional-national levels in line with proposals set out in the [SAHF – Sustainability, Resources and Funding](#) paper.



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Next steps and actions



Next Steps

- SAHF Executive Council approval (May 2025).
- Finalisation of TOR, confirmation of WG members and chairs. (May-June 2025)
- Inception of WG at meeting of chairs, members and technical support. (June-August 2025)
- Development of a structured and resourced work plan with priorities for short-term (2025-27) goals, ensuring phased, achievable and sustained implementation.

ACTIONS REQUIRED BY SAHF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. Approve the Terms of Reference for WG on Climate Services.
2. Agree on the participation of SAHF NMHSs in the WG.
3. Requests NMHSs of SAHF Member Countries and RIMES in its capacity as the SAHF Secretariat to formally establish the WG and to develop a prioritised and resourced work plan (2025-27) by September 2025.