

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT IV

WMO Input Supporting the “data revolution” for key Environmental nexus issues by assessing Interoperability, access and capacities

A WMO proposal for the 2015-2016 EMG work plan

Background, context and requirements

The EMG work plan for 2015-2016 should take into account the international context framed by the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the Post-2015 Framework for DRR, the UNFCCC process and anticipated outcomes of the coming COPs, the outcome of the UN Conference on SIDS, the anticipated outcome of the Habitat III Conference, and *inter alia*, the progress of the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), which provides the fundamental underpinning climate services, as monitored by the Intergovernmental Board on Climate Services (IBCS).

As a collective, the UN system is expected to assist UN Members to implement the decisions of these major conferences in a coherent, sound, robust and cost-effective manner. In particular, the system is expected to provide member states with appropriate methodologies to design, manage and monitor programmes that integrate the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, based on respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Among the different key success factors and levers for achieving the SDGs, the need for a sustained, transformative effort aimed at improving how data is produced, processed, stored, disseminated and used at the national and global levels, has been stressed. Such a “data revolution” is needed to ensure that high-quality, timely data collected in a sustainable manner will be available both at the national and at the global level. This implies first and foremost a considerable, concerted and sustained investment in national observing infrastructure and processing capacity, both technical and institutional. This will require a quantum shift in data collection, processing, archiving, access and dissemination and, as budgets are limited, the identification of an optimal set of variables that support the preparation of national, regional and global reports on the status of, *inter alia*, Sustainable Development.

Overall aims of the work

WMO would like to suggest that the EMG exploit its individual and collective expertise to establish the business case for design and implementation of an environment focused global observing platform in support of the nexus issues such as food/water/energy/health/climate, possibly within an Issue Management Group.

Indeed, the development of observing infrastructure and processing capacity in each sector that is sensitive to, or impacted by, environmental conditions is essential in its own right, but it is also critical to have a coherent, inter-related and consistent picture of all environmental aspects of this nexus, in order to anticipate and avoid increasing vulnerabilities associated with variability and changes of environmental conditions.

To this end, it would be important to account for existing programmes and networks. In the case of climate, the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) as well as the Ocean (GOOS) and Terrestrial (GTOS) components already exist. Other such initiatives should also be identified. Important elements could be obtained in collaboration with the new Future Earth initiative.

Specific deliverables and timescale

The first Phase of this work (Sept 2014-March 2015) aims to survey the participating agencies of the Environmental Management Group and produce an initial assessment report of the environmental data sources, quality, accessibility, capacities and integration potential related to environmental nexus issues such as climate, water, food, health and energy. Recommendations to the EMG will focus on the measures needed to enhance the interoperability of data and new approaches to analysis in support of the 'data revolution'.

A second phase of the work (April 2015-September 2015) should aim at designing partnership structures/modalities across the environmental nexus areas taking into account initiatives such as the Future Earth and Global Observing platforms. Recommendations on the means of implementation of these partnerships to support future development targets can be reported to various UN Groups and committees including the HLPF, HLCP and UNDG, to enhance coherence of environmental data and partnerships. The work of this project will also be of relevance to the UN Environment Assembly, where the assessment report could be disseminated.

Modalities of operation

It is proposed that the EMG could carry out the work in a more informal way than through a classic Issue Management Group, and through cooperation and support from members of the HLCP Group on Climate Change. The proposers request the EMG members for advice on the operational modalities of the work including the possibility to establish a small task team or set of interested focal points to complete the initial surveying.