

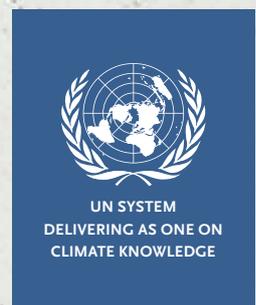
CLIMATE KNOWLEDGE FOR ACTION:

A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK
FOR CLIMATE SERVICES—
EMPOWERING
THE MOST VULNERABLE

SUMMARY REPORT



THE REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL TASKFORCE
FOR THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK
FOR CLIMATE SERVICES



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AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WORLD

Climate is a critical factor in the lives and livelihoods of all people and in development as a whole. This report proposes how a global system for the provision of climate services¹ can be set up over the next few years that will save lives and protect the jobs and homes of vulnerable people.

On the basis of its work and wide consultations, the High-Level Taskforce believes that the widespread, global use of improved climate services, provided through the Global Framework for Climate Services will provide substantial social and economic benefits. The Framework presents an important, cost effective opportunity to improve well being in all countries through contributions to development, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. A global mobilisation of effort and an unprecedented collaboration among institutions across political, functional, and disciplinary boundaries is required and the Taskforce believes that the Global Framework for Climate Services can foster and guide this effort.

While all countries stand to gain from participation in the Framework, the Taskforce believes that it should give priority to climate vulnerable developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing states, where climate services are also often weakest.

FINDINGS OF THE HIGH LEVEL TASKFORCE

The Taskforce worked in consultation with all relevant actors to assess the current state of global climate service provision and identify opportunities for improvement, finding that:

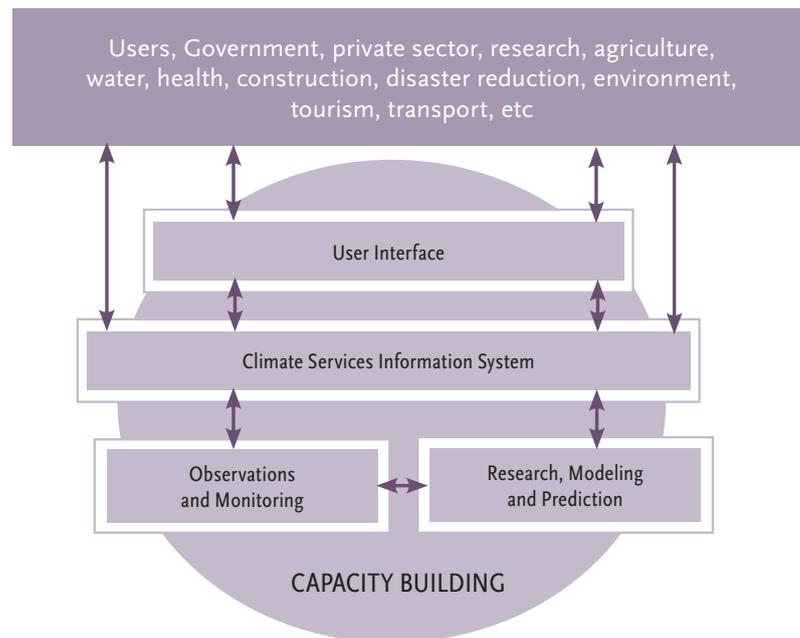
- In countries that have effective climate services they greatly contribute to reduced risks and maximised opportunities associated with climate. However, there is a significant gap between the supply of climate services and the needs of users. Present capabilities to provide climate services do not exploit all that we know about climate, fall far short of meeting present and future needs, and are not delivering their full and potential benefits. This is particularly the case in developing and least developed countries, which are also the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate variability and change;
- To be useful climate information must be tailored to meet the needs of users. Existing climate services are not well focused on user needs and the level of interaction between providers and users of climate services is inadequate. Users need access to expert advice and support to help them select and properly apply climate information. Climate services often do not reach “the last mile”, to the people who need them most, particularly at the community level in developing and least developed countries;
- To support climate services, high quality observations are required across the entire climate system and of relevant socioeconomic variables. While existing capabilities for climate observation provide a reasonable basis for strengthening climate services, commitment to sustaining high quality observations is inadequate and enhancements to existing networks are required, particularly in developing countries. Further effort is also needed by governments and others to overcome the currently significant restrictions concerning sharing of, and access to climate and other relevant data;

¹ Climate services are climate information prepared and delivered to meet users' needs.

- Effective climate services will depend on maximising the potential of existing knowledge, new research developments and strong support from and strengthened collaboration between all relevant research communities. Understanding of the climate system is advancing quickly, but is not being effectively translated into services that can inform decision making. In particular, further effort is required to improve our ability to predict climate and help users incorporate its inherent uncertainty into their decision-making;
- Efforts to provide effective climate services globally will only be successful if capacity is systematically built to enable all countries to manage climate risk effectively. Current capacity building activities to support climate services need to be scaled up and better coordinated. A comprehensive capacity building initiative is needed to strengthen existing capabilities in the areas of governance, management, human resources development, leadership, partnership creation, science communication, service delivery and resource mobilisation.

COMPONENTS OF THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE SERVICES

The Taskforce broadly endorses the structure of the Framework, as proposed by the World Climate Conference-3, but with the addition of a capacity building component.



A schematic of the components of the Global Framework for Climate Services with capacity building occurring within, and between all other components.

The proposed components of the Framework are as follows:

1. The User Interface Platform will provide a means for users, user representatives, climate researchers and climate service providers to interact, thereby maximising the usefulness of climate services and helping develop new and improved applications of climate information.

2. The Climate Services Information System is the system needed to protect and distribute climate data and information according to the needs of users and according to the procedures agreed by governments and other data providers.
3. The Observations and Monitoring component will ensure that the climate observations necessary to meet the needs of climate services are generated.
4. The Research, Modelling and Prediction component will assess and promote the needs of climate services within research agendas.
5. The Capacity Building component will support systematic development of the necessary institutions, infrastructure and human resources to provide effective climate services.

Many of the foundational capabilities and infrastructure that make up these components already exist or are being established, but they require coordination and strengthened focus on user needs. The role of the Framework should therefore be to facilitate and strengthen, not to duplicate.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

The Taskforce believes that providing operational climate services should be the focus of the Framework. It should operate at global, regional and national levels, in support of and in collaboration with global, regional and national stakeholders and efforts.

- At the global level, it will focus on producing global climate prediction products, coordinating and supporting data exchange, major capacity building initiatives, and establishing and maintaining standards and protocols;
- At the regional level, it will support multilateral efforts to address regional needs, for example through regional policy development, knowledge and data exchange, infrastructure development, research, training and the provision of services regionally to meet agreed regional requirements;
- At the national level, it will focus on ensuring access to data and knowledge products, tailoring information to user requirements, ensuring effective routine use of information in planning and management along with developing sustainable capacities in these respects.

Depending on their needs and capacities, users may obtain information from a range of available global, regional and national sources.

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES OF THE FRAMEWORK

The Taskforce proposes that the five near-term implementation objectives for the Framework be as follows:

- Establishing mechanisms to strengthen the global cooperative system for collecting, processing and exchanging observations and for using climate-related information;
- Designing and implementing a set of projects that target the needs of developing countries, particularly those currently least able to provide climate services;

- Developing strategies for external communications, resource mobilisation and capacity building programmes;
- Establishing internal working methods, particularly for communications and for debating and deciding on implementation priorities, including for the observations, information systems, research and capacity building components;
- Setting targets and establishing procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Framework.

RESOURCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

The Taskforce unanimously recommends (Recommendation 1) that the international community makes the commitment to invest on the order of US\$ 75 million per year to put in place and sustain the Framework. This investment will build upon existing investments by governments in climate observation systems, research, and information management systems to return to the community benefits across all societal sectors but most importantly, and most immediately, in disaster risk reduction, improved water management, more productive and sustainable agriculture and better health outcomes in the most vulnerable communities in the developing world.

PRINCIPLES TO BE ADOPTED IN IMPLEMENTING THE FRAMEWORK

To ensure that the Global Framework for Climate Services provides the greatest benefit to those who are most in need of climate services, the Taskforce recommends (Recommendation 2) that the following eight principles be adhered to in its implementation:

Principle 1: All countries will benefit, but priority shall go to building the capacity of climate-vulnerable developing countries

Principle 2: The primary goal of the Framework will be to ensure greater availability of, access to, and use of climate services for all countries

Principle 3: Framework activities will address three geographic domains; global, regional and national

Principle 4: Operational climate services will be the core element of the Framework

Principle 5: Climate information is primarily an international public good provided by governments, which will have a central role in its management through the Framework

Principle 6: The Framework will promote the free and open exchange of climate-relevant observational data while respecting national and international data policies

Principle 7: The role of the Framework will be to facilitate and strengthen, not to duplicate

Principle 8: The Framework will be built through user – provider partnerships that include all stakeholders

IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

CAPACITY BUILDING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Taskforce believes that a strategy for building capacity in developing countries will be essential in successful implementation of the Framework. This will include a strong Executive Committee for Capacity Building in both governance options proposed for the Framework. A principal near-term strategy for the implementation of the Framework should be designing and implementing a range of projects that target the needs of developing countries. Specifically, the Taskforce proposes the following capacity building projects, to be implemented as soon as possible:

- **Linking climate service users and providers.** The Taskforce is proposing that the Framework include a User Interface Platform to link climate service providers and users with a view to building the capacity of users to make better use of climate services, collecting user requirements, assisting in the monitoring and evaluation of the Framework and promoting a global understanding of the Framework;
- **Building national capacity in developing countries.** The Taskforce has found that about 70 countries do not have the necessary basic capabilities to provide sustainable access to climate services. It therefore recommends that a high profile programme of fast-track projects be established to build the necessary capacity of the countries, in accordance with their needs and priorities;
- **Strengthening regional climate capabilities.** Enhanced regional coordination and technical capabilities will be important to the functioning of the Framework. The Taskforce therefore recommends that a fully effective network of regional centres be established. This will require strengthening existing centres and creating a number of new centres. The roles and activities of regional climate centres will vary according to each region's specific interests and needs.

BUILDING CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE USER INTERFACE PLATFORM IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

A key to the long term success of the Framework will be its ability to interact with its user community to enable it to properly tailor climate services to meet community needs. The Taskforce urges that new efforts be made to develop the dialogue between providers and users and to focus on developing and implementing measures of the Framework's success in meeting needs, and using these monitoring results to continuously evaluate and improve the overall performance of the Framework.

IMPROVING CLIMATE OBSERVATIONS IN DATA SPARSE AREAS

Effective climate services rely on the availability of adequate, high quality climate data. The Taskforce proposes that a programme be put in place to address the problem of gaps in the two basic atmospheric global observation systems, the Global Surface Network and the Global Upper Air Network.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE CLIMATE RESEARCH SECTOR IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

To improve the rate at which research results flow to services, and to improve the quality and relevance of climate services, particularly in the developing world the Taskforce's proposal includes a programme of capacity building in the research sector of developing countries.

APPROACHES TO GLOBAL DATA POLICY

The Taskforce believes that barriers to accessing and using existing data sets are a major shortcoming in the provision of climate services. To overcome these barriers, the Taskforce proposes that existing international deliberative mechanisms, principally within the World Meteorological Organization System, be used to reach agreement on what essential climate data and products are needed to provide effective climate services and what can be shared in support of the protection of life and property and the well-being of all nations.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY

Implementation of the Framework will require the establishment of a leadership team that has government ownership and support, as well as support from the United Nations System. This core of leadership and technical expertise that will drive the implementation of all aspects of the Framework in collaboration with existing national and regional capacities, should be supported by a small, United Nations-based secretariat.

DEVELOPING A DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Report of the Taskforce provides a strategic level plan for the implementation of the Framework. After endorsement of this plan we recommend (Recommendation 3) that the United Nations System establish, as a matter of urgency, an *ad-hoc* technical group to develop a detailed implementation plan for the Global Framework for Climate Services based upon the broad strategy outlined in this report, this plan to be endorsed by governments through an intergovernmental process prior to its implementation.

The detailed implementation plan should identify high priority projects to advance the Framework in areas where this would assist in reducing vulnerability to climate change and variability. In addition to the fast-track, capacity building projects, the implementation plan should describe a sustainable programme to underpin the coordination needed to maintain the operational capabilities of the Framework. The implementation plan should set targets to be achieved over the next ten years, further elaborate the roles and responsibilities of components of the Framework that contribute at the global, regional and national levels and of the secretariat that supports it, and include a risk assessment.

INDICATORS AND TIMELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FRAMEWORK

The Taskforce proposes the following indicators and timelines for implementing the Framework:

- **By end 2011.** Develop a detailed implementation plan for the Framework that aligns with the decisions of the World Meteorological Organization Congress and incorporates the elements and principles proposed in this report. This plan to be considered at the inaugural, intergovernmental plenary meeting of the Framework's Board;
- **By end 2013.** Complete an organization building phase, including establishment of a secretariat to support the Framework and necessary management and executive (technical) committee structures. Establish programmes to undertake immediate implementation priorities;

- **By end 2017.** Facilitate access to improved climate services globally in four priority sectors (agriculture, disaster risk reduction, health and water). Establish active technical committees for each component and an active communications programme. Involve at least five United Nations entities and participate in at least US\$ 150 million of climate-related development projects. Completion of a mid-term review of the implementation of the Framework;
- **By end 2021.** Facilitated access to improved climate services globally across all climate-sensitive sectors. Involve at least eight United Nations entities and participate in at least US\$ 250 million of climate-related development projects.

RESOURCING THE CAPACITY BUILDING ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK'S IMPLEMENTATION

The Taskforce proposes the governments commit to supporting a modest secretariat requiring an investment of around US\$ 3 million per annum that will have the role of supporting the leadership and management structures of the Framework. As regards capacity building the Taskforce has proposed the implementation of a range of “fast track” projects aimed at building capacity in the developing world to create and deliver climate services requiring an investment of the order of US\$ 75 million per annum. The Taskforce strongly recommends (Recommendation 4) that governments and development assistance agencies give high priority to supporting national capacity building that will allow developing countries to participate in the Framework. Further analysis of national needs is required, but in the meantime we recommend a number of fast track projects as outlined in the Report. To ensure effective national access to global climate information by the largest number of countries, we recommend an initial strategy to strengthen rapidly or create the regional elements of the Framework. These regional elements should be led and hosted by countries of the region based upon regional agreements and should be tasked with supporting information flow and assisting national capacity building at national level.

GOVERNANCE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The Taskforce considered a number of options for governance of the Framework, taking into account the need to ensure the central role of governments, other needs based on the Taskforce’s findings, and common principles, such as efficiency, transparency, accountability, flexibility, equitability and participation. On the basis of these considerations, the Taskforce recommends (Recommendation 5) the following two governance options for the Framework be considered:

- **OPTION A – Create a new intergovernmental board within the United Nations System.** An Intergovernmental Board on Climate Services would be established to provide leadership and direction for the Framework. It would report to the World Meteorological Organization Congress. The Board would be open to membership of all countries and would meet in plenary session periodically, probably annually. It would develop formal mechanisms to engage the United Nations and other stakeholders in its work. It would elect a chair and a small executive committee to conduct the affairs of the board between sessions as well as designating a number of technical management committees to oversee and contribute to the Framework’s implementation work. These technical committees would work intergovernmentally, and, where possible, would be based on relevant existing international committees;

- **OPTION B – Develop a joint board within the United Nations, hosted and convened by an existing Agency.** A joint board of relevant United Nations System entities (agencies, organizations, programmes, departments and independent funds) would be created to provide leadership and direction for the Framework. The United Nations System joint board would report regularly to the United Nations Chief Executives Board as well as to governments through the plenaries of the sponsoring United Nations agencies and programmes. The joint board would establish an executive committee and five technical management committees to implement and manage the Framework, of the technical committees working intergovernmentally. Mechanisms to engage non-United Nations stakeholders in the work of the Board would be developed through both the User Interface Programme and, up to the level desired by governments, through participation in national delegations.

The Taskforce recommends that Option A be adopted and that the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization convene the first intergovernmental plenary meeting of the Global Framework for Climate Services by the end of 2011. The World Meteorological Organization should lead the process and put in place arrangements to ensure full participation of all interested United Nations agencies and programmes.

The Taskforce considers the main advantages of Option A are that the Framework would have a clear and independent realm of responsibility, direct accountability to governments, potentially strong involvement of national technical experts and the independence and high profile that would help secure good access to United Nations system entities and processes. The main advantages of Option B are that it can be implemented quickly and can immediately engage the mechanisms of the United Nations System and the financial requirements for governance and management are likely to be lower.

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