

Coordination Office for WCRP Regional Activities (CORA) Report Annual Report 2020

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1. ACTIVITIES

1.1. Task Team on Regional Activities (TTRA):

- CORA organised a total of 10 telecons between September 2019 and October 2020, prepared the agendas and meeting minutes. In addition, it contributed to the discussions regarding the establishment of a new *Working Group on Information for Regions and Society* (WGIRS) by drafting the [terms of reference](#), its [membership](#) and a concept document on [Framework of Climate Information \(FoCI\)](#) projects. The TTRA then delivered its [recommendations](#) to the JSC at the 41st meeting of the JSC in May.
- Next, the JSC asked the TTRA to propose structural elements of the new WCRP Home “Regional Information for Society”. For this, CORA organised 3 telecons, agendas and [meeting minutes](#) were prepared. CORDEX chairs, Jacob and Solman, worked a draft structure for RifS for discussion with the TTRA and the WCRP family at large. For this, Balino adapted the template from the LHA *My Climate Risk* for the development of a working document for RifS and drew from the TTRA’s previous work to include: strategic goals and high-level outcomes, relationships within and outside WCRP, structure, timeline, resources, gaps in knowledge and expertise, funding mobilization, and diversity. This template formed the base for the [TTRA’s recommendations for the new Home RifS](#) at the extraordinary meeting of the JSC in December (JSC-41b).

1.2 **Forum of the WCRP secretariat and the IPOs:** CORA participated in all monthly meetings arranged among the International Project Offices and the WCRP secretariat in Geneva. This has turned out as an important forum for the exchange of information and discussion of pertinent administrative and strategic issues common to all offices. The forum will become even more important as the IPOs are envisioned to become increasingly involved in the implementation of the new WCRP and its new activities, e.g. the Lighthouse Activities.

1.3 **CORA database on WCRP regional activities:** Balino, Schlünsen-Rico and Seung-Jae worked with the database until March when the project entered an impasse due to a stop in the final programming of the interface. The status is that more resources are needed to make the database functional. However, with the WCRP moving into a new decade with new goals, it is recommended to put the project on hold until the new WCRP and its regional activities shape in the near future and the future and role of CORA is elucidated.

1.4 Assistance to other WCRP activities:

- **Regional Consultations:** CORA and the WCRP sec have assisted JSC co-chair Helen Cleugh in the organisation of regional consultations worldwide: North and Central America, South America, Asia and Oceania (divided in 4 sub-regions), Europe and Western Asia, Africa. The work consisted in: appointment of Regional Focal Points (RFPs) in all regions, official

letters of invitation have been issued, a total of 10 telecons with the RFPs has been carried out to discuss the goal and objectives of tailored events called “Regional Climate Forums” in all continents throughout 2021, in order to engage the climate research community, stakeholders (climate services, economical sectors, etc.) and regional/local funding agencies. The IPOs have been engaged to provide assistance in the logistics previous and during the events, and in the communications and follows up. A contact’s database of invitees is under construction.

- **WCRP Grand Challenge Near Time Climate Prediction:** Balino assisted in the distribution of the “WMO Annual to Decadal Climate Update” produced by the GC, to the wider international scientific community.
- **WCRP/WWRP S2S phase II: real-time pilot projects initiative:** Balino was invited to participate in a team lead by Joanne Robbins from the UK MET office, and scientists from ECMWF, Florida International University, University of South Africa, the Argentinian Meteorological Services, and the WMO, in the analysis of a survey carried out among the 16 projects of this pilot initiative. The goal of the survey was to gauge the co-design and co-production of S2S forecasts among research scientists, stakeholders and end-users from each project. A second survey will be launched in 2021, to monitor the projects’ progress. The results will be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, sometime in 2022.

1.5 Connections with partners outside WCRP:

- CORA was invited to participate in a number of events in 2020, all of which were cancelled due to Covid-19: (i) the 6th International Conference of Climate Services, Pune, February, to hold a WCRP session together with JSC Krishnan Raghavan, (ii) a round table discussion at Climateurope Festival 2020, in Riga, May, and (iii) a workshop on risk assessment of coastal impacts of sea level changes, in Australia to be organised by the *Future Earth Coasts* hub.
- CORA continued its connection to Future Earth’s *Knowledge Action Network on Emergent Risks and Extreme Events (Risk-KAN)* during 2020. In this regard, Balino was invited to an on-line EGU session organised by the FE Risk KAN to inform on WCRP new strategic and implementation plans for the next decade and explore venues of cooperation between WCRP and FE regarding WCRP’s objective 4: “Bridging Science with Society”. The proposed Lighthouse Activity “My Climate Risk” attracted particularly attention to this forum, and Balino was asked to keep the FE Risk KAN informed about further developments.

2. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Staffing of CORA: Science coordinator Wiebke Schubotz from GERICS resigned on February 1st. The position was then announced twice (?) but none has been employed yet. This means that the CORA office has functioned at half machine since March 2020. In the meantime, GERICS made available a 50% administrative assistance (Ms Schlünsen-Rico) for CORA since November 2019. Schlünsen-Rico participated in the administrative work of the TTRA and the database, participated in the discussions of the IPOs forum and provided some assistance to the regional consultations. In addition, the intern Seung-Jae, from South Korea, worked at GERICS and CORA for the period February-July, thanks to an arrangement between GERICS and the WMO (who sponsored the

position) facilitated by Boram Li from the WCRP secretariat. Seung-Jae worked exclusively with the database.

Hopefully a new science coordinator will be in place at GERICS well before the summer. Still, it is expected that it will take the new coordinator sometime to become acquainted with the WCRP organisation, science and get a grasp of all its activities before she/he can start working effectively. This means that CORA will probably not be fully operational again until the summer/early fall. CORA's agreement with WCRP ends on December 31st, 2021.

3. PLANS FOR 2021

2020 was again an exceptional year for CORA, not only due to Covid-19, but also because it has not yet found its place in the organisation. This year WCRP has focused on the scientific questions and the design of its new structure, and as such, it is still a "moving landscape". Thus, CORA has not managed to fulfil its mandate this year either: to coordinate and promote synergies among WCRP regional activities. However, it has been suggested to the JSC that CORA can become a resource to the new Home RifS, as follows: (excerpt from the TTRA presentation and recommendations to the JSC-41b):

An international Office will be essential to assist the leadership, coordinate initiatives and activities, and serve as channels of communication within the Home and across other WCRP elements. The existing Coordination Office for WCRP Regional Activities (CORA) jointly hosted by GERICS and the Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research, could serve in this capacity.

If CORA is to take on a new role within the WCRP, this will demand a revision of its ToR and the agreement with WCRP to be renegotiated. Such discussion shall be carried out among the future leaders of the RifS Working Group, the chairs of the JSC, and the directors of the Bjerknes Center and GERICS.