

Implementing the 2030 Agenda through Policy Innovation and Integration – a WMO contribution

GFCS: an example of integrated cooperation

The September 2015 summit convened by the United Nations General Assembly adopted and launched the 2030 development agenda featuring 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). To succeed, the SDGs will require effective action by all countries and stakeholders. Climate services can play a vital role by providing a practical and user-driven approach to achieving many of the Goals.

The Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) is the principal platform for expanding, improving and coordinating the delivery of climate services for decision-making on climate change and sustainable development. It boasts global reach and access to unsurpassed meteorological, hydrological, and climatological knowledge and expertise. The GFCS offers the best available opportunity to channel the energies of existing services and initiatives into creating practical solutions.

This intergovernmental partnership is supported by United Nations and other international organizations with diverse and cross-cutting mandates and competences. While spearheaded by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), it is led and implemented by a broad partnership of agencies that collaborate through the GFCS Partner Advisory Committee on an equal footing.

These partners include the European Commission (EC), the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the World Bank, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

GFCS enables countries and regions to coordinate their activities, and it catalyses action to make climate services fully operational. It is guided by a 10-year Implementation Plan developed through an extensive consultative process involving more than 300 experts and approved by governments at the first session of the Intergovernmental Board on Climate Services in July 2013.

Streamlining GFCS partners engagement

GFCS structures its activities around three main objectives. The first is to engage stakeholders and the users of climate services in order to improve service delivery. The second is to make climate services more immediately useful for decision-making in the priority areas of agriculture and food security, disaster risk reduction, energy, health, and water. The third objective is to upgrade and expand the technical and scientific capabilities that countries need in order to provide user-driven climate services.

Managing climate risk is central to the international global agenda. It supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the National Adaptation Plans of the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change (UNFCCC). Pooling resources can ensure that climate services empower countries to take early action to reduce emissions and adapt to climate variability and change. Structured coordination at country level is central for providing the technical advisory, planning and coordination services needed to make these national investments technically sound, effective and sustainable.

GFCS will enable partners to assist least-developed countries to develop and implement national adaptation plans (NAP) by strengthening the scientific and technical capabilities needed to generate climate knowledge for effective decision-making. Another benefit will come from the provision of evidence and data for attributing loss and damage caused by hydrometeorological disasters in a changing climate, and it will support climate services for mitigation and renewable energy, thus contributing to a low-carbon development path.

Pushing for Policy coherence: Lessons learnt

To ensure the success of GFCS, its activities have been structured according to the following general principles and policy guidance: (1) make meaningful and sustained progress towards the GFCS vision; (2) communicate the strategic priorities for climate-services development to GFCS stakeholders; (3) guide the necessary investment strategies and decisions and prioritized activities; and (4) provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating key elements of the Framework.

These principles have provided a means for GFCS partners to leverage their expertise and technical capabilities to support climate services at the country level. Each area of work can thus be implemented by the relevant GFCS partners in a coherent and collective manner. The three objectives mentioned above are pursued by (1) enhancing user engagement and service delivery by strengthening national, regional, and global coordination and delivery mechanisms; (2) supporting the development and application of climate services for decision-making in the five climate-sensitive GFCS priority areas depending on national priorities and conditions; (3) enhancing core technical and scientific capabilities for user-driven climate services, such as information and early warning systems, climate observing systems, research, and capacity development. Achieving these objectives require also carrying out specific activities for improving the technical and scientific capacities of countries.

Meeting the challenge

The demand for accessible and accurate weather, climate, hydrological, marine and related environmental services will continue to grow in the years ahead. It will be driven in part by concerns over climate change and the varying patterns of weather, hydrology, storms, flooding and drought.

It will also reflect the need to respond to new human vulnerabilities resulting, for example, from migration and the growth of megacities and coastal developments. The contributions that these services can make to the 2030 Agenda will increase every year. Advances in weather and climate science will make it possible for the WMO community and its GFCS partners to satisfy this demand for continuously improved services.

WMO and its partners will collaborate on accelerating this trend through technology transfer, capacity development, training and public outreach. With a stronger emphasis on partnerships and openness to a changing political and economic environment, they will also pursue innovative and creative new approaches to

delivering services. In this way, the WMO community will ensure that today's decision-makers, and those of future generations, have the tools and information they need to thrive and develop in an increasingly complex and challenging environment.