

46th Session of the World Climate Research Programme
Joint Scientific Committee



Session on Ensuring diversity and future leadership

Contributions leveraged from RIfS' Africa Initiative

Robust Information for Decisions: Africa Climate Change Focus

WCRP
World Climate
Research Programme



Naomi Goldenson,
Bruce Hewitson
14 May, 2025
Paris, and online



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Context

- Emerged from ongoing conversations held with funders who attended:
 - **RIfS Expert meeting** on *Robustness of Climate Change Information for Decisions*, Brussels, Belgium: April 2024
 - **RIfS Planning retreat** for the *Interim Working Group on Robust Information*, Virginia, USA: Dec 2024
- Identified an opportunity in Africa where a “connecting glue” can build synthesis of knowledge, enhance collaboration across a multiplicity of efforts and networks, and catalyze new actions.

A selection of the breadth of converging issues and opportunities, as presented by Bruce Hewitson:



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A new collaboration

RIfS has partnered with CLARE for an initial two-year period:

Robust information for decisions: Africa climate change focus (RIfS)

CLARE is a flagship research programme on climate adaptation and resilience, funded mostly (about 90%) by UK Aid through the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and co-funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada.

CLARE is bridging critical gaps between science and action by funding Southern leadership to enable socially inclusive and sustainable action to build resilience to climate change and natural hazards.

Learn more about CLARE: www.clareprogramme.org



Structure and governance

- Contracted funding between IDRC (on behalf of CLARE project) and the RIfS International Project Office (IPO) with benefits for donor management and reducing institutional overheads
- RIfS IPO will create sub-contracts with African partners for:
 - One Africa-based **Science Officer**, who will be remotely integrated with the RIfS IPO team [selection cmte including external senior African researchers]
 - Two Africa-based **post-docs** [selected by the RIfS Africa Task Team]
 - One primarily on research, one primarily on collaborations and coordination
- The African host organizations will be based on best addressing the placement needs of the personnel.
- RIfS SSG **Africa Task Team** (Africa membership and chairs), to establish the science framing, set objectives, and oversee the programme and activities.



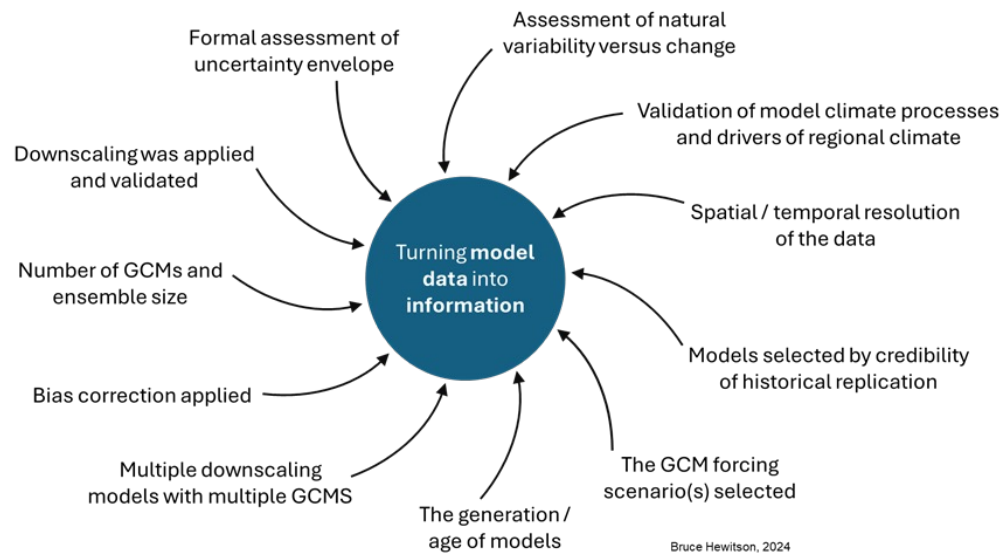
Our 2025 plans

- The **Task Team** is established as a body of the RIfS for representing the regional interests of Africa.
 - Leadership through a majority African membership and three Africa co-chairs (1 RIfS co-chair and 2 Africa members from the RIfS IWG on robust information).
 - Leadership by Africa for Africa addressing the problem of the “missing middle” between climate research and stakeholder contexts. The Task Team focus on the Africa-specific issues, and helps shape the agenda for collaboration and research investment.
- The **Science Officer** will be accountable to and operate under the guidance of the Task Team, and with local mentorship support from the host institution.
 - help the Task Team to foster a transdisciplinary approach through linking the multiple research communities and networks, project-based research consortia, policy and stakeholder communities, national agencies, and relevant donor agencies.
- All will participate in the RIfS + CORDEX Africa strategic workshop in September in Cape Town.

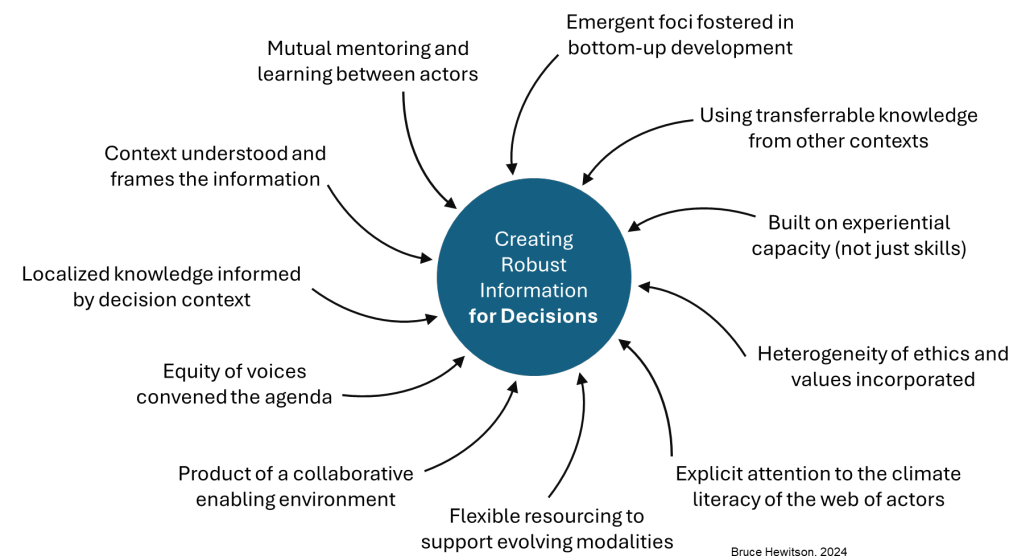


The challenges

Factors of a “data” lens on information
(a WCRP/Scientist approach)



Factors of a “context” lens on information
(a decision makers reality)



CLARE
CLIMATE
ADAPTATION
& RESILIENCE



**UK International
Development**
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity



IDRC · CRDI
Canada



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Goals

- Contributing to:
 - Building a synthesis of Africa knowledge and lessons learned from across the CLARE projects and other major actions in Africa
 - Fostering (new) collaboration and partnerships around frontier research on the generation, analysis, construction, and communication of *robust climate change information* aligned with and shaped by the stakeholder and decision-maker contexts;
 - Developing climate and context literacy across the web of all actors (scientists included) and enhancing capacity for managing climate risk and building resilience to climate impacts;
 - Building an Africa Community of Collaboration with a visible and recognized identity around transdisciplinary approaches to climate and society;



A model for other regions?

- If this initiative is successful, RIfS would see it as a potential model for learning how to organize hubs of activity in other parts of the world, with:
 - Local coordinating capacity
 - Connected tightly with the rest of RIfS' work on cross-cutting themes
- By taking this approach, we ensure that we are helping to develop a next generation of leadership *in Africa that is:*
 - *convening the agenda,*
 - *owning the process,*
 - *building from local and regional needs,*
 - *operating within the realities of the Africa lived experience for researchers.*

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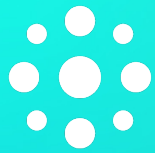
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Thank You

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