

Coordination Office for WCRP Regional Activities (CORA) Report

Reporting period: June 2019-April 2020

1. Highlights for JSC

- Staffing of CORA: Coordinator Wiebke Schubotz started on June 15th at GERICS. Thus, CORA only became operational since July 2019. CORA's terms of reference are available here <https://www.wcrp-climate.org/cora-tor>
- WCRP Survey: the coordinators performed a survey among the WCRP community in order to make them aware of the existence of CORA and to collect knowledge about on-going or planned regional activities. The survey was conducted between August and October 2019, consisted of a questionnaire targeted to the co-chairs and leaders of all WCRP bodies (Core Projects, Working Groups and Grand Challenges). We received input from half of the WCRP bodies inquired, notably from all the working groups and two grand challenges. The responses received are encouraging as it shows a clear need for support body within WCRP. Moreover, the kinds of activities they indicated support with align very well with the existing its terms of reference. The full survey with transcripts of the respondents is available upon request.
- Task Team on Regional Activities (TTRA): CORA was appointed member of the TTRA in order to advise the JSC on the implementation of structures and elements for activities on *climate knowledge and information for regions* and to develop a concrete work plan for the next two years on how they will intersect with each other and with WCRP core activities while each pursuing its unique role. The emphasis is on realising Objective 4 "Bridging Science with Society". CORA assisted the TTRA by organising 5 telecons between September 2019-February 2020 and contributed to the TTRA report for the WCRP science week at AGU. It also conducted a consultation with service partners and a WCRP stakeholder's stocktake. It is now contributing to the discussions regarding the establishment a new Working Group on Information for Regions and Society (WGIRS), drafting the terms of reference, membership and a concept document on *Framework of Climate Information (FoCI)* projects. The future work of the TTRA is pending the revision of the report of the WCRP workshop on scientific questions held in Hamburg in February. The TTRA will deliver its recommendations to the JSC at the 41st meeting in May
- WCRP activities database
CORA is presently building an on-line, map-based and searchable database (DB) of past and on-going WCRP activities. The database will be searchable by region/continent, science activity and topics, and by partner organisations. The DB has been programmed and is hosted by the Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht (HZG) which provides services to GERICS own database tool. This is thus, an in-kind contribution from GERICS to WCRP. When full populated, the DB will contain about 200 records of information about WCRP global and regional activities. CORA and the JPS will thoroughly test the DB previous to its launch in mid-May. The DB link from the WCRP webpage and will be accessible to everybody.

2. Issues and challenges

- Working with other WCRP activities: CORA has established connections to the co-chairs of the Core Projects and personnel of their IPOs, the leader of most of the Grand Challenges and all the Working Groups. The office maintains regular telecon participation with some projects and it is invited to the Core Project annual meetings of the Scientific Steering Groups. CORA has also a fluid communication with the Joint Planning Staff (notably with Boram Lee, CORAs primary JPS contact until January 2020, when Narelle van der Wal took over).

CORA took the initiative to revamp the regular communication between the JPS and the Core Project's IPOs after a hiatus the last couple of years, and so telecons are now scheduled throughout 2020. Regarding CORDEX, CORA has also established regular telecons with the IPO in Sweden, and new activities are under planning.

Examples of interactions so far:

- CORA prepared a grant proposal for a workshop to consolidate the launching of a new GEWEX Regional Hydrology Project in East Asia.
 - CORA volunteered to coordinate the "Joint Core Project Initiative" proposed by the co-chairs of the CPs and CORDEX at the JSC-40. Thanks to this, the CP initiative will serve as pilots of the Framework of Climate Information (FoCI) projects proposed by the TTRA and subject to approval by the JSC.
 - CORA is assisting the Grand Challenge *Near Time Climate Prediction* and the S2S community in the distribution and collation of information, e.g. "WMO Annual to Decadal Climate Update" and the "WCRP/WWRP S2S phase II: real-time pilot projects initiative" respectively
- CORA connections with partners outside of WCRP:
CORA made a connection to Future Earth *Knowledge Action Network on Emergent Risks and Extreme Events (Risk-KAN)*. Scientists from the Grand Challenge Weather and Climate Extremes participate in this KAN and in this regard, CORA prepared a ppt about the GC for Sonia Seneviratne to present at the Risk KAN session organised at AGU 2019. CORA also connected to *Future Earth Coasts* hub regarding the organisation of a workshop in Australia on risk assessment of coastal impacts of sea level changes (cancelled due to the Coronavirus).

CORA was invited to participate in a number of events in 2020: (i) to the 6th International Conference of Climate Services, Pune, February, to hold a WCRP session together with Krishnan Raghavan, (ii) to a round table discussion at Climate Festival organised by *ClimatEurope*, Riga, May, (iii) to an EGU session organised by the Risk KAN to explore venues of cooperation regarding WCRP objective 4: "Bridging Science with Society". However, CORA failed to attend the Pune meeting due to the imminent coronavirus situation while the Riga and EGU were cancelled. Only the Risk KAN meeting will be held remotely and CORA will participate.

In the future, and in connection to the work of the TTRA, CORA will assist in the establishment of working and sustainable partnerships with a number of boundary organisations and partners, such key bodies of WMO (e.g. Global Framework for Climate Services and Commission for Climate Information, Regional Associations, etc), Future Earth, Climate Services Partnerships, the International Conference on Climate Services, Disaster Risk Reduction Communities, etc.

- Funding: The hosts of the CORA, Bjerknes Centre and GERICS have initially committed funds until 31st of December 2021. CORA is a pilot project and continued funding from the hosts will depend on the office being able to prove that its activities provide added value to the WCRP. An unexpected development was the resignation, early this year, of Wiekbe Schubotz the coordinator at GERICS which means that CORA has been operating at half machine since March.

Although CORA has had an active year, which includes reaching out to the entire WCRP family with a survey, we still have a way to go before everyone in the WCRP organization is familiar to CORA and the service it provides. Clear messages from the leadership would help to sort out any confusions that still exists.

CORA reports directly to the JSC. It is a challenge to secure good information flow on a more daily basis, and CORA would like to establish an informal reference group consisting of, for instance, key personnel from the TTRA. In this way we are confident that CORA will come closer to fulfilling its intended functions as communicator, facilitator and integrator.

Finally, we recognize that the year of 2019 has been particularly hectic for many WCRP scientists, in connection to the IPCC, the WCRP Implementation Plan and the WCRP Science Week. Because of all these, it has been difficult for CORA to try to coordinate and create synergies in a "moving landscape" as WCRP heads towards a new structure. With the ongoing covid-19 situation it seems that 2020 will also be an exceptional year, but at some time things will "fall into place" so WCRP can get the most out of CORA and the resources put into it by GERIC and Bjerknes Centre.