

47th Session of the World Climate Research Programme
Joint Scientific Committee



Regional Information for Society (RfS)

Bruce Hewitson - RfS SSG co-chair

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WCRP

World Climate
Research Programme

Tue, April 28, 2026

Online





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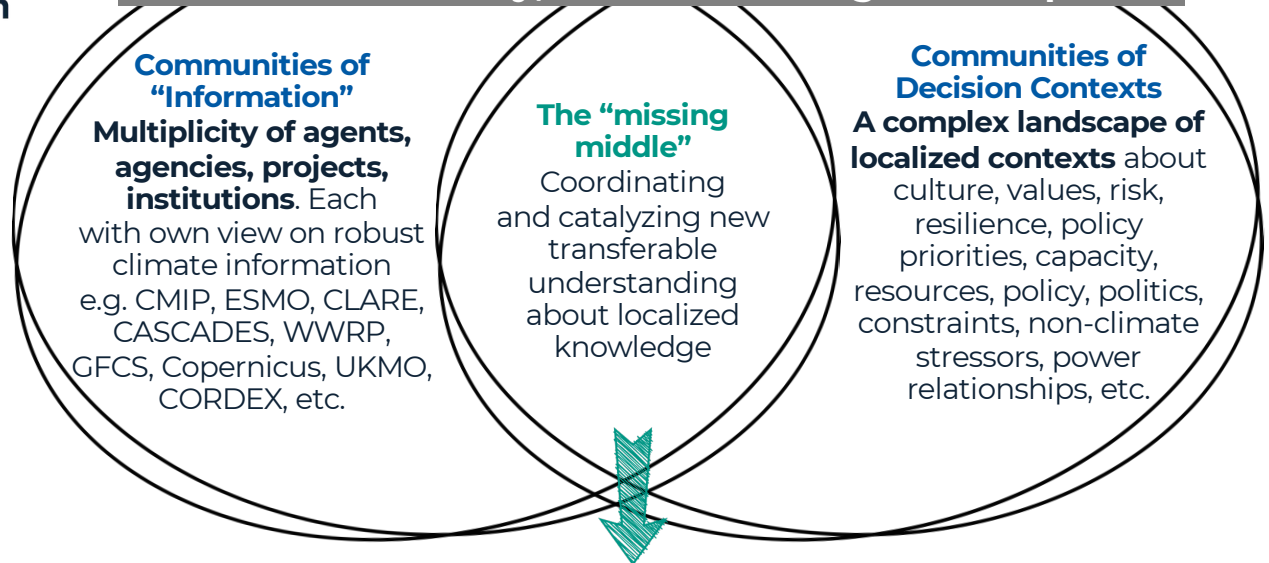
Operative since 2023

Enhancing the scientific value of regional climate information in policy and decision contexts

A Core Project of



Actionable, Ethical, and Defensible Robust Climate Information for Policy, Decision-Making and Adaptation



Bridging context and climate information for actions to be ethically defensible

When our research outputs are used to inform policy and decisions, we have implicit accountability for consequences



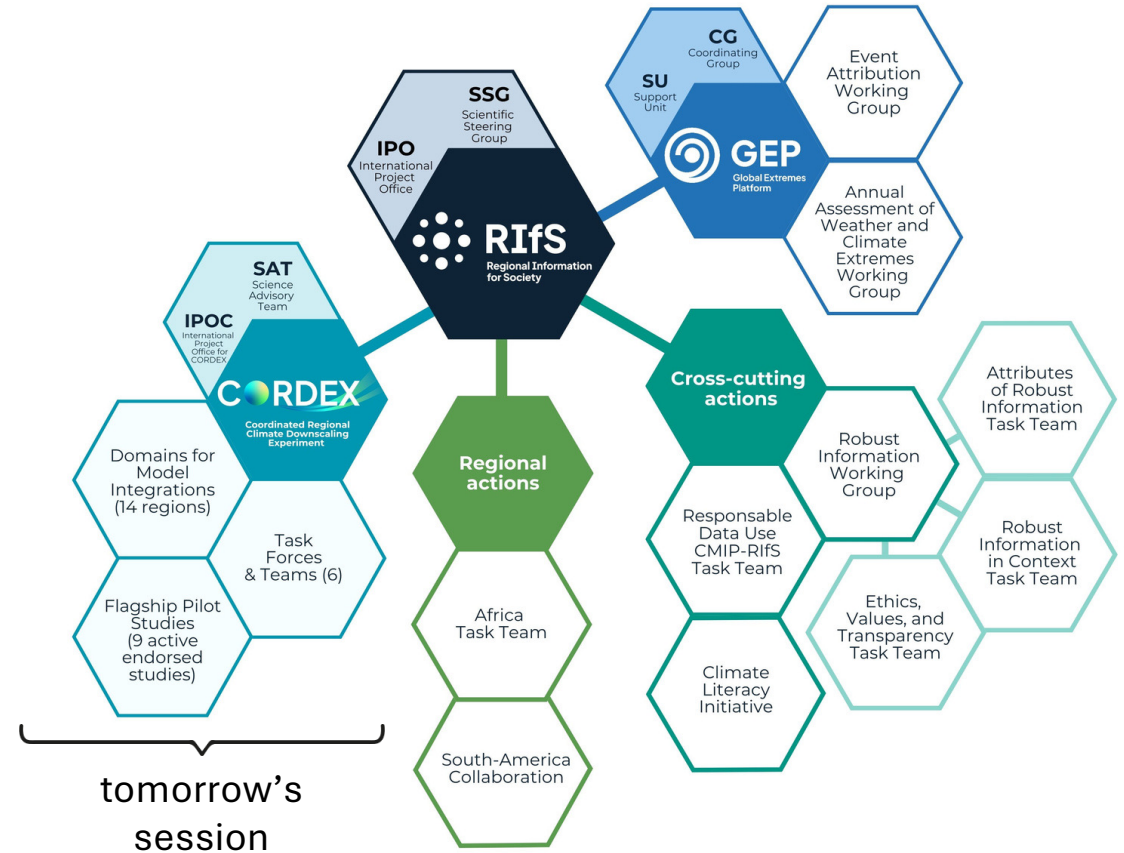
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Highlights



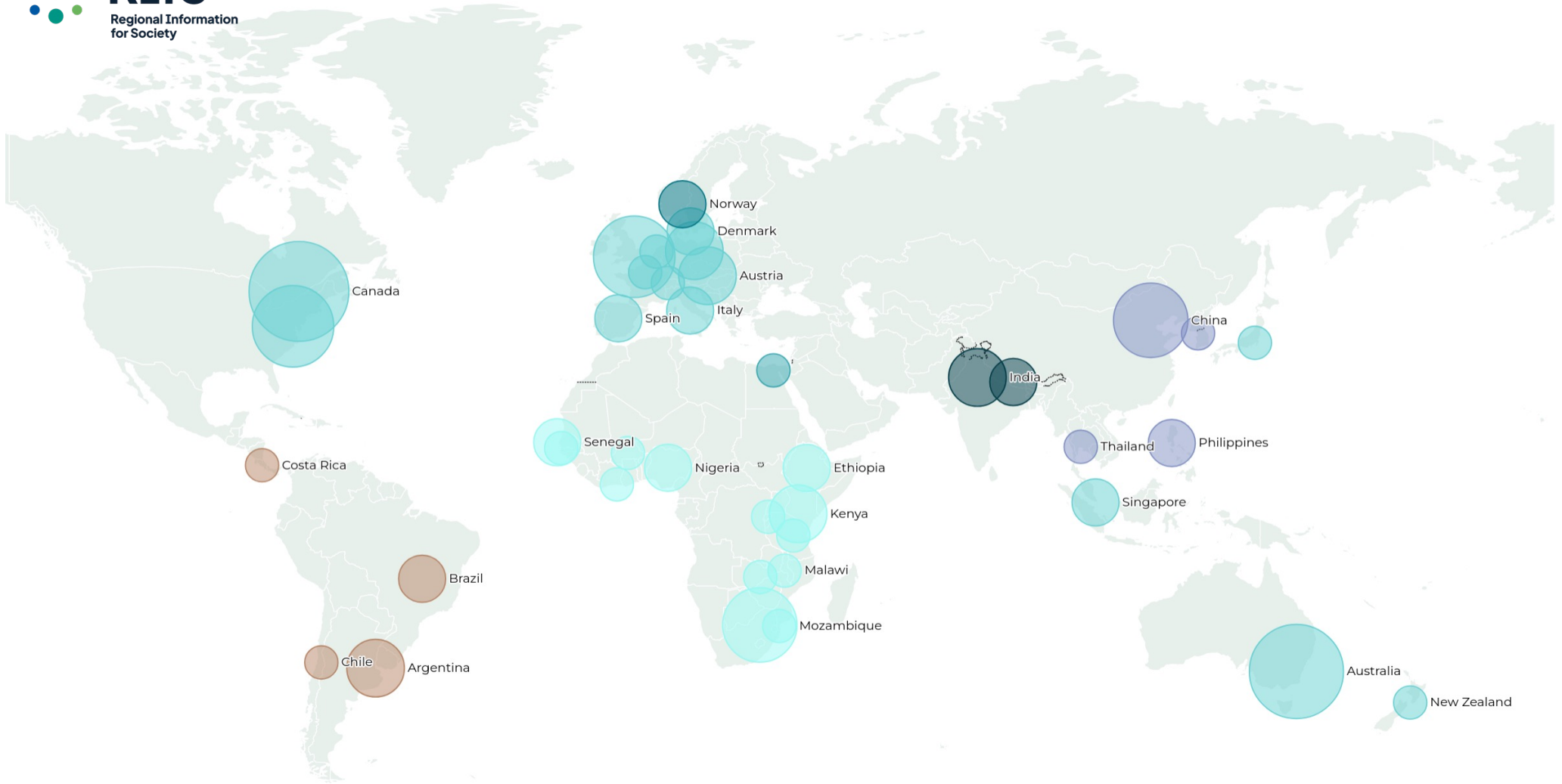


May '25 to Apr '26



RIFS membership, by based country

94 members based in 40 countries - Oct 2025



- 1. Understanding what constitutes robust (actionable) information and developing guidance**
- 2. Developing context-transferable knowledge about using climate information for adaptation while also building our Africa community**
- 3. Exploring the dynamics and challenges for communication with decision and policy-makers**

1. Understanding what constitutes robust (actionable) information and developing guidance.

- **Responsible Data Use Task Team** (joint TT with CMIP) worked on **guidance for the Rapid Evaluation Framework (REF)** launched at the CMIP community workshop (<https://www.wcrp-rifs.org/ref-guidance/>)
 - The RDUTT is also looking ahead to more targeted guidance about model data use in general for different audiences
- **The Robust Information Working Group** has three task teams working on this question, and planning **guidance on context aligned markers, attributes and ethics of robust climate information**, and has started:
 - A comprehensive literature review
 - A series of virtual 'fireside chats' to learn from experiences of working with climate information users
- Intern at the IPO did a **review of existing guidance materials about climate information** e.g. not documentation, but the forms of guides that help someone understand how to make choices depending on their context



2. Developing context-transferable knowledge about using climate information for adaptation while also building our Africa community

- Builds on the intellectual framing presented in 2025
- **Pan-Africa Workshop** with CORDEX-Africa in Cape Town, Sept 2025: “**Building Actionable Climate Information for Africa Adaptation**”, with follow-ups and network building
- Hires under CLARE funding: Africa-based science officer, and two postdocs
- Nairobi research partners project planning meeting with postdocs
- Partnering with **Rockefeller-funded climate literacy project**
- Coming up: Capacity-sharing and research exchanges, Two project workshops (Aug, Nov, 2026)



3. Exploring the dynamics and challenges for communication with decision and policy-makers

- **Collaboration with ANDEX (GHP-GEWEX):** ad-hoc group conducting a survey in Spanish, to be followed-up by targeted interviews
 - This dataset aims to:
 - Become a resource in a **repository** we will host online
 - Be analyzed for a **research study** examining the challenges that members of the **Andean climate science community** have faced when interacting with decision-makers
 - This work is meant **to be expanded to reach regional communities of decisions**, and the possibility of establishing a **South America Task Team** is currently being explored.
- **Evolving focus on climate literacy** and its cross cutting role and impact on information construction, communication, and adoption.



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Global Extremes Platform (GEP)

Xuebin Zhang and Sonia I. Seneviratne

April 28th, 2026

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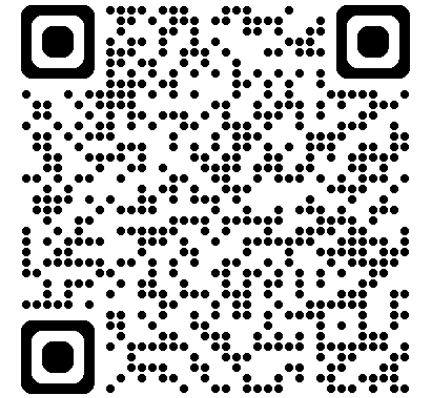

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Working Group on Event Attribution

- The WG created a **survey** to map operational event attribution activities across the wider community. Responses from this survey will be analyzed and summarized.
- Work is underway to produce a **paper** summarizing current operational event attribution activities and providing best practice guidance for such systems.
- The WG has been **meeting with other groups** interested in event attribution, from both within and outside WCRP, and efforts to increase awareness and collaboration will continue.
- As the focus is operational aspect of event attribution, this is highly relevant to climate service.



You can fill in the event attribution survey until 06 May!

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Annual assessment of Weather and Climate Extremes (AWCE) Working Group

- The Annual assessment of Weather and Climate Extremes (AWCE) Working Group was formed in **November 2025**.
- A key output will be an **annual report delivered in May/June each year**, with a retrospective analysis of extreme events of the past year and helping to fill gaps in existing initiatives.
- **First in-person meeting** will be held from 26th-28th May at ETH Zurich, which aims to finalize the first annual assessment report in time for the Bonn pre-COP meeting.

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Contact Group for Weather and Climate Extremes

Research on extremes spreads across almost all WCRP Core Projects and Lighthouse Activities, but lacks an effective communication mechanism.

- **Co-Chairs:** Peiqiang Xu (IAP/CAS, Beijing), Fei Luo (CCRS, Singapore)
- **Members:** 21 early-career scientists from 12 countries, nominated by WCRP Core Projects and Lighthouse Activities
- **Aims:** To serve as a hub that connects, compiles, and disseminates extremes-related activities across WCRP
 - Internal WCRP communication: members serve as liaisons to their home projects; share activities via mailing lists
 - Public outreach: newsletters, climate science communication through educators and spokespersons

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Other Activities

- WMO and WCRP experts have jointly formed an **ad-hoc scientific task team** to review indices for weather and climate extremes.
- The **Global Extreme Indices Data Portal** (<http://globalextremeindices.com>) is online, providing indices at the regional scale:
 - Allows users to select the region (AR6 region or any rectangle) and then generate downloadable data, and to do simple analyses.
 - Feedback collected via RfS was carefully reviewed and addressed. An updated version with improved usability has been provided.
- The extension of NUIST's sponsorship of GEP Support Unit will be discussed in June 2026.

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RifS Developments & Priorities



1. Climate Literacy

2. First Pan-RIfS workshop

3. Regional Workshop: North + Central America and the Caribbean

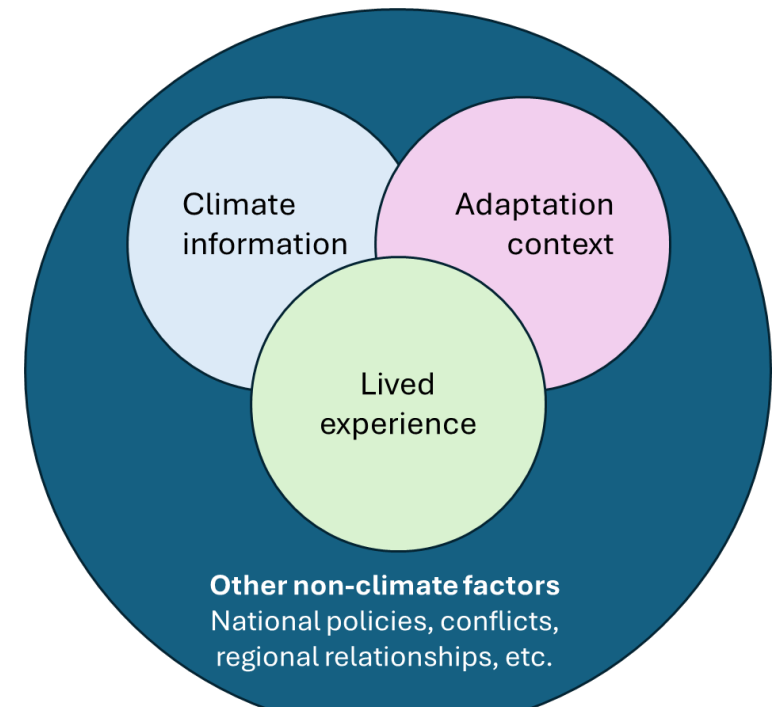
4. Defining Describing Robust Information

6. Revising RIfS Science Plan

5. Fundraising efforts

1. Climate Literacy

- Refers to the web of actors **being functionally conversant between communities** about the information and decision context to **avoid ambiguity, false confidence, and maladaptation**.
- A **key cross-cutting issue**: central to stakeholder engagement and applicable within the WCRP.
- **2025: Developments** include a new discussion group, literature review, webinar and workshop sessions.
- **2026: Moving towards a new task team**, active research in Africa, perspective paper in draft, webinar in May, plans for a workshop within the next year.
- **Broadening the conversation** beyond RiFS to the WCRP community and externally.



Effective climate literacy is more than only literacy about the science

2. First Pan-RIfS workshop



June 9-12, 2026
Nanjing, China

[Online registration
still open for those in
the WCRP community](#)



- **Brings together the community** from all RIfS bodies, including CORDEX, GEP, and deepen the community relationships.
- **Review the status** of current activities, objectives, and challenges.
- **Explore critical intellectual frontiers** (e.g. dimensions of robustness, ethics and values, diverse knowledge systems)
- **Discuss questions around climate overshoot** and what this means for regional climate information (UNEP Overshoot report will be released days ahead of the workshop)
- **Gain community input on revising the RIfS science plan**

3. Regional Workshop: North + Central America & Caribbean

- Building off of Africa workshop and testing new insights in another region
- Targeting February 2027 in Mexico or Central America
- Multiple collaborations being explored, US-CLIVAR working group (conversation happening later this week)

4. Defining Describing Robust Information

- The Robust Information Working group is moving forwards with the underlying research and planning a workshop to advance the critical issues, including ethics and values.

5. Revising the RIfS science plan

- SSG sub-committee draft to be discussed at the June pan-RIfS meeting

6. Fundraising efforts

- No new activity-specific funding since the 2025 CLARE project in Africa (ongoing), which we shared about in more detail last year.
- Possible RIfS endorsement / co-branding of a collaborating Rockefeller-funded project in Africa on climate literacy.
- Some instances of support from other sources for meetings.
- **Initial 5-years of funding for the IPO** (hosted at Ouranos with funding from Quebec government) goes to March 2028, and came with some activity funds.
 - Already exploring renewal of this funding from Canada & Quebec sources
 - Active development of concept proposal for international foundations.
- Exploring philanthropy foundations and non-traditional sources and coordinating with Secretariat with respect to discussions and approaches.

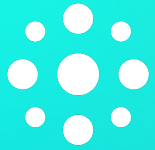
Suggestions, issues, challenges



Suggestions, issues, challenges

As a new core project, RIfS has found its stride, established good momentum, and now revisiting our founding structures and policies.

- RIfS has been short a co-chair for a long time. **Guidance, or WCRP policy, on dealing with an absent co-chair** would be helpful and might help others in the future.
- Request that the nominated **new RIfS co-chair's term be effective immediately** upon JSC approval.
- Work by a SSG sub-committee on a comprehensive **Terms of Reference for RIfS, in compliance with the WCRP guidelines**
- **Conversations with CORDEX co-chairs** are advancing productively about formalizing the terms of the relationship between RIfS and CORDEX.



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