

GCOS Cooperation Mechanism Terms of Reference (August 2004)

The GCOS (Global Climate Observing System) Cooperation Mechanism (GCM) is established through the common action of a number of donor countries with the endorsement of the GCOS Steering Committee and is implemented under the GCOS Memorandum of Understanding.

The purpose of this mechanism is to identify and make the most effective use of resources available for improving global observing systems for climate in developing countries, particularly in order “to enable them to collect, exchange, and utilize data on a continuing basis in pursuance of the UNFCCC.”¹ In particular, the GCOS Cooperation Board is established to facilitate cooperation amongst donor countries, between donor and recipient countries, and amongst countries and existing funding and implementation mechanisms, in addressing high-priority needs for the improvement of global observing systems for climate in developing countries. It aims to ensure the most effective use of voluntary contributions for meeting such needs.

This mechanism will address priority improvements in atmospheric, oceanic, and terrestrial observing systems for climate and is intended to complement and work in cooperation with other funding and implementation mechanisms, many of which deal with GCOS-related activities and, particularly, capacity building. The requirement for improved global observations for climate recognizes that capacity building is an essential component but that it does not address the full scope of needs for sustained observations. Accordingly, the GCOS Cooperation Mechanism is established specifically to ensure that this broad spectrum of needs, for system improvement and sustained operations as well as capacity building, in support of global observing systems for climate are addressed as effectively as possible.

The GCOS Cooperation Mechanism provides for a coordinated multi-governmental approach to address the high-priority needs for stable long-term funding for key elements of global observing systems for climate in support of the requirements of the UNFCCC and other GCOS clients, especially those needs in developing countries, taking into account the special needs and situations of least developed countries and small island developing States.

The mechanism is governed by a GCOS Cooperation Board, which aims to facilitate cooperation amongst donor and recipient countries and funding agencies in addressing the high-priority needs. In addition, the Board functions as the primary means to establish and direct improvement projects resourced through voluntary contributions, both in-kind and financial, to a GCOS Cooperation Fund, which aggregates voluntary financial contributions from multiple donors into a common trust fund.

The mechanism provides the ability to facilitate, develop, fund and implement crosscutting approaches relevant to all climate disciplines/regimes, including addressing data management and data exchange.

Participation in the mechanism is open to all donors that support, through financial or in-kind contributions, improvements in global observing systems for climate in developing countries. There is no requirement to move funds from existing mechanisms or to commit new funds through the GCOS Cooperation Fund.

A. GCOS Cooperation Board

The GCOS Cooperation Board is established to facilitate cooperation amongst donor countries, between donor and recipient countries, and amongst countries and existing funding and implementation mechanisms, in addressing high-priority needs for the improvement of global observing systems for climate in developing countries. It aims to ensure the most effective use of voluntary contributions for meeting such needs. The Board will provide advice to potential donors on

¹ UNFCCC Decision 5/CP.5

the high priority funding needs and will direct the operation of the GCOS Cooperation Fund, in light of existing international and national support activities and in accordance with the specific priorities of some donors. Features of the GCOS Cooperation Board include:

- All donors are invited to be Board members, whether their contributions are financial or in-kind, and whether they are contributed directly through the GCOS Cooperation Fund or through any other bilateral or multilateral mechanism;
- Attendance at meetings is self-funded;
- The Board will operate by consensus;
- The Board will elect its Chairperson and convene as agreed, nominally on an annual basis;
- The GCOS Steering Committee, using the resources of the GCOS Science Panels (atmospheric, oceanic, terrestrial), will provide scientific advice to the Board;
- The GCOS Secretariat will provide appropriate secretariat support to the Board.

The responsibilities of the Cooperation Board are to:

Maintain and review a register of the activities supported by members with the express purpose of improving global observing systems for climate in developing countries;

Agree on the high priority funding needs for improvements in the global observing systems for climate (including data management elements) in developing countries based on scientific and programmatic advice from the GCOS Steering Committee;

Assess ways to address these needs through cooperative approaches, building upon existing national activities and the activities of regional and international funding mechanisms, including through the use of the GCOS Cooperation Fund;

Monitor the implementation of activities and the expenditures from the GCOS Cooperation Fund through a set of agreed guidelines;

Agree to and monitor appropriate procedures for cooperating with other funding and implementation mechanisms;

Provide an Annual Report for the GCOS Steering Committee and sponsoring agencies;

Review and modify, as appropriate, these TOR to match the common objectives of the Board.

B. GCOS Cooperation Fund

The GCOS Cooperation Fund is established to support the implementation of priority activities as determined by the GCOS Cooperation Board through the aggregated voluntary financial contributions from multiple donors. The fund is configured as a component of the existing Climate Observing System Fund (COSF), with separate accounting.

The characteristics and operation of the Cooperation Fund are as follows:

Contributions to the GCOS Cooperation Fund can be made in several ways:

1. Financial contributions whose specific purpose is unspecified. These funds would be allocated according to the expressed priorities of the Cooperation Board;
2. Financial contributions for specified purposes. These funds would be used consistent with the intent of the donor within the overall priorities identified by the Cooperation Board.

The Fund may be used to support all types of funding requirements for global climate observations in developing countries, including system improvement, sustained operations and capacity building. This would require ongoing investment and replenishment of the fund.

The Fund may be used in concert with, and seek co-financing from, other funding mechanisms, particularly in respect of capacity building.

C. In-Kind Contributions

Donor contributions may also be made via in-kind contributions for projects in developing countries. These contributions may be implemented directly with the recipient country or in coordination with other funding from the GCOS Cooperation Fund to address the priorities for improved global observing systems for climate.

For the purposes of accounting and reporting, in-kind contributions will be treated as equivalent to financial contributions for specified purposes.

D. Implementation of the GCOS Cooperation Board

The GCOS Director will be the responsible officer for managing the fund and for secretariat support to the Cooperation Board.

The GCOS Director will report annually and as required to the Cooperation Board on expenditures from the Cooperation Fund.

Necessary project office support will be agreed and supported by the Cooperation Board.

Functions of the project office will include implementation actions to improve systems and to sustain the operation of key stations and systems.

Existing mechanisms will be utilized for implementing the actions of the Cooperation Board whenever appropriate, including, for example:

- WMO/Voluntary Cooperation Program (VCP) for implementing projects related to GUAN, and GSN stations; IOC for ocean projects, where appropriate;
- Regional approaches – e.g. SPREP or SOPAC for coordination of implementation in the Pacific;
- National agencies – e.g. national meteorological and oceanic services.

Recipients of funds will be asked to agree to the normal requirements of the WMO/VCP for use and operation of any systems supported by the GCOS Cooperation Board. The Board may impose standards and guidelines for the accountability of awarded resources.

Funding will be subject to agreement by the recipient to make all associated data available in a timely fashion to the appropriate world data centre.