

6th Telecon of the Task Team on Regional Activities

16 June 2020, 15:00-16:20 UTC

Participants: Irene Lake, Daniela Jacob, Silvina Solman, Bill Gutowski, Gwenaelle Hamon, Xuebin Zhang, Ken Takahashi, Jens Hesselbjerg Christensen, Francisco Doblás-Reyes, Stefan Sobolowski, Peter van Oevelen, Ling Ji, Jose Santos, Aurel Moise, Lindha Nilsson, Narelle van der Wel, Paul Bowyer, Anke Schlüsen-Rico, Beatriz Balino

Apologies: Clare Goodess, Bruce Hewitson, Lisa Alexander, Gabi Hegerl, Sonia Seneviratne, Krishna Raghavan, Mike Sparrow

Solman chaired the meeting. The call was targeted at reporting on, and discussing the outcomes of the 41st session of the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC-41), the implications of these outcomes on WCRP Regional Activities (RAs) and on the way forward to develop the roadmap for RAs.

Discussion highlights

- At JSC-41 the importance of coordinating and exchanging knowledge on regional activities (RAs) across Core Projects and other WCRP activities was emphasized. The report from the TTRA was well taken and the suggestion to extend its lifetime to put together a roadmap for WCRP RAs was approved.
- At JSC-41 new elements for the future WCRP were proposed: “Homes” for the disciplinary activities and *Lighthouse Activities* (LAs) for cross-disciplinary activities. All these elements are open for consultation within the WCRP community.
- Shall WCRP RAs become a *Home*, or shall it be a “common floor” for the *Homes*? Shall the *Homes* have a common agenda regarding RAs? If so, the TTRA could be a vehicle to achieve this.
- What RAs shall be prioritized as we move ahead? The following were mentioned: connecting observations with modelling; capacity development; LA *My Climate Risk*; on-going RAs in South America – ANDEX; elucidate how transferable WCRP activities in one region are applicable to other regions.
- The joint contents or the priorities of WCRP RAs have not been discussed enough. This would help in the structure and elements discussion since form follows function.
- There is also a need to map the diversity of existing RAs and networks within WCRP, how they are connected (or not) and whether there are overlaps. There is also a need to map regional networks outside WCRP. For instance, WMO Regional Associations (which largely represent operational institutions -NMHS), are good candidates to see how WCRP could connect at the regional level. The TTRA shall take advantage of WMO’s established and functional networks worldwide with well-developed methodologies and know-how. It can also provide many case studies as well. The WCRP Secretariat¹ has a key role to play by ensuring the connection with WMO.

¹ Narelle informs: *There is a new sponsor's agreement almost approved to substitute Joint Planning Staff (JPS) with Secretariat'*

- The WCRP community must diversify, i.e. engage scientists/partners from South America, Africa and Asia with WCRP in existing RAs and get the active involvement from young scientists. Have diversity in mind in future co-design opportunities.
- The proposed *LA My Climate Risk* departs from the “business as usual” way of working by addressing questions from a user perspective. It would need a coordinating entity to ensure the running of the activity (and they had CORA in mind).
- Need for an entity whose mission is to pull all the RAs together by identifying the opportunities and the people that must be brought together. For instance, the *Working Group on Information for Regions and Society* (WGIRS) discussed earlier by the TTRA could be such an entity, with the day-to-day assistance of CORA in order to make the connections across the communities and to ensure the coordination of the activities.
- There is no agreement on what the role of CORA shall be. Shall it assist in all WCRP regional activities - as originally planned and the ToR mandates - or shall it be a support office for an entity within the new WCRP elements? If consensus for the later, then the ToR must be changed.
- Should the TTRA have a say/be involved in the planned regional consultations?
- Proposed future work of the TTRA towards building the roadmap:
 - CORA to set up a document to bring these ideas /mapping of on-going activities for the TTRA to understand where RAs and networks should be connected or are overlapping. The TTRA might benefit from the information in the WCRP regional database that CORA is putting together and the stakeholder’s stocktake.
 - Proceed to identify priorities of activities e.g. how to connect data with modelling, issues about capacity development; *LA My Climate Risk* etc. And then work on how to bring in more people already involved in these activities and get them involved by organising, say, on-line schooling/webinar series around a topic, for instance: “The 10 must knows of RAs”. The TTRA could expand on the planned CORDEX capacity development workshops in Africa etc. to include the ideas discussed here and serve as a kick off for a general discussion on WCRP RAs and pave the way for practical steps.
 - The TTRA to embark in a series of discussions over specific topics on RA, e.g. *Data availability in XX region: what do we have, what is lacking, etc*, so as to inform each other and to facilitate putting together the skeleton of the roadmap of what is needed to enhance the connectivity of WCRP RAs.

Actions

- Map existing regional activities and networks in WCRP, find overlaps, and identify where to add value. Exploit the information in CORA's regional database (under construction), the stakeholder's stocktake and the overview of the Core Project's activities prepared in 2019 (see at the end of this document). **CORA can support this work?**
- Map existing networks within WMO: start with the Regional Associations in the continents where WCRP has on-going RAs. **CORA can support this work?**
- Organise a series of webinars in capacity development to bring people together in different regions and with different expertise (partners and young scientists)
- Combine the criteria for GEWEX Regional Hydrological Project (RHP) and CORDEX Flagship Pilot Projects (FPS) to provide a common denominator for WCRP RAs. **CORA with CORDEX and GEWEX IPOs can work on this?**

Transcript of the meeting

1. Report and discussion of the JSC-41 meeting outcome

Jacob summarised her impressions. New elements were presented: *Homes* and *Lighthouse Activities* (LAs); these are proposals that will be developed further in consultation with the WCRP community. At the meeting, the importance of WCRP regional activities (RAs) and a better coordination and exchange of knowledge across the Core Projects was emphasised. The issue of outreach and communication of local and RAs outside the WCRP was also strongly emphasised. As co-chair of CORDEX, she highlighted the discussion around CORDEX, modelling and data, specifically what will be the *Home* for the modelling and data. She thinks the presentation of the TTRA interim report and future recommendations were well taken.

2. Implications for the organisation of the Regional Activities & the process to develop the roadmap for RAs

Solman: shall we create a “Home” for regional activities? And if so, how would a RA *Home* interact with the other *Homes*.

Christensen: the CP will probably not disappear but will have to see themselves contributing to the Lighthouse Activities (LAs). This must be discussed further in the JSC. Agrees with Daniela that the emphasis on the RA was strong and probably has to do with the regional and community consultations to be launched in the near future. However, he thinks the JSC has not properly dealt with what the TTRA is doing and taking it seriously in WCRP. He emphasised that the ideas for a new structure presented by the JSC are not carved in stone but that is an accommodating process. It will be very important to have more interactions with the South and developing countries, and a more active involvement of young scientists. He thinks it should be the role of CORA to make this happen.

Jacob: She thinks the connections between the *Homes* (community activities) and LAs (across *Homes*) open for interactions. Also, the intention is to make them more diverse and to bring in capacity development.

Christensen: *Homes* and LAs have a sort of matrix structure. Must identify what parts of the *Home* are rock solid and which ones must evolve, and how they will interact with each other. Everybody needs to contribute to the process, i.e. have ownership.

Jacob: Could we consider RAs as the “first floor” of the *Homes*? Are RA cross-cutting or connecting activity? It could be e.g. data analysis, modelling, short-term, climate,

Christensen: We must start discussing about it, for instance, on whether the disciplines shall have a similar agenda regarding RAs, and this TTRA could be a vehicle to make this happen.

Oevelen: He is not enthusiastic about matrix organisations on a volunteer basis and advises to exercise caution. In addition, the structure looks very similar to the structure of the

Grand Challenges while there has not been a proper discussion within the community on the issue of why they did not succeed, the time it took them to take off, etc. On another note: if we want to be more inclusive, past experiences show that it requires actions in the right order as well as additional funding. GEWEX experiences trying to do this have failed and he does not see how to improve it. Regarding this TT and how it will relate to, e.g. the LA *My Climate Risk*: he wonders how that will play out, who will set the priorities, etc. There is a lack of introspect of what the outcomes are. Because we are the same group in the last 30 years, we tend to repeat the same mistakes. Finally, it is not clear to him what the expectations from the JSC are regarding the TTRA, since there was not clear link, e.g. to the regional consultations. Taken all the on-going RAs in South America, Central Asia, Africa, etc, why not put people in positions where they can actually make a difference?

Takahashi: Pointed out that the *Homes* presented at the JSC-41 were not really discussed previously by the JSC. As he mentioned at the meeting, this TTRA (or an equivalent body) could be the interface between WCRP and the broader community outside, for instance, could propose to the JSC how the regional consultations should look like and assist in the coordination. Then we could see how we fit into the new structure.

Doblas-Reyes: Points out those Grand Challenges (GC) that were focused with clear outcomes actually succeeded, for instance, the *GC Near-Term Climate Predictions*. It accomplished all the objectives and deliverables and will sunset as scheduled. So: Focus and well-defined outcomes are key for success. He also mentioned that there was a meeting among all Working Groups where it was suggested to gather all of them into one *Home*, and discussed how that will affect the work of that community in the future. Lastly, he emphasised the great opportunity this re-structuring that lies ahead of us. For instance, he and Christensen were shaping the LA *My Climate Risk* – inspired by the draft Chapter 10 of the draft WG1 of AR6 - by trying to go away of the “business as usual” *modus operandi* by addressing questions originating from the communities outside the WCRP.

Jacob: Agrees that we have great opportunities ahead, and also to reflect on our activities. We can influence RAs quite substantially. This forum is appropriate to discuss what has worked and what has not. It is unclear to her what the regional consultations are. She emphasised that CORA role is not to support LAs only or to design activities, but to support all WCRP activities at large, a facilitator to bring people together. If CORA proves to have an added value, the office might be extended from the initial 3-year period (i.e. beyond 2021). In such case, one could consider establishing “CORA-like” offices/secretariats in all continents, maybe connected to WMO regional centres, to build a world-wide network as a means to connect all RAs.

Takahashi: the most relevant WMO structures are actually the Regional Associations which largely represent operational institutions, e.g. NMHS. One could start doing a mapping of the entities that WCRP could connect at the regional level.

Gutowski: Needs an entity whose mission is to pull all the RA together (e.g. Working Group on Climate Information for Region discussed earlier) with the assistance of CORA for the day-to-day (in a similar way as IPOs of the Core Projects) to make the connections to the communities and to ensure the running of the activities.

Jacob: Does not fully agree on that as CORA shall be a sort of Project Office for anyone as it was not the original idea. But if that is what is needed then CORA mandate must be changed. This is what she thought we have to work out in the coming months with the new structure of the WCRP. Likes Peter comment earlier on “let’s talk about activities”, let’s make RAs alive and connect through joint action. This is a second thought besides the structure ideas, thinking about the design of the roadmap. We initially agreed on capacity development as an important priority and we might agree on 1 or 2 more, e.g. *LA My Climate Risk*. But it would be also good to discuss the contents in a way that we can connect and start activities cross the current settings instead of building a structure first since form follows function. We have not discussed this extensively enough, the joint content or the priorities of the RAs: which are the ones we want to follow. Or are we a too diverse group to do in this in a platform?

Solman. We are not too diverse, but we must figure it out with a pilot example, because the discussion is very abstract. There are too many things at the same level that have to be taken care of, we are not sure on how to start organising all this puzzle. We could propose to focus on one activity- a pilot- and try organise the work flow so as an example that it can be replicated through consultations in different activities through consultations. She feels we the discussion is too abstract.

Balino: It would help to be specific but we also do something different. Likes Solman’s idea to work on a pilot, likes Peter’s idea of the funding, agrees with Paco’s comment: to be focused and to start with the demands from the users/stakeholders. If we start with the stakeholders to define the needs/event to be studied, the location and time scales, then put together the consortium (within WCRP and invite partners from outside WCRP and involve young scientists) and then proceed to get the funding. Then one can evaluate whether the activity was successful (or not) and take it from there.

Oevelen: Agrees with that, we have talked about this before. If we do not do it this way, we might end up “coordinating coordination”, and that is not good. Looking at the current structures and elements of today’s WCRP - which are there for a reason- the point being that the groups do not work well together very well. Thinks South America is a good example of several active groups (e.g. notably CORDEX and GEWEX, CLIVAR has something, also Future Earth). And we could use the existing activities to think on how transferable these are to other regions within WCRP. Another point is: how do we connect the data with the modelling aspect. They have been separated even though we know it should not be that way, and now we have an opportunity to change that.

Solman: She does not see it as “coordinating coordination” but as a way to try to connect on-going activities to bring the communities closer together and produce actionable knowledge.

Takahashi: Focusing on a certain activity is fine for him, the ANDEX. And TTRA could show how such an activity could fulfil objective 4.

Jacob: Supports the idea of focusing on a region. The question of transferability is an important one. But coming back to the building the rooms in the *Homes*, we could use

regions as an example. Still, we have regional activities on the modelling, the experiments and the observations, on the short to the long term, on the coupled and the disciplinary, on the capacity development and the involvement of young scientists. And these are the rooms for her. If we want to come up with a roadmap on what is needed to enhance and connect the visibility and community of RAs in WCRP we need a mapping of all these types of RAs. This is because RAs in CORDEX is different from those of GEWEX, from Eurasia and the Arctic, and the time scales are all different as well. There must be a way to flesh out of all these contributions to RAs in order to find out what is intrinsic to all of us, and where we can join with already existing activities. And the next step would be to prioritize, so that we can come through this plan or the idea of questions for the regional consultations since: What is a regional consultation when we do not know what is there to begin with? We are not still there to focus on one area yet.

Solman: Agrees, it would be a good start to map what is going on, in order to know how to connect activities together.

Moise: I am chair of the GEWEX-CLIVAR Monsoon Panel, chair of the regional working group on the Asian Monsoon, and the head of research in Singapore at the MET services. We are involved in many WMO activities and running workshops linking science with operational activities and regional with academia. Agrees with Jacob: one needs to leverage of existing networks, not only within the WCRP but, notably, within WMO since it has well established and functional networks all over the world and they have well developed methodologies and the knowhow. You would probably find many case studies there as well.

Gutowski: Agrees with Solman in that there must be a way of connecting these regional RAs going on, sometimes in parallel, in WCRP. For that there must be some sort of entity whose mission is to identify the opportunities and the people that must be brought together.

Oevelen: Agrees with Gutowski but adds that the JPS has a role to play here, connecting with WMO. Although hydrology activities within the WMO are very disconnected but there are still opportunities. Also thinks that there is a need for a better connection between the CPs and the IPOs, e.g. pretty much all the RAs in GEWEX are more or less connected to CORDEX. However, he warns about formalizing things too much, in that structures that can get in the way of the functioning of the programme. In addition, we are still the same group and we need to talk outside ourselves. It is essential to get more input from the different regions (e.g. Asia, Africa...). Finally, we must emphasise what we are doing right.

Jacob: How do we proceed from here? Proposed that CORA sets up a document to bring these ideas /on-going RAs for the TTRA to understand where RAs and networks are overlapping. The TTRA should tap on the information in the WCRP regional database that CORA is putting together and the stakeholder's stocktake. Then proceed to identify priorities of activities e.g. research projects, capacity development, etc. And then work on how to bring in more people doing these already and get them involved by, for instance, organising some kind of schooling online/webinar series around the topic: "The 10 must knows of RAs". She also suggested the TTRA embarks in a series of discussions over specific topics, e.g. *Data availability in XX region*: what do we have, what is lacking, etc, so as to inform each other facilitate putting together the skeleton of the roadmap.

Lake: CORDEX is preparing a series of workshops to organise in, e.g. in Africa, to get to know the needs of the participants, know how to access to data, what kind of platforms work for them also for interactions among regions, etc. These workshops could be expanded to include what has been discussed here, in that they would serve as a kick off for a general discussion on WCRP RAs and pave the way for practical steps.



*Map of activities from Core Projects and CORDEX
and cooperation with partners/boundary organisations
as of 2019*

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CLIVAR

Research Foci

Core Panels

Joint Panels

Grand Challenges

Joint activities

Boundary organisations









