



Climate Infrastructure Task Team Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Task Team on Climate Infrastructure (TT-CI) was established under the WMO's Commission for Observation, Infrastructure and Information Systems (INFCOM) in response to the growing demand for robust, coordinated, and scientifically grounded climate infrastructure. This need has intensified following the WMO reform, which dissolved the Commission for Climatology and redistributed its responsibilities between INFCOM and SERCOM. The TT-CI is tasked with developing a roadmap to guide INFCOM's efforts in strengthening climate infrastructure across global, regional, and national levels. This includes addressing gaps and overlaps in existing systems and ensuring alignment with WMO's broader strategic goals and regulatory frameworks. TT-CI only considered the in-situ component of the observing system, where INFCOM can add value, thus avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts with WGClimate (CEOS/CGMS Working Group on Climate) that already provides the coordination of satellite observations.

Terms of Reference (ToR)

The TT-CI is established to:

1. Identify gaps and overlaps in existing infrastructure, regulations, and guidance materials related to the production, exchange, and archiving of climate observations—particularly within the WIGOS, WIS, and WIPPS components needed for climate monitoring and reanalysis.
2. Review climate data management standards and recommended practices, as well as the availability and adequacy of Climate Data Management Systems (CDMS), climate archives, and data centres to meet national and international needs.
3. Assess the potential benefits and risks of establishing global and/or regional climate infrastructure mechanisms and explore coordination opportunities with existing Lead Centres and Global Producing Centres (GPCs) under WIPPS and GCOS.
4. Identify actions required by INFCOM to address gaps and resolve overlaps in climate infrastructure, regulations, and guidance materials, taking into account decisions and recommendations from the WMO Congress, Executive Council, Technical Commissions, and GCOS.
5. Propose prioritization of identified actions and recommend appropriate working mechanisms (e.g. INFCOM subsidiary bodies) to implement the required activities.

Rationale

Reliable climate infrastructure is critical for:

- Monitoring climate variability and change at global, regional, and local scales.
- Supporting climate services that inform adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction.
- Enabling scientific research and the development of climate models and projections.
- Fulfilling international commitments, including those under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

Climate infrastructure encompasses all processes and systems involved in the collection, preservation, curation, and dissemination of fundamental raw climate observations along with all associated metadata. This infrastructure should ensure the availability and exchange of climate data in support of the creation of derived data products, including daily, monthly, and other aggregated climate datasets, which facilitate the development of value-added climate products such as reanalysis and services for diverse user communities.

As climate-related challenges intensify, the need for integrated, forward-looking infrastructure that supports timely and high-quality data becomes increasingly urgent. A sound climate infrastructure is the foundation required for successful climate services.

Climate Infrastructure task Team Modus Operandi

The task team met virtually over the course of one year, during 6 meetings that were each organized around a specific topic identified as a fundamental block of the required climate infrastructure. Additional experts, identified by the Secretariat, Chair and Vice-Chair, were invited to present on each topic, and ample time was dedicated to discussion. Annex A of this report contains the list of members of the task team and the list of the 6 meetings with the topics covered and dates. After each meeting, a list of recommendations was drafted. This report contains the recommendations presented according to the value data chain, starting from the observations needed for climate, through the exchange of historical observations, including data policy, national and regional data centres and global data centres. The report will be submitted to the next INFCOM Management Group meeting, which is invited to review the recommendations contained in the report.

Given that the CI TT was time limited and it has now finished its term, INFCOM-MG is additionally invited to consider potential mechanisms to ensure that the long-term climate focus of INFCOM is now maintained.

2. SPECIALISED CLIMATE OBSERVATIONS AND DATA RESCUE

This section considers specialised climate observations and the status of data rescue. These aspects are key to ensuring long-term high-quality monitoring and ensuring that the longest possible historical records are preserved and exploited. High level arising suggestions were as follows.

2.1 Resolve ambiguities in terminology

What: Propose and implement a solution to eliminate the confusing, multiple uses of the term "reference" (e.g., reference observation, reference site, reference network) across WMO and GCOS documents. The solution must include recommendations for addressing the change in existing regulatory materials, including guidance documents, and secure broad community buy-in. The activity will also need to identify any other similarly ambiguous terms.

Why: The current inconsistent use of 'reference' creates widespread confusion for WMO bodies and end-users, hindering a coherent approach.

Who: **SC-ON, SC-MINT**, SC-IMT, GCOS, including broad stakeholder engagement, WMO and GCOS Secretariat, Technical Coordination Committee

Priority: High priority to ensure a more coherent approach.

Dependencies: None

2.2 Holistically review and clean up regulatory and guidance materials as they pertain to climate networks, observations and their requirements

What: Conduct a comprehensive review and propose revisions to the Technical Regulations and associated Manuals and Guides to ensure consistent terminology, clear identification of climate networks/observations, and that necessary support for ongoing climate observation implementation is firmly established in the Technical Regulations and associated Manuals and Guides. When necessary, this should also include developing new text to fill current gaps.

Why: Climate observation requirements, including specialized networks, are not comprehensively integrated. Some materials are outdated or misplaced, creating an urgent need for harmonization and clarification.

Who: **SC-ON**, SC-IMT with support from GCOS, SERCOM

Priority: High

Dependency: upon resolution of ambiguous use of the term reference.

2.3 Update and clarify the requirements for Members to publish and exchange monthly (CLIMAT) and daily (DAYCLI) climate summaries.

What: Update the standard and recommended practices related to the publication and exchange of monthly (CLIMAT) and daily (DAYCLI) climate summaries within the relevant Manuals. This includes clarifying and strengthening the roles of the different observing networks (e.g. GBON, RBON), observing systems (e.g. GOS, GCOS), and stations in the provision of this climate data.

Why: The monthly and daily climate summaries are invaluable for climate monitoring and attribution, with the data under-pinning many high value and high profile datasets and climate assessments, yet require no additional equipment. The only additional requirement is for additional messages to be sent once per month on the WMO Information System. Recent open-source tools developed as part of the WIS2 development provide this capability. However, following the retirement of the Regional Basic Climatological Network and replacement with RBON, the link between station classification and climate reporting status has been lost. In turn, this has led to a reduced reporting of these summary products. Clarifying which stations are expected to report these data within the Manual on WIGOS, and establishing a mechanism to ensure discoverability. Communicating this information with Members is required. Additionally, strengthening the requirements under GBON and RBON may enable access to additional funding to Members under the SOFF and other initiatives.

Who: **SC-ON**, INFCOM MG to adopt as decision to be endorsed at INFCOM IV

Priority: High

Dependencies: None

2.4 Scope the instigation of a database of parallel measurements and the potential issues for its adoption

What: Determine the feasibility of establishing a global or regional repository of parallel measurements from WMO intercomparison campaigns and / or national change management activities. This requires understanding what data Members possess and their willingness to share it.

Why: Through data rescue activities, it has been recognised that many WMO measurement intercomparison campaigns have been undertaken, and that many members have similarly undertaken parallel measurements campaigns at selected field sites. These are often only documented in the grey literature and with limited availability of both the data and documentation. These data are required to understand the impact and timing of the historical changes.

Who: SC-MINT

Priority: Medium/Low

Dependencies: None

2.5 Strengthen Data Rescue Tools, Visibility and Member Support

What: Increase awareness of the importance and benefits of data rescue. Promote the use of existing WMO/C3S tools and guidance, ensuring Members register projects on the portal and upload rescued data to national or global repositories. Tools need to be developed to enable upload to national, regional and global repositories. Also, promote novel approaches like class-room based rescue and AI/ML exploration.

Why: Despite substantial efforts by WMO/C3S, uptake is uneven and with many data rescue projects not registered. Failure to register projects risks duplicated effort, and not uploading data to a national, regional or global repository significantly reduces the activity's value.

Who: SC-IMT, SERCOM, WMO Exec Mg Team

Priority: High

Dependencies: Recommendations 3.1 and 3.4

2.6 Improve retention and access to key metadata required to read and understand the data

What: Develop and implement a coordinated strategy to improve the long-term retention and accessibility of essential historical metadata (including, *inter alia*, instrumentation, observing practices, data formats, repository locations and structures). This requires establishing global or regional long-term repositories.

Why: Current metadata sharing, management, and retention are ad-hoc, inconsistent and incomplete globally and regionally, hindering the ability to locate, interpret, and adjust historical data for non-climatic effects. In turn, this reduces the number of observations available and lowers the skill in identifying and adjusting for non-climatic effects in many data records.

Who: SC-MINT

Priority: High

Dependencies: WMO metadata system

2.7 Prevent loss of digital climate records

What: Emphasize the critical importance of digital stewardship for existing digital archives. This requires moving away from reliance on diverse, temporary, and ad-hoc IT solutions to ensure these records are not lost as underlying systems and storage media become obsolete.

Why: Great effort, including ongoing initiatives, has been spent recovering millions of records going back to the earliest instrumental records and to store these records digitally. However, the rapid evolution of the IT environment makes digital data more volatile than paper records. Hard drives decay, with a half-life measured in years not decades or centuries, and reliance on proprietary/unsupported software poses a growing risk of data corruption, lack of portability and future inaccessibility. Digital stewardship of these archives is of utmost importance to avoid losing data in the future as the underlying IT systems become obsolete

Who: SC-IMT, GCOS

Priority: High

Dependencies: None

3. DATA POLICY AND THE EXCHANGE OF HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS

The TT-CI considered the WMO data policy landscape for historical observations and the mechanisms and guidance pertaining to the exchange of historical observations. These aspects are required to ensure relevant data is made available and that it is sent to the right place(s). The task team heard from the Chair of the data policy implementation focus group and the Secretariat on these matters followed by discussion. High level suggestions were as follows.

3.1 Amend the climate data annex to the Unified Data Policy for clarity

What: Propose updates to the climate annex (Annex 1.2) to the Unified Data Policy to remove confusion caused by references to multiple networks and documents that overlap considerably. Additionally, an explicit time period to be exchanged (entirety of record, last decade etc.) is absent. Clarifying these key aspects is required. Note that amended annexes may require approval by EC / Congress.

Why: A simplified and clearer list of required data to be exchanged is more likely to be acted upon by Members

Who: Data Policy Coordinator, SC-ON, SC-WIPPS, GCOS, SERCOM

Priority: High priority to ensure that data policy for climate is actionable.

Dependencies: Recommendation 3.2.

3.2 Promote the exchange of essential metadata alongside historical holdings

What: Draft clear guidance to encourage Members to exchange essential metadata concurrently with historical data holdings. The most critical information includes information on changes in siting, equipment and methods of observation, as well as metadata necessary for discovery (i.e. WCMP2 records).

Frequently data is exchanged with its metadata absent. Guidance needs to be drafted clearly such that metadata is also exchanged recognising that most critical information is on changes in siting, equipment and methods of observation, as well as metadata essential for data discovery.

Why: Metadata are vital for many downstream applications, they ensure long-term continuous station records can be identified and used appropriately and enable data to be discovered through the relevant metadata catalogues.

Who: SC-ON, SC-MINT, SC-IMT

Priority: High

Dependencies: Linked to recommendations 2.6 and 3.1

3.3 Review and revise guidance on the exchange of time-lagged and historical data

What: Simplify and ensure consistency of the standard and recommended practices defined in the relevant Manuals regarding time-lagged and historical data exchange, including, *inter alia*, whether monthly and daily summaries (CLIMAT, DAYCLI) are required or recommended and clarifying the terminology around obligations (e.g. distinguishing between “reporting”, “providing”, and “exchanging” data).

Why: Current ambiguity and inconsistencies make it hard for Members to identify obligations and may be used as a rationale for non-exchange of data, and affects the design of the WMO time-lagged data exchange mechanisms.

Who: SC-IMT, GCOS, SC-ON

Priority: High priority. this should be addressed as part of a more holistic review and with an overall ethos of documenting once and cross-referencing.

Dependencies: Linked to recommendation 2.3

3.4 Provide practical tools, guidance and examples for WIS2 time-lagged and historical data exchange

What: Develop and provide examples, open-source tools and quick reference guides for members on how to exchange time-lagged and historical data holdings using the WIS2. Guidance should cover all aspects of the process, including how Members, and other users are notified when new data become available.

Why: Members are generally proficient with accessing real time data sources but require additional, specific guidance to the publication and exchange of non-real-time data.

Who: SC-IMT

Priority: High

Dependencies: None

3.5 Proactively consider how to undertake exchange and archival of citizen science data / Internet of things and other new and novel observing technologies¹

What: There are many meteorological observations not undertaken under direct NMHS auspices which in delayed mode analysis could be exploited by analysts and end-users.

Why: These data could prove valuable for climate applications. It is important to consider their exchange and long-term preservation.

Who: **SC-IMT**, SC-MINT and WCRP, JAG-AI

Priority: Low

Dependencies: None

4. THE ROLE OF REGIONAL CLIMATE CENTRES AND NATIONAL REPOSITORIES

This TT-CI discussed the role of Regional Climate Centres (RCCs) and the status of national data repositories. Access to climate data holdings fundamentally rests upon these activities because global data centres can only integrate what is aggregated and served at the regional and national levels. Individual inputs were received from the perspectives of both national meteorological services and RCCs followed by discussion. High level suggestions were as follows.

4.1 Reconcile and simplify guidance on the creation and maintenance of national repositories

What: Simplify the guidance material available to Members on the creation and maintenance of national repositories. Obsolete, and out of date guidance material, should be withdrawn.

Why: Over the past 75 years, the WMO has published many documents and reports providing guidance on the creation and maintenance of national repositories and the management of climate data. Overtime, these documents have become outdated but not necessarily withdrawn. Additionally, inconsistencies have arisen as best practices have changed. To provide clarity and consistency for Members, and to avoid confusion, there is a need for the body of work to be simplified and collated into as small a number of documents as possible.

Who: **SC-IMT** with relevant bodies under SERCOM and INFCOM.

Priority: High. This is essential if we are to ensure that data and associated metadata hosted in well maintained repositories can be accessed, shared and integrated into regional and global holdings.

Dependencies: None

4.2 Ensure data and metadata are managed together in national repositories

What: Emphasize the necessity for national data repositories to treat data and metadata as a single unit. If not stored together, they must be explicitly cross-

¹ In this specific context this is out of scope, but it is important on the long term.

referenced and accessible. Metadata describing what, how, when, and where data were measured must be better foregrounded and associated with the data.

Why: Metadata is essential for understanding and making use of historical climate data.

Who: **SC-MINT**, SC-IMT and SERCOM

Priority: Medium

Dependencies: Recommendation 3.2

4.3 Standardize base structure and content for data and metadata exchange

What: Further develop and promote the use of a common data model, and associated serialisation, for the integrated exchange of data and metadata, including high-level quality information, between Members, national climate centres and RCCs.

Why: Whilst WMO formats and standards exist for the standardised representation and exchange of data and metadata, such as the BUFR and WMDR standards, many Members struggle to use these due to a lack of easy-to-use tools. As a result, many data exchange exercises follow ad-hoc processes using custom formats. Modernising, and using well supported standards, would reduce overheads and introduce consistency in data and metadata exchange processes.

Who: **SC-IMT**, with contribution from SC-MINT and SERCOM.

Priority: Medium

Dependencies: Recommendations 2.6, 3.1 and 3.2

4.4 Strengthen the role of the Regional Climate Centres in providing data management services to Members in their area of responsibility

What: Strengthen the role² of the Regional Climate Centres by updating the standard and recommended practices defined for RCCs in the Manual on the WMO Integrated Processing and Prediction System. The strengthened role should include, *inter alia*, support to Members in maintaining and preserving national holdings, ensuring that the national holdings are accessible, providing data aggregation and reduction services to meet regional needs and to simplify the collation of global holdings. Capacity development support should also be given to Members in the RCCs areas of responsibility. Members should also be encouraged to engage with, and the utilise the services offered by the RCCs.

Why: Many Members lack the infrastructure to maintain and manage national repositories of historical data, and this requirement may place undue expectations on those Members with limited resources. The provision of operational data services, including providing climate database and archiving services, already falls within scope

² The work of RCCs should extend beyond technical support to include the following aspects:

- (1) Assist national meteorological departments in identifying the specific climate information needs of their users, such as those in agriculture, water resources management, health and energy.
- (2) Data Support: Guide national departments on how to effectively access, process, and integrate climate data from national repositories and external sources.
- (3) Capacity Building: Help countries with less technical capacity to improve their climate services by providing technical guidance and training, including the provision and sharing of practical tools, methodologies, and successful case studies.

of the RCCs but the expectations on the RCCs is lacking in detail. Consequently, many Members fail to engage and make use of the services offered by the RCCs. Strengthening the role of the RCCs would also help bridge the gap between individual Members and global data centres.

Who: **SC-WIPPS** to liaise with relevant groups in INFCOM (SC-ON, SC-IMT) and SERCOM (SC-CLI)

Priority: Medium. Valuable way to promote regional participation so a particular priority in data sparse regions.

Dependencies: None

5. GLOBAL DATA CENTRES

Globally collated data holdings need to be accessed in support of the provision of climate monitoring, climate services, operational attribution and informing Early Warnings for All (amongst others).

There was unanimous agreement across the Task Team in attendance that the current status quo with respect to global data centres for the collation, harmonisation, and provision of access to historical and near-present fundamental climate data was inadequate. In evolving the process, already existing global centres should not be overlooked, and their functional mechanisms should be incorporated in formulating the designation criteria. The group also agreed to avoid designing an over-complex process.

Specific suggestions arising were the following.

5.1 WMO designation and recognition of global data centres

What: The WMO should stop relying on third parties (such as the International Science Council) to recognise and endorse operational global data centres. The WMO should instigate a process for the designation, certification, recognition and monitoring of WMO global climate data centres – using existing processes such as those for WIPPS centres and for WMO/IOC Marine Climate Data System centres as a template.

Why: To give confidence to Members and end users as to the credentials and standards of global data centres and to promote the deposition of data into the holdings.

Who: **INFCOM Management Group**

Priority: Very high -This is a necessary building block for other suggestions pertaining to global data centres.

Dependencies: Dependency upon the task to define data centre attributes (or designation criteria). Ongoing discussion under the Task Team on Global Hydrological Data Centres on the definition of data centres

5.2 Defining global data centre attributes and integrating into WMO regulatory materials

What: Develop standard and recommended practices for global data centres, defining a minimum set of expectations of those centres covering aspects like: traceability, quality control standards, metadata retention, resilience, adherence to FAIR principles. These standard and recommended practices should be included in

the relevant Manuals and Guides and clearly define how Members should interact with these centres, including data provision and updates.

Why: To establish and document standard and recommended practices on the functions of the global data centres.

Who: INFCOM Management Group

Priority: High

Dependencies: Defining the principles may be required to progress a certification process outlined in recommendation 5.1

5.3 Promotion of federated global data centres robust to a single point of failure

What: The WMO should actively develop and promote the establishment of federated global data centres contributed to by multiple Members and third parties.

Why: Historically, the provision of historical climate data has relied on a small number of Members through dedicated data centres. However, recent geopolitical and economic events have highlighted the vulnerability of these centres to funding cuts, and highlighted them as a single point of failure in the global system. Developing a federated system, mirroring the data holdings and data management processes, mitigates this risk and will ensure a robust data system and assure the continuity of climate monitoring and climate services provision. The use of federated systems will also share the load between Members (similar discussion as for OSCAR/Surface).

Who: INFCOM Management Group

Priority: High priority given rapidly developing geopolitical events

Dependencies: Recommendation 5.1

5.4 Identifying and responding to immediate community identified data centres needs

What: There are unfulfilled needs for repositories for key data types such as climate forcings³ that require urgent attention. WMO recognition of data centres to meet these needs is required. A review of the current data centre landscape recently completed by GCOS can help inform key current gaps, augmented by other sources of information. The GCOS review identified best practices such as keeping observations that were made concurrently together e.g. keeping all synoptic observations in one integrated holding rather than splitting out elements to individual holdings. These gaps should be iteratively filled.

Why: To quickly identify and address immediate mission-critical shortcomings and vulnerabilities in the current climate data infrastructure.

Who: INFCOM MG, SC-WIPPS, SERCOM, WCRP, GCOS

Priority: Priority based upon immediacy of needs.

Dependencies: None

³ <https://journals.plos.org/climate/article?id=10.1371/journal.pclm.0000708>

Annex

Members of TT-CI

Name	Affiliation	Group represented
Michel Jean (Chair)		INFCOM/P
Peter Thorne (Vice-Chair)	Maynooth University	GCOS (AOPC Chair)
Axel Andersson	Deutscher Wetterdienst (DWD)	Oceans
Gaston Torres Aravena	Dirección Meteorológica de Chile	GCOS-LC
Qingchen Chao	CMA	SC-Cli
Sarah Gallagher	The Irish Meteorological Service (Met Éireann)	SC-ON
Valentina Khan	Hydrometeorological Research Center of Russian Federation	RCCs
Arun Kumar	NOAA/NWS	SC-WIPPS
Shawn Marshall	ECCC	AG-GCW
Christina Maurin	NOAA/NCEI	Global Data Centres
Bimochan Niraula	Deutsches Klimarechenzentrum (DKRZ)	WCRP-ESMO
Ge Peng	Science Systems and Applications, Inc.	SC-IMT
Paul Poli	ECMWF	Global Data Centres
Pierre H Kamsu Tamo	ACMAD	RCCs
Jane Wane	Bureau of Meteorology - Australia	SC-MINT

Secretariat:

Nir Stav – Director of Infrastructure

Caterina Tassone – GCOS

Dave Berry – WMO

Meetings of TT-CI

1. Definition of climate infrastructure and challenges; agreement on topics needed to build a global climate infrastructure – 21 January 2025
2. Global Data Centres - 4th March 2025
3. Regional Climate Centres and National Repositories – 22nd April 2025
4. Exchange of historical observations and data policy - 23 May 2025
5. Specialized observations and data rescue - 3rd September 2026
6. Final Report approval – 11 November 2025