



Joint statement of European meteorological institutions and the World Meteorological Organization in support of the creation of the Systematic Observations Financing Facility

2nd October 2020

We – the European meteorological institutions and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) – strongly welcome the creation of the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF). With this statement, we want to convey the importance of European support for the SOFF.

The goal of the SOFF is to strengthen climate adaptation and resilience to respond to the increased frequency, severity and impact of weather and climate events by contributing to improved weather forecasts and climate services. The quality of these services depends decisively on a homogenic global distribution of surface-based observations. This will protect lives, property and reduce poverty, creating benefits for all citizens across the globe, in particular the most vulnerable.

The SOFF will substantially improve the timely and spatial availability of the most essential surface-based meteorological data in developing countries, contributing to internationally exchanged meteorological High Value Datasets. Surface-based observations are critical to maximize the benefits of increasingly available satellite data, including for validating global climate records derived from satellite observations.

Today, the inhomogeneity across the globe in both network density and volume of surface-based observations internationally exchanged is striking. The COVID-19 crisis further decreased the availability of observational data, showing the vulnerability of the global observing system and the urgent need to increase its resilience.

The SOFF will enable developing countries to deliver their contribution to the Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) as approved by the 18th World Meteorological Congress in 2019. At the UNFCCC COP25, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice welcomed the development of the GBON and re-emphasized the need of sustained funding to meet the essential needs for global observations.

The SOFF builds on the successful experience of the European Composite Observing System and its overarching network design, which has proven to be cost-effective and impactful. The SOFF benefits from the expertise of European meteorological offices through the provision of technical advice by the WMO Country Support Initiative.

The SOFF will provide financial and technical assistance in new ways. First, SOFF support is based on internationally agreed, quantitative metrics that guide investments in basic surface-based observations – the GBON. Second, the SOFF will shift from short-term capital investments to the provision of long-term observational data exchange as a measure of success. It will contribute to cover operating and maintenance costs of a country's basic observation infrastructure through results-based finance. Third, the SOFF will create local benefits while delivering on a global public good – improving global weather forecasts and climate information for all nations.

The creation of the SOFF is a joint commitment and a priority action of the Alliance for Hydromet Development. The Alliance brings together major international development banks, multilateral climate and environment funds and UN organizations, aiming at uniting efforts to boost developing country capacity for high-quality weather forecasts, early warning systems, and climate information. The development of the SOFF is at advanced stages and the aspirational goal is to announce it at UNFCCC COP26.

Given the paramount importance of developing country basic observations, we are asking European governments, European development banks, the European Commission as well as all multilateral climate and environment financing institutions to consider funding the SOFF.

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