

Updated version of the *Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC* published -- including revised list of GCOS Essential Climate Variables

The *Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC* was updated and published on 31 August 2010.¹ This 2010 update also includes the revised list of GCOS Essential Climate Variables (ECVs). It is important that all 138 actions recommended in the Implementation Plan be fully implemented, as these actions will substantially improve the availability of the observational information needed by all governments to understand, predict, and manage their response to, climate and climate change. This responds to Articles 4 and 5 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

To achieve full implementation, sustained global observations of Essential Climate Variables (ECVs) in the atmosphere, in the world's oceans, on land, and from space are required. Moreover, climate research, modelling, analysis, and capacity building activities need to be strengthened to build and maintain a global climate observing system, and observational records need to be improved to enable better seasonal-to-interannual climate predictions. Each recommended action in the Implementation Plan states relevant "agents for implementation," timelines, performance indicators, and estimated annual costs associated with the action.

The estimated annual costs of implementing the Plan of US\$2.5 billion are given as additional costs over and above the costs for maintaining and operating existing networks, systems, and activities required to address climate needs (but that are in many cases not specifically designed for climate purposes). The cost estimates cited in the Plan are also given for satellite-related and open ocean-related costs and for the enhancements in networks needed in both developing and developed countries.

The 2010 version of the Implementation Plan updates an original version published in 2004. It takes into account the current status of observing systems, recent progress in science and technology, the increased focus on adaptation, enhanced efforts to optimize mitigation measures, and the need for improved projections of climate change.

The Plan underwent a two-month web-based open review by the scientific community between November 2009 and January 2010. It was submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat on 31 August 2010 for consideration by Parties at the 33rd session of the UNFCCC *Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)*, which will be held in conjunction with the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) in Cancún, Mexico, from 29 November – 10 December 2010.

¹ The 2010 Implementation Plan is available for download from: <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/gcos/Publications/gcos-138.pdf>