

REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Background

1. The WMO First Congress (1951) established six WMO Regions with related Regional Associations (RAs). The Regional Programme (RP) aimed at facilitating a regional approach to the implementation of WMO Programmes and activities, was first introduced by Seventh Congress (1975). As a cross-cutting programme, the RP contributes to all Expected Results of the WMO Strategic Plan, with its main focus on ER 6 of the WMO Strategic Plan 2012-2015.

Overall Objective

2. The overall objective of the RP is to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the six RAs of the Organization in coordinating meteorological, hydrological, climatological and related activities of their Members. The RP provides a framework for regional cooperation in the implementation of the WMO strategies, policies and programmes taking into account regional requirements, capacities and priorities.

Purpose and scope

3. The RP provides support to the six RAs. The regional associations play a key role in planning and coordinating the regional activities, aligning them with the WMO Strategic Plan and the other WMO technical and scientific programmes, ensuring a harmonized and synchronous implementation effort by Members. RAs should play an important role in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation activities of their Members, establishing suitable baselines and measuring performance.

4. The RP ensures that in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the scientific and technical programmes of the Organization, the particular needs and capabilities of Regions are recognized and considered, taking into account the best interests of the Organization as a whole. The activities under the RP provide significant assistance in addressing regional aspects and integrating them within the entire scope of the work of WMO, particularly in strengthening the role and operation of NMHSs at the national and regional levels to enable them to fulfill their mandates and provide adequate response to emerging challenges.

5. The RP is a cross-cutting programme involving all Members, RAs and TCs. It provides a two-way interface between the Members and the WMO Secretariat to allow for streamlined expert assistance to Members, particularly developing and Least Developed Countries, and for feed-back on best practices and lessons learned. The RP identifies the need for and fosters the establishment of Regional Centres to serve Members in different fields, such as, numerical weather prediction, climate, instruments, education and training. The regional basic observing networks (RBSN/RBCN) are also coordinated through the RP mechanisms in coordination with CBS and the WMO Secretariat, taking into account the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS).

6. Through the RP, WMO establishes and maintains links and partnerships with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, inter-governmental and economic groupings in the Regions. In this way it promotes WMO activities, contributes to the implementation of the WMO strategic objectives, and provides tools needed to effectively address regional, sub-regional and national issues of importance to society.

7. The RP accounts for the wide range in development levels of the countries in the various WMO Regions resulting in large differences in the capacities of the respective NMHSs. In

this regard, RP, as part of the WMO capacity development effort, focuses on the assistance given at regional level that is needed to bridge gaps in the capabilities of all Members, especially LDCs, SIDS and countries in transition to produce, utilize and benefit from hydrometeorological information, products and services, as called for by WMO strategies, standards and recommended practices.

Governance

8. The overall guidance and direction of the RP is provided by the regional associations and, during the intersessional periods, the oversight of the regional activities is carried out by the presidents of the regional associations, assisted by their respective management groups. The regular meetings of the presidents of RAs allow for the inter-regional coordination of the Programme.

Programme structure

9. The RP consists of two interdependent functional areas, as follows:

- (a) Regional associations activities:
 - Institutional support to RAs;
 - Regional events;
- (b) Regional cooperation and partnership:
 - Coordination of capacity development activities in the Regions;
 - Cooperation with regional partners.

10. The RP supports the organization and conduct of the RA sessions which decide on ways of coordinated implementation of the WMO Programmes and strategies in the respective Regions and develop regional operating/action plans to address priority tasks through coordinated implementation efforts of its Members. The RAs have emphasized the need for capacity development of its Members, including activities taken by individual or groups of Members on behalf of the Region, coordinated through the RP. In order to pursue the tasks during their intersessional periods, RAs develop appropriate work structures for its subsidiary bodies such as working groups, task teams, networks and forums, engaging the available expertise of its Members based on the principle of volunteerism. The RP supports the activities of RA's subsidiary bodies and plays an important role in ensuring consistency between the WMO Strategic Plan, technical programmes and respective regional activities. The RP provides technical and logistics support to the related RA activities in order to ensure achievement of planned key outcomes.

11. In each WMO Region there are a number of international organizations, inter-governmental agreements, regional economic groupings, development agencies, and NGOs, whose objectives and activities are related to those of WMO. The RP works towards establishment of close cooperation and partnership with those organizations in order to find synergies, possibilities for financing projects and provision of technical assistance to Members in the Region. The RP accounts for the representation of WMO in different inter-agency and inter-governmental meetings at regional and sub-regional level, thus, contributing to a better visibility of WMO and the NMHSs and emphasizing their role in the development agenda.

12. WMO Regional Offices support the RP and other Programmes as appropriate. The Regional Offices include a number of offices located in Sub-Regions for closer coordination of regional activities with Members and development partners. The RP contributes to capacity development efforts, through the Regional Offices and WMO Offices in the Regions, by maintaining close relations with all Members, by acting as point-of-contact between Members and the WMO Secretariat. One of the main tasks of these Offices is to advocate the role of the NMHSs

and the need for support from the governments to sustain and enhance their operations. A major task in the advocacy effort is to demonstrate the socio-economic benefits of the weather, climate and water services and promote the need to invest in necessary infrastructure, as well as in related research and development. The RP puts emphasis on strengthening the national and regional institutional frameworks, legislation and regulations, in order to ensure sustainability of NMHSs and their continuous improvement.
