

# Rules of Procedure for Regional Associations

2021 edition

WEATHER CLIMATE WATER



WORLD  
METEOROLOGICAL  
ORGANIZATION

WMO-No. 1241



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## 1. **GENERAL**

1.1 The rules of procedure for the regional associations have been adopted in accordance with Regulation 3 of the General Regulations. Their goal is to ensure standardized procedural arrangements for all regional associations and their subsidiary bodies.

Note: Hereinafter, references in this publication to numbered regulations indicate regulations in the General Regulations, unless otherwise stated.

1.2 The rules of procedure were adopted by the Executive Council at its seventy-first session under the authority of the Convention and General Regulations of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). They may be amended by the Executive Council as needed. In the event of any conflict between the provisions of these rules of procedure and any provisions of the Convention or of the General Regulations, the text of the latter two documents shall prevail.

## 2. **FUNCTIONS, GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

2.1 The main functions of the regional associations are:

- (a) To promote the execution of the resolutions of Congress and the Executive Council in their respective Regions;
- (b) To consider matters brought to their attention by the Executive Council;
- (c) To discuss matters of general interest and to coordinate meteorological and related activities in their respective Regions;
- (d) To make recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council on matters within the purposes of the Organization;
- (e) To perform such other functions as may be conferred on them by Congress.

Note: Regional associations are defined in Articles 4 and 18 of the Convention. The General Regulations related specifically to the regional associations are provided in Chapter IV of the General Regulations.

2.2 The regional associations of the Organization are:

Regional Association I – Africa

Regional Association II – Asia

Regional Association III – South America

Regional Association IV – North America, Central America and the Caribbean

Regional Association V – South-West Pacific

Regional Association VI – Europe

The geographical limits of the corresponding Regions, as adopted by Congress, are provided in Annex II of the General Regulations.

2.3 The general terms of reference are reproduced in Annex I to the present rules of procedure. The regional associations may propose amendments to the general terms of reference to Congress.

2.4 Each regional association, in deciding on its work programme and activities, should adhere to the general terms of reference.

### 3. **MEMBERSHIP**

3.1 Members of the regional associations are Members of the Organization that have declared their membership under the conditions of Article 18 (a) of the Convention and Regulations 131 to 133.

3.2 A Member may belong to more than one regional association provided that the conditions of Regulation 131 regarding the exclusive responsibility, technically and financially, for the maintenance of a network of meteorological or hydrological stations lying in or extending into the geographical limits of the Region concerned, are met.

Note: While Members may belong to more than one regional association and may exercise voting rights in all associations of which they are members, for the election of members of the Executive Council Regulation 112 has to be respected. Therefore Regulation 112 also restricts the candidates for the election of the president of the association, as the president of an association is an ex officio member of the Executive Council.

### 4. **OFFICERS**

4.1 Each association shall elect its officers, president and vice-president, in accordance with Article 18 of the Convention. Elections should be conducted at ordinary sessions of the association.

4.2 As stipulated in Regulation 135 (a), the president and vice-president of an association shall be Directors of Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services of Members of the Organization with voting rights belonging to the Region.

4.3 The term of office of the officers should be from the end of the ordinary session until the end of the next ordinary session at which an election of that officer is to be held. They can be re-elected in accordance with Regulation 10.

4.4 The duties of the president of the association are provided in Regulation 134. The specific roles of the president should be as follows:

- (a) Facilitate with the support of the Regional Offices the identification of key capacity gaps and priorities from the region supported by diagnostic databases of Members' capacities to inform the development of regional plans and serve as the foundation for the development of the strategic and operational plans of the WMO in support to Members;
- (b) Facilitate with the support of the Regional Offices the formulation of the regional association plan, based on capacity gaps of the Members in the region, including the definition of numerical indicators for monitoring implementation of the plan;
- (c) Facilitate with the support of the Regional Offices the nomination of experts from the region to the subsidiary bodies of the Organization as well as their effective utilization in the substructures of the regional associations;
- (d) With the support of the Regional Offices, lead the monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the regional association, including the activities of the WMO Regional Centres in collaboration with relevant technical commissions, the Chairs of working groups/expert teams, focal points and Regional Office;
- (e) Coordinate with the Regional Office the communication and facilitate the fulfilment of the requests to Members to keep the relevant WMO platforms up to date.



4.5 The duties of the vice-president should be to act on behalf of the president when delegated by the president or when the president is not able to carry out duties. The specific roles of the vice-president should be as follows:

- (a) Assist the president in the fulfilment of duties specified in General Regulation 134;
- (b) Act as Vice-Chair of the Management Group of a regional association;
- (c) Carry out activities as delegated or requested by the president and the Management Group of the regional association.

4.6 In case that the president or the vice-president of the association resigns or is not able to carry out the functions of the office, a replacement should be arranged as soon as possible following relevant procedures in the Regulation 15.

## 5. **SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

5.1 Each association may establish subsidiary bodies to carry out certain tasks of its work programme. As a principle, associations should keep the number of subsidiary bodies to a necessary minimum with due consideration of the available financial and human resources. Associations should endeavour to establish their structures in a coherent and coordinated manner with similar types of subsidiary bodies in each association.

5.2 The terms of reference of each subsidiary body should be established by the association and should be within the terms of reference of the association. When a subsidiary body is established during a session, the association may select its chair and, if necessary, a vice-chair or authorize its president to do so.

5.3 With the exception of the Management Group, subsidiary bodies should be composed of experts nominated by the Members belonging to the association.

5.4 The number of experts in each subsidiary body should be kept to a necessary minimum with due consideration of the financial and human resources needed for the accomplishment of the tasks given to that body.

### 5.5 **Types of subsidiary bodies**

#### 5.5.1 **Management Group**

- (a) Each association should establish a Management Group with the following composition: the president, the vice-president, an agreed number of Directors of Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services of Members belonging to the regional association, and chairs of established subsidiary bodies, as necessary. The president of the association should preside on the Management Group.

Note: The number of Directors to serve on the Management Group should be decided at the session of the association in such a way as to ensure relevant geographic coverage, and subregional, gender and level-of-development balance.

- (b) The president of the association may invite additional experts to support the work of the Management Group, as necessary.
- (c) The Management Group of the association should have general terms of reference as provided in Annex II. Each association may decide on specific terms of reference.

- (d) The Management Group should coordinate all activities of the respective association through a work programme adopted at the session of the association with updates, as necessary, approved by the president.

### 5.5.2 ***Joint subsidiary bodies***

Note: This part is to be developed as part of the next phase of the reform of constituent bodies.

5.6 The president of an association may, between sessions, establish any subsidiary body of the association that may be deemed necessary for the accomplishment of the tasks in the work programme, or to address an urgent issue. Establishment of a new subsidiary body should be duly coordinated with the Secretariat with regard to the required financial and human resources.

5.7 If the chair of a subsidiary body resigns or is not able to carry out the functions for any cause, the vice-chair of the group, if any, assumes the chair. In the absence of a vice-chair, the president of the responsible association shall designate a new chair, preferably from among the members of the subsidiary body.

5.8 The invitation to each expert to serve on a subsidiary body (according to the resolution of the association) shall be issued by the Secretary-General as soon as possible after the closure of the session of the association.

5.9 The subsidiary body shall be regarded as activated when acceptances have been received from a simple majority of the nominees (including the designated chair).

## 6. **SESSIONS**

Note: The sessions of the regional association are conducted as intergovernmental meetings.

6.1 Ordinary sessions of regional associations should normally be held at intervals not exceeding four years. Presidents of the associations should endeavour to establish the dates for the ordinary sessions of their associations well in advance for each four-year financial period.

6.2 An extraordinary session of an association may be convened by decision of Congress or the Executive Council, if so recommended by the association, either in session or through a vote by correspondence that will be conducted after receiving a request from one third of the Members of the association. Extraordinary sessions should only be held to address unforeseen developments that may require regional intergovernmental discussion and decision.

6.3 The Secretary-General should draw up a provisional programme of sessions of associations in consultation with the presidents of the associations for coordination by the Executive Council at its last session before an ordinary session of Congress. The coordinated programme of sessions should be sent to all Members prior to the ordinary session of Congress. The date and place of an ordinary or an extraordinary session should be determined by the president of the association after consultation with the Secretary-General.

6.4 The ordinary session of a regional association shall normally be held at a place within its Region. Proposals should be treated in accordance with Regulation 17. In case no Member of the association is in a position to host the session, the default venue for the session of the association shall be the WMO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

6.5 In the case where invitations are received from more than one Member to act as host for the same session of a regional association, the Secretary-General should submit the matter to the President of the Organization for decision.

6.6 The Secretary-General should be responsible, in consultation with the convener, for making all arrangements for a session or joint session, utilizing any facilities that may be offered by a host Member.

6.7 Joint sessions of regional associations may be held, subject to authorization by the President of the Organization, if the agenda covers items that can be better addressed in a coordinated manner. The date and place of a joint session should be determined by agreement between the presidents of the associations concerned after consultation with the Secretary-General.

6.8 Joint sessions of regional associations with other bodies, such as technical commissions, may be held if necessary, subject to authorization by the President of the Organization. The date and place of such a joint session should be determined by agreement between the presidents of the bodies concerned after consultation with the Secretary-General.

6.9 Joint sessions of regional associations with other bodies shall be conducted in accordance with those provisions of the General Regulations and the present rules of procedure that are applicable to the constituent body to which the chair of the joint session belongs, and the chair of the joint session shall take such action following the joint session as normally follows a session of the constituent body to which the chair belongs, including reporting to Congress or the Executive Council on the work of the joint session.

#### 6.10 **Documents**

6.10.1 Notification of the date and place of a session of a regional association or a joint session should be distributed by the Secretary-General at least 120 days before the opening meeting to the Members of the Organization, the Members of the association, the presidents of all the other constituent bodies, the United Nations, all other international organizations with which the Organization has concluded arrangements or agreements and, in conformity with the provisions of Regulations 18 and 19, other persons.

6.10.2 The provisional agenda and an explanatory memorandum summarizing the items to be discussed should also be sent to the addressees of the notification at least 120 days before the date of opening.

6.10.3 The documents for the session should be made available as soon as possible and preferably not later than 30 days before the opening of the session.

6.10.4 Working papers submitted by Members on items on the provisional agenda should be submitted to the Secretariat as early as possible but preferably not later than 60 days before the opening of the session; they should similarly be made available by the Secretariat.

6.10.5 Reports of sessions of regional associations should be prepared in accordance with Regulation 95.

6.10.6 Each ordinary session of a regional association should adopt a work programme for the period until the next session. Work programmes should be prepared in coordination with the Organization's Strategic and Operating Plans.

#### 6.11 **Agenda**

6.11.1 The provisional agenda for an ordinary session of an association shall be prepared by the president of the association in consultation with the Secretary-General and shall normally include:

- (a) Consideration of the report on credentials;
- (b) Establishment of committees;

- (c) A report by the president of the association;
- (d) Reports by chairs of subsidiary bodies;
- (e) Consideration of regional aspects of:
  - (i) WMO Programmes;
  - (ii) Strategic and operational planning;
- (f) Items submitted by the President of the Organization, the Executive Council, other associations, commissions, the United Nations and Members;
- (g) Review of previous resolutions and recommendations of the association and status of related follow-up actions;
- (h) Review of the Executive Council resolutions related to the association;
- (i) Work programme for the next intersessional period and establishment of subsidiary bodies of the association;
- (j) Election of officers;
- (k) Optional – scientific lectures and discussions.

The order in which the items are to be discussed shall be determined by the president and submitted to the association for approval.

6.11.2 The agenda for an extraordinary session of a regional association shall contain only the following items:

- (a) Consideration of the report on credentials;
- (b) Establishment of committees;
- (c) Consideration of the question(s) for which the session was convened.

6.11.3 Any Member may propose additional items to the provisional agenda for an ordinary session, but preferably not later than 30 days before the opening of the session; explanatory memorandums in respect of the additional items should accompany such proposals and be distributed by the Secretariat to the addressees of the notification referred to in rule 6.10.1.

6.11.4 The provisional agenda should be submitted for approval by the association as soon as possible after the opening of the session. In the course of the session the agenda may be amended at any time.

6.12 Sessions of the regional association should be conducted as intergovernmental meetings attended by delegations with one principle delegate per delegation. The name of the principle delegate and the delegate's alternate should be communicated by Members through a notification to the Secretary-General in response to the convening announcement for the session.

6.13 The president of the association may decide to convene technical expert segment(s) of a session in which delegates may meet in breakout groups for discussion of technical issues that need clarification. Such technical segments should be conducted as non-intergovernmental with experts participating in personal capacity.

6.14 Experts nominated by international organizations should participate in the sessions as observers with no voting rights.

## 6.15 **Voting and quorum**

6.15.1 Decisions of regional associations, including for the election of officers, should be determined preferably by consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, a voting may be conducted in accordance with Regulations 40 to 61.

6.15.2 The quorum for decisions and elections of officers should be in accordance with Regulation 139.

6.15.3 If a quorum is not obtained at a meeting, Regulation 140 should be applied for decisions other than elections.

6.15.4 If a quorum for elections of officers is not obtained at a meeting, the full list of candidates should be referred by correspondence to the Permanent Representatives of Members of the Organization who are members of the association with voting rights. Any candidate should be considered to be elected only when the candidate has received a majority of votes within 60 days after it has been sent to the Permanent Representatives.

## 6.16 **Types of decisions by sessions**

6.16.1 Decisions of sessions of the association should be formulated in accordance with Regulation 94 in the form of a decision, a resolution, or a recommendation.

6.16.2 Decisions on establishment of a subsidiary body of the association should be in the form of a resolution.

## 7. **MEETINGS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

7.1 After each session, the Management Group of the association should prepare a schedule of meetings of standing committees and study groups established by the session. In case of joint standing committees or study groups, their meetings should be coordinated with the Management Group of the other parent body.

7.2 The meetings of the subsidiary bodies should be kept to a necessary minimum. Management Groups should normally meet on a yearly basis.

7.3 The duration of a meeting of a subsidiary body should normally be three working days. An exception of this rule may be granted by the president of the association in case of highly complex issues that may need additional time for discussion.

7.4 The chair of the subsidiary body should prepare the agenda and work programme for the session, in consultation with the president and Management Group.

7.5 For the conduct of business in meetings of subsidiary bodies the Regulations 77 to 91 should be applied where necessary.

7.6 Within 15 days after each meeting of a subsidiary body, the chairperson should submit a summary report to the president of the association.

**8. ASSISTANCE BY THE SECRETARIAT**

8.1 As required by the association, the Secretariat should carry out the administrative work, including preparation of documents, and technical work to the extent compatible with its functions. Technical experts in the Secretariat shall be assigned by the Secretary-General to participate in a consultative capacity in the work of each association.

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## **ANNEX I. GENERAL TERMS OF REFERENCE OF REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

(As defined in Annex II to the General Regulations)

In carrying out the functions specified in Article 18 (d) of the Convention within the allotted geographical areas defined in Annex II of the General Regulations, under the general guidance of Congress and the Executive Council and with support from the Secretariat, each regional association, in close coordination and collaboration with other bodies concerned, shall:

- (1) Coordinate and organize its Members' activities related to the planning, implementation and evaluation of agreed programmes, strategies and activities, at the regional and subregional levels;
- (2) Ensure that WMO is visible and recognized in its Region, and engage stakeholders in regional initiatives and projects related to the strategic priorities of the Organization; promote visibility and institutional capacity-building of its Members, and identify and address critical deficiencies for long-term sustainable modern services through supporting Members in the development of national strategic plans on meteorological and hydrological services; facilitate the exchange of best practices to communicate the socioeconomic benefits of meteorological and hydrological services;
- (3) Identify requirements and priorities among Members and regional bodies with the support of Regional Offices and communicate them, together with any impediments to the timely implementation of planned programmes, strategies and activities, to the Executive Council, technical commissions and other bodies, as appropriate, as the starting point of the WMO Strategic and Operational Planning Process; collaborate with Members, technical commissions and other bodies, as necessary, to support, monitor and regularly review all the regional centres established by WMO bodies, ensuring excellent performance, sustainable operations and effective services to regional Members; consult with technical commissions, Research Board, and other bodies, as appropriate, on the identification of common experts to assist with the sharing of regional priorities and requirements and the implementation of technical priorities and associated capacity building activities; identify technical gaps and promote training to develop future experts;
- (4) Promote cooperation and efficiency by establishing regional networks and facilities based upon identified regional needs, in close coordination with the technical commissions concerned; monitor the performance of regional networks and facilities, and the open sharing of data and technical expertise, and require corrective measures, as necessary;
- (5) Contribute to the WMO Strategic Plan, Operating Plan and other implementation plans, as necessary, to reflect agreed strategic priorities from a regional perspective and ensure the engagement of Members in focused activities aimed at achieving the expected results of the WMO Strategic Plan;
- (6) Structure its work to address regional priorities and make the best use of the expertise of its Members to provide guidance and assistance, in accordance with the needs of the Region;
- (7) Build and promote cooperation and partnerships with relevant regional organizations, including the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions, other United Nations bodies, subregional organizations, development partners, non-governmental organizations, professional associations and academic and research organizations;
- (8) Advocate, through its president, to regional political and economic entities, and support Permanent Representatives in advocating to their governments, the necessary political

and financial support to Members' capabilities to ensure provision of and access to vital meteorological, climatological, hydrological and other related environmental information and services.

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## **ANNEX II. GENERAL TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MANAGEMENT GROUPS OF REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Within its terms of responsibility as defined hereunder and under the delegated authority of the parent regional association, each Management Group shall be responsible for advising and supporting the president and vice-president on all matters related to the work of the Association, and particularly:

- (a) Oversight of the development, maintenance, prioritization and monitoring of the Association's Operating Plans, supporting structures and related resource needs, in close consultation with the other regional associations, technical commissions, the Research Board and other relevant bodies to ensure strategic alignment with the WMO Strategic and Operating Plans;
- (b) Coordination of the Associations' response to requests from Congress and the Executive Council relevant to the Association, such as input to the WMO Strategic and Operating Plans, considerations of cooperation between the public and private sectors, ongoing reviews of WMO structures and processes, and the monitoring and evaluation of activities relevant to the Associations' expected outputs;
- (c) Oversight, in consultation with technical commissions, the Research Board and other relevant bodies, the development and maintenance of WMO guidance and other relevant resources, in order to support Members in the implementation of and their compliance with, the WMO Technical Regulations;
- (d) Coordination and promotion of capacity development activities and opportunities based on examples and principles of good practice, in collaboration with technical commissions, the Research Board, the Capacity Development Panel and other relevant bodies, with an emphasis on addressing the priority needs of developing and least developed countries including Small Island Developing Member States and Territories;
- (e) Discuss matters related to the work of the Association, ensuring the delivery of a coordinated approach to the different areas of work covered by the Association;
- (f) Coordination of the Association's successful implementation of the delivery of the WMO Gender Action Plan;
- (g) Planning, preparation and delivery, in coordination with other relevant bodies, of the sessions of the regional association;
- (h) Identification, selection, appointment and periodic review of experts to serve on the subsidiary bodies of the regional association, taking into account national and gender balance, in close coordination with technical commission, the Research Board and other relevant bodies based on the nomination of experts made by Members and approving agencies;
- (i) Coordination of the Association's advice and inputs into the development and maintenance of the priorities, work and operating plans of technical commission, Research Board and other relevant WMO bodies;
- (j) Promote and encourage the engagement and participation of early-career experts, the private sector and other stakeholders, in the work and sessions of the Association;
- (k) Oversee in collaboration with the WMO Secretariat, the activities of WMO Regional Centres;
- (l) Provide guidance on resource mobilization, including collaboration with the Secretariat;

- (m) Encourage good practices and promote the sharing of experiences in enhancing observations, data exchange, capacity development and visibility of NMHSs.
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