

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

**REVISED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)
ON THE GLOBAL CLIMATE OBSERVING SYSTEM (GCOS)**

Summary. [GCOS](#), co-sponsored by WMO, UNESCO-IOC, UNEP and ISC, was established in 1992 to address the UNFCCC systematic observation agenda. GCOS works towards a world where climate observations are accurate and sustained, and access to climate data is free and open.

It is governed by a [Steering Committee](#) and has three panels of experts: Atmospheric Observation Panel for Climate (AOPC); Ocean Observations Physics and Climate Panel (OOPC); and Terrestrial Observation Panel for Climate (TOPC), supported by the GCOS Secretariat.

GCOS specifies 55 Essential Climate Variables of which 19 are oceanic. GCOS regularly reviews the state of global climate observation, published as the *GCOS Status Report*, and identifies gaps and needs in observing systems and capabilities, published as the *GCOS Implementation Plan* every 5-6 years.

This information document provides the revised MoU proposed by the GCOS Steering Committee as well as a summary of the main changes between this revision and the previous MoU from 1998 for the information of the IOC Executive Council at its 57th session (June 2024).

Revised memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)

Summary of the main changes between the GCOS MoU (1998) and the draft GCOS MoU (2024)

Changes to the structure

The proposed new MoU is divided in two parts:

- (1) Part 1: the agreement describing GCOS goals and mandate and the Parties organizations commitments, and
- (2) Part 2: a technical part, divided in three Annexes as follows:

ANNEX A: CONCEPT OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE OBSERVING SYSTEM

ANNEX B: TERMS OF REFERENCE, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE, AND THE SECRETARIAT

ANNEX C: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

To ensure flexibility, only Part 1 is signed by the Parties, while authority is delegated to the GCOS Steering Committee to formulate and amend the technical parts, with the agreement of the representatives of the Parties, who are ex-officio members of the GCOS Steering Committee.

Changes to the content of Part 1 and Part 2

Part 1 includes a list of Decisions and Resolutions by UN agencies and bodies, as well as a list of recognitions and considerations which have been duly updated to reflect the current situation. The main elements of the agreement remain, and a new section is included describing the mission of GCOS.

Annexes in Part 2 were already present in the 1998 MoU, as part of the body of the agreement. The main following changes in their content can be highlighted:

ANNEX A

- (a) Contains an expanded section describing the “Concept of the Global Climate Observing System”: more emphasis on strategy, engagement and links to parties and stakeholders;
- (b) The description of activities developed by GCOS is more detailed, including references to the Essential Climate Variables, the *GCOS Status Report* and Implementation Plan and the reporting commitments towards UNFCCC amongst others;
- (c) The links to the Parties organizations signing the MoU is made more explicit, and the connections with WMO subsidiary bodies are detailed.

ANNEX B

- (a) The Steering Committee membership is reduced from 15 to 13 with a clear distinction between core members (technical experts) and ex-officio (representatives from the Parties organizations signing the MoU and expert panel chairs);

- (b) Entities providing financial support to GCOS are given more recognition and invited to nominate representatives to attend the Steering Committee as observers;
- (c) Members of the Steering Committee are appointed for 4 years (instead of 2);

ANNEX C

- (a) It is specified that financial contributions provided by the Parties organizations will have to be adequate enough to maintain the basic resources to operate the GCOS Secretariat.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between the

**World Meteorological Organization,
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO,
United Nations Environment Programme, and
International Science Council**

The World Meteorological Organization, hereinafter referred to as “WMO,” Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, hereinafter referred to as “IOC,” United Nations Environment Programme, hereinafter referred to as “UNEP,” and International Science Council, hereinafter referred to as “ISC,” jointly and individually referred to hereinafter as “the Parties” and “Party”¹, respectively,

NOTING

The recommendation of the Second World Climate Conference concerning the creation of a Global Climate Observing System;

Resolution 15 (Cg-XVII) of the Seventeenth World Meteorological Congress on the World Climate Programme (WCP);

Resolution 39 (Cg-XVII) of the Seventeenth World Meteorological Congress on the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS);

Resolution 48 (Cg-XVI) of the Sixteenth World Meteorological Congress on the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS);

The decision of the sixtieth meeting of the ICSU Executive Board that ICSU should join WMO and IOC of UNESCO in the formation of the Global Climate Observing System;

The decision of the Sixteenth Session of the UNEP Governing Council that UNEP should support, within available resources, the creation of a Global Climate Observing System and assist in ensuring that its development and implementation are pursued with urgency;

Resolution 50 (Cg-XVI) of the Sixteenth World Meteorological Congress on the implementation of the WMO Integrated Global Observing System (WIGOS);

Decision 7 (EC-69) of the WMO Executive Council – Support to Implementation of The Paris Agreement;

Decision 14 (EC-69) of the WMO Executive Council – Support The Development of Actions Based on The Global Climate Observing System Implementation Plan;

Resolution 38 (EC-76) of the WMO Executive Council – Report of the Joint Study Group on the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS);

¹ Referred to as “sponsoring organizations” in the previous Memorandum of Understanding.

Resolution XVI-8 of the Sixteenth Session of the IOC Assembly to undertake the development of a Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and participate in the Global Climate Observing System;

The decisions of the Parties on other programmes on similar related Earth Observing Programmes;

Articles 4 and 5 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) committing parties to promote and cooperate in systematic observation;

UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.21, the Paris Agreement;

UNFCCC Decision 19/CP.22 “Implementation of the global observing system for climate” and earlier decisions of parties to the UNFCCC related to systematic observation and the reporting of the GCOS to the UNFCCC on this matter;

The outcomes of the Earth Observation Summits in Washington (2003), Tokyo (2004), Brussels (2005), and the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Ministerial Summits in Cape Town (2007) and Beijing (2010) where GEO was created, endorsed and implemented;

Agenda 21 which calls for systematic observations in support of sustainable development;

Recommendations made by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development toward the development of global environmental observing systems.

RECOGNIZING

That the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land and that widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred. The scale of recent changes across the climate system as a whole and the present state of many aspects of the climate system are unprecedented over many centuries to many thousands of years. It also notes that Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. Evidence of observed changes in extremes such as heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts, and tropical cyclones, and, in particular, their attribution to human influence, has strengthened since the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5);

The importance of the existing observation systems and networks and the evolution of observing systems to the IPCC assessment Reports, improving climate prediction, assessment and attribution and in supporting climate policy and the UNFCCC.

CONSIDERING

That the total climate system encompasses a range of physical, chemical and biological properties along with atmospheric, oceanic, hydrologic, cryospheric and terrestrial processes;

That the required information will encompass climate relevant in situ, airborne and space based data from operational meteorological, hydrological, oceanographic and other relevant programmes, as well as observations from research programmes;

That the development of an Earth system approach recognizing the Earth system cycles of energy, water and carbon (including fluxes) allows the development of ECV as an integrated whole;

That climate observations support climate science, public information, climate services, policy development and climate adaptation and mitigation.

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. This Memorandum of Understanding, hereinafter referred to as “MoU”, constitutes the framework within which the Parties will, on the basis of reciprocity, cooperate in organizing and supporting the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) based on high-level coordination of existing and planned operational and research programmes for observing the global climate system, promote cooperation among these programmes as required, and ensure continuity and further development of climate observations;
2. GCOS will ensure that the climate observation system evolves and is sustained to enable users:
 - To detect further climate change and determine its causes;
 - To improve modelling and prediction the climate system;
 - To assess impacts of climate variability and change;
 - To monitor the effectiveness of policies for mitigating climate change;
 - To support climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts;
 - To develop climate information services;
 - To promote sustainable national economic development; and
 - To meet requirements of the international environment conventions and agreements on climate observations including those of the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, including on adaptation, mitigation and its global stocktake.
3. To consult and call upon other relevant national and international agencies, institutions and organizations, to collaborate in the organization of, and participate in, the implementation of GCOS;
4. To establish a Steering Committee as the primary decision-making body of GCOS in implementing, developing and administering the GCOS and its Secretariat as mandated by the signatories of this MoU (hereafter “Parties”);
5. To delegate to the Steering Committee the authority to formulate and amend, by consensus with the agreement of the representatives of the Parties, the Annexes supplementing this MoU and establish panels and working groups for technical and implementation activities within its mandate;
6. The Chair of the Steering Committee will be a member of or report to the governing bodies of the Parties as appropriate.
7. To provide adequate financial resources for the Secretariat and to ensure support for the Steering Committee, panels and working groups;
8. To encourage, as appropriate, Parties and partners to maintain and develop strategic guidance and implementation of systematic observation of climate;
9. Other organizations and agencies, which contribute to the implementation of GCOS and wish to join in the partnership of GCOS, may become a Party to this MoU, including its appropriate administrative and financial arrangements.
10. Each Party will appoint a Representative who will coordinate relations with the other Party, including between technical experts of the Parties, and who will keep the head of their

organization informed. Any change of Representative will be communicated in writing to the other Party.

11. Any use by either Party of the other Party's name, emblem or logo will only be made with the prior written approval of that other Party.
12. All activities under this MoU will be subject to availability of funding of the Parties and is not intended to be legally binding. The activities are to be conducted on a no-exchange of funds basis, unless otherwise agreed by the Parties in writing.
13. The Parties will settle between them any question of interpretation or difference concerning this MoU.
14. Nothing contained in this MoU will constitute or be deemed a waiver, express or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by WMO.
15. This MoU shall be reviewed every four years by the Parties, and may be called for review at any time by one of the Party. Any amendment will be agreed by mutual consent and will be effected by an exchange of letters;
16. This MoU shall come into force on signature by all parties and shall replace and supersede in its entirety the prior MoU signed in 1998.

Done in duplicate in the English [*if applicable, insert the other language/s here*] language. [*insert this here if the document is available in several languages: In case of differences in the interpretation, the English one will prevail.*]

Signed on behalf of the
World Meteorological Organization

Signed on behalf of
**Intergovernmental Oceanographic
Commission of UNESCO**

[insert full name of WMO's official signatory here]

[insert full name of IOC's signatory here]

[insert title of WMO's official signatory here]

[insert title IOC's signatory here]

Date: _____

Date: _____

Signed on behalf of the
United Nations Environment Programme

Signed on behalf of
International Science Council

[insert full name of UNEP's official signatory here]

[insert full name of ISC's signatory here]

[insert title of UNEP's official signatory here]

[insert title ISC's signatory here]

Date: _____

Date: _____

ANNEX A: CONCEPT OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE OBSERVING SYSTEM

1. GCOS as a programme

- 1.1 GCOS serves a broad range of user needs for globally coordinated climate observations. Its goal is to provide comprehensive data and climate information on the total climate system, including a range of physical, chemical, and biological properties, along with atmospheric, oceanic, hydrological, cryospheric and terrestrial processes.
- 1.2 GCOS works with existing or planned operational and research programmes for acquiring, storing and distributing systematic global climate system data and identifies gaps in observations, data management and information distribution systems. The ownership and management of the observing systems and networks will remain fully with their operating entities. GCOS advocates for further enhancements of these systems, and encourages new systems to be established, where necessary.
- 1.3 GCOS identifies user data needs to enable the further development of these programmes to ensure continuity and diversification of climate observations. Data needs are organized around the concept of Essential Climate Variables (ECVs).
- 1.4 The GCOS ECVs comprise physical, chemical, and biological properties that are essential to describe the climate system. GCOS will:
 - (a) Elaborate the ECV concept to specify its key deliverables and outputs, continuing the process of emphasizing fields and products and de-emphasizing individual observing platforms;
 - (b) Develop systematic observation requirements for climate applications on relevant time and space scales by providing standards, indicators, and best practices in the reporting cycle of producing the GCOS Status Reports and Implementation Plans.
- 1.5 GCOS supports climate research, assessments, and services.
- 1.6 GCOS underpins interactions among observation, research, assessment, and policy communities leading to international decision-making on climate change. In this regard, in particular, it supports the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) including its Paris Agreement.
- 1.7 GCOS advocates for the maintenance and improvement of sustained climate observations and the free and unrestricted access to all climate data. It will support the creation and sustainable operation of a network of climate data centres, ensuring the long-term access and archiving of climate observations.
- 1.8 GCOS supports data archiving, dissemination, communication, and other infrastructures necessary to support operational climate services. Global Data Centres with free and open access to climate data are required.
- 1.9 To support the Paris Agreement, contributing to its adaptation and mitigation measures, GCOS promotes observing systems that allow the quantification of climate impacts (e.g., health, energy, water, and food sectors) and support national economic development.
- 1.10 GCOS will pay particular attention to countries and regions with limited resources.
- 1.11 GCOS will report to the UNFCCC at least annually on progress on systematic observations, and regularly provide reports describing the adequacy and status of the global climate observing system and plans for its improvement and development.

2. Strategy

- 2.1 The strategy of the GCOS programme will have to define clearly how the climate community should implement, maintain, and support the climate observing system including:

- (a) Development of a long-term vision for GCOS;
- (b) Enhanced engagement by both stakeholders and implementation networks and agencies including those outside the Parties;
- (c) Increased visibility of the programme, its achievements and ambitions using available and modern media tools;
- (d) Development of a communication strategy that will provide additional clarity about the purpose of GCOS;
- (e) Development of a short statement of strategy, based on the vision, to guide priority setting and to communicate to stakeholders the aims and intended benefits of GCOS;
- (f) Data on adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and its regional dimensions;
- (g) The role of the GCOS cooperation mechanism and how the 'global South' countries can be supported.

3. Engagement with stakeholders

- 3.1 The GCOS cooperation mechanism is the strategic approach to capacity-building to meet some of the needs of developing countries taking into account geographical balance with regard to identifying data and observational requirements and is applied in partnership with existing observing systems and programmes.
- 3.2 GCOS engages with national governments by promoting the role of national and regional coordinators and by providing a series of regional workshops. In addition, the Steering Committee shall engage with a larger community of stakeholders and implementers to receive advice on the programmes, gaps, needs, ideas, etc. to supplement the governance function of GCOS.
- 3.3 The Steering Committee will develop an engagement strategy. This will aim to seek advice and guidance on the development of the GCOS programme and on fund-raising strategy. It will improve the engagement of partners and stakeholders with the GCOS programme aiming to develop links with groups not traditionally engaged with the GCOS climate-observing community. A regular meeting with all stakeholders, perhaps as part of the 4-5 years GCOS Conference cycle, should be part of the engagement strategy. This engagement should develop advice and guidance on:
 - (a) Programme priorities that require new resources;
 - (b) Engagement and communication strategy, particularly by providing strategic guidance, and by finding new ways to foster engagement and partnership with users;
 - (c) Fund-raising strategy and activities;
 - (d) Developments and impacts of new Earth Observing initiatives;
 - (e) Improved engagement with the private sector in matters of global climate observations.

4. Links to Parties

- 4.1 All the Parties agree to consider the recommendations of GCOS, related to its mandate, in their decision-making processes. In particular:
 - (a) The WMO Commission for Observation, Infrastructure and Information Systems (Infrastructure Commission) will consider recommendations, status reports and implementation plans sent to WMO by GCOS. They shall be incorporated in the WMO regulations, the WIGOS manual and the Rolling Review of Requirements as appropriate. The Infrastructure Commission, the Commission for Weather, Climate, Water and Related Environmental Services & Applications (the Services Commission) and the WMO Research Board shall consider GCOS outputs and provide information to GCOS on climate observational needs.

- (b) IOC will consider recommendations, status reports and implementation plans forwarded to it by the GCOS Steering Committee. They shall be considered by GOOS in the development of ocean observations.
- (c) The Chair of the GCOS Steering Committee shall be a member of the Infrastructure Commission (INFCOM) Management Group and shall report to WMO Congress and Executive Council, and the IOC Assembly and Executive Council as needed.
- (d) ISC will promote the work of GCOS to academic institutions globally and ensure full participation of experts in GCOS panels. ISC can support the Steering Committee experts in UN negotiations by providing access through the UN major group for Science and Technology accreditation process.
- (e) UNEP will ensure that the work of GCOS informs the regional processes and invite GCOS representatives to attend relevant meetings.

ANNEX B: TERMS OF REFERENCE, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE, AND THE SECRETARIAT

1. Steering Committee

Function:

- 1.1 The functions of the Steering Committee are to develop the overall concept and scope of GCOS, and to provide scientific and technical advice to partners and other participating organizations and agencies for the planning, implementation and further development of GCOS.
- 1.2 Specifically, the Steering Committee will be called upon:
 - (a) To establish standing panels of experts, cross-panel working groups and time limited task teams, as needed, to advise the Steering Committee, including the definition of their governance;
 - (b) To ensure that the requirements for observational data needs are defined;
 - (c) To establish objectives and recommend coordinated actions by the Parties and participating organizations and agencies, in order to optimize the system's performance and coherence, taking cognizance of the responsibilities, working arrangements and recommendations of established scientific and technical bodies of such organizations and agencies;
 - (d) To review and assess the development and implementation of the components of GCOS, and report to the Parties and to the participating agencies, as required;
 - (e) To facilitate the exchange of information among Parties and participating organizations and agencies, and in general make the objectives, resource requirements, capabilities and outputs of GCOS known to relevant national and international bodies;
 - (f) To approve the budget of GCOS within the funds available and set rules and priorities for the Secretariat for the use of the funds;
 - (g) To periodically update the list of GCOS funders;
 - (h) To develop, maintain and implement a strategy for GCOS, consistent with this mandate, that will include:
 - A GCOS vision;
 - An engagement strategy covering stakeholders and implementation agencies, including those outside the Parties, users of climate data and observing systems;
 - Visibility of the programme, its achievements and ambitions using available and modern media tools;
 - A communication strategy that will provide additional clarity about the purpose of GCOS; and communication with stakeholders the aims and intended benefits of GCOS;
 - Priority setting;
 - Guiding the GCOS Cooperation Mechanism (GCM) so that it supports developing countries in observing all ECVs;
 - A plan for capacity development in developing countries that may include the GCM; strong ties to national governments by promoting the role of national and regional coordinators; and holding a series of regional seminars;
 - To increase engagement with national observing systems;
 - To work with the Parties and GCOS secretariat in resource mobilisation for both the coordination and execution of the GCOS work.
 - To report at least annually to the Parties and to the UNFCCC.
- 1.3 The Steering Committee may delegate authority to the Chair and the panel Chairs to make expedited decisions on the intersessional periods.

Membership:

- 1.4 The Steering Committee shall consist of core members and ex-officio members. Core members include the Chair of the Steering Committee and up to 7 scientific and technical experts. Membership shall be balanced in terms of geographical representation, gender, and expertise. Experts in the collection and utilization of in situ and remote sensing observations will be included.
- 1.5 Core members should ensure diversity across several criteria and include:
- A Chair nominated by the Parties and appointed by WMO;
 - Representatives of key partners;
 - Representatives of key GCOS users;
 - Representatives of the wider technical or scientific communities.
- 1.6 Ex-officio members include:
- One representative of each Party;
 - One panel Chair from each GCOS standing expert panel;
 - A representative of the UNFCCC;
- 1.7 Observers: Organizations/Programmes providing funding and or in-kind contributions to the GCOS programme may be invited to nominate an expert to attend the Steering Committee sessions in the capacity of observers.
- 1.8 A Steering Committee core member cannot be simultaneously a member of a GCOS standing expert panel.
- 1.9 New members of the Steering Committee shall be proposed by the Chair of the Steering Committee, in consultation with the Parties and appointed by WMO. In this process the membership shall be reviewed bearing in mind the need to ensure reasonable continuity and inflow of new members.
- 1.10 The members will be appointed for an initial term of four years. Members have the possibility of serving for up to two terms unless otherwise decided by the Chair of the Steering Committee with the agreement of all Parties.
- 1.11 Representatives from other GCOS stakeholders, as well as individual experts, may also be invited in the capacity of observers on an ad hoc basis to participate in the sessions upon the decision of the Chair of the Steering Committee.

The Chair of the Steering Committee:

- 1.12 The Chair of the Steering Committee shall be selected and appointed by the Executive Heads of the Parties for a term of appointment of four-year with a possibility of reappointment for a further term.
- 1.13 The duties of the Chair of the Steering Committee shall be:
- (a) To preside over the sessions of the Steering Committee and respond to its decisions;
 - (b) To make procedural decisions on behalf of the Steering Committee between meetings;
 - (c) To advise the GCOS Secretariat with respect to the fulfilment of GCOS plans and tasks;
 - (d) To conduct, through the Parties, correspondence on matters related to the organization, planning and implementation of GCOS;
 - (e) To carry out specific duties as prescribed by decisions taken in agreement by the Parties;
 - (f) To arrange for the views of the Steering Committee to be presented to the Parties, representing GCOS at WMO Congress and Executive Council and IOC Assembly and Executive Council and similarly for any other Parties; The Chair of the Steering

Committee or a nominated delegate on their behalf may represent GCOS at meetings of relevant GCOS stakeholders (UNFCCC, IPCC, CEOS, CGMS etc.).

- (g) To be a member of the WMO INFCOM Management Group;
- (h) To prepare annually, with the GCOS Secretariat, a report of GCOS planning and implementation activities, including the considerations and recommendations by the Steering Committee, and to present this report to the Parties.

- 1.14 The Chair of the Steering Committee may establish a Vice Chair position. The Vice Chair will be selected from within the Steering Committee (core or ex officio members). The Vice Chair will be approved by the Executive Heads of the Parties and appointed by WMO. The Vice Chair supports the Chair of the Steering Committee.
- 1.15 The Chair of the Steering Committee may call upon any member of the Steering Committee to assist with specific tasks, or form time limited task teams within the Steering Committee as necessary.
- 1.16 The Chair of the Steering Committee shall work with the Chairs of the GCOS standing expert panels in the performance of their duties.

Sessions:

- 1.17 The Steering Committee shall meet at least annually either in person or virtually as decided by its Chair in consultation with the Secretariat. In case of an in-person meeting, the venue and dates will be decided by the Chair in consultation with the Director of the GCOS Secretariat. Sessions shall normally be arranged so as to avoid scheduling conflicts with meetings of executive bodies of the Parties organizations.
- 1.18 The Steering Committee may meet virtually, in between annual sessions.
- 1.19 The Director of the GCOS Secretariat, acting on behalf of the Chair of the Steering Committee, shall inform the Parties and participating organizations and agencies, notify the members and make appropriate practical arrangements for the session.
- 1.20 The attendance of representatives of each Party shall not be charged to the GCOS Fund.
- 1.21 The attendance of other Members of the Steering Committee will be offered to be covered by the GCOS Fund.
- 1.22 The attendance of observers may be charged to the GCOS Fund at the discretion of the GCOS Director in consultation with the Chair of the Steering Committee.
- 1.23 The working language of the Steering Committee is English.

2. Standing Expert Panels², Working Groups and Task Teams:

- 2.1 The Steering Committee shall be authorized to establish standing panels of scientific and technical experts within the approved budget taking account of relevant scientific or technical groups established by the Parties and their constituent bodies.
- 2.2 Both the Steering Committee and the standing expert panels can establish working groups and time limited task teams, within their area of responsibility and within the approved budget taking account of relevant scientific or technical groups established by the Parties and their constituent bodies.
- 2.3 Each standing expert panel, working group and task team will be guided by Terms of Reference that articulate the scope and mandate approved by the Steering Committee or by the Expert Panels as appropriate.

² The standing expert panels at the time of signature of this MoU are the Atmospheric Observation Panel for Climate (AOPC), the Ocean Observations Physics and Climate Panel (OOPC) and the Terrestrial Observation Panel for Climate (TOPC).

3. Secretariat

- 3.1 The general functions of the Secretariat shall be to assist the Steering Committee in formulating the concept and in organizing the implementation of GCOS, and any other organizational or technical task, as the Steering Committee may decide. In particular, the Secretariat, under the responsibility of its Director, shall take charge for:
- (a) Preparing plans and guidance materials for the development and implementation of GCOS;
 - (b) Providing support to the Steering Committee;
 - (c) Supporting the standing expert panels, working groups and task teams;
 - (d) Maintaining scientific and technical liaison with relevant departments and constituent bodies of the Parties, and all other relevant institutions or agencies, as required, for the development and implementation of GCOS;
 - (e) Serving as the documentation and information centre for GCOS and preparing information or action documents pertaining to GCOS as required by the Steering Committee;
 - (f) Making arrangements for GCOS planning and coordination activities, in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Arrangements, and following the guidelines provided by the Steering Committee;
 - (g) Report annually to the GCOS SC and provides a plan of work and indicative budget for the next calendar year for approval by the GCOS Steering Committee;
 - (h) Develop communication and outreach material, including developing and maintaining the GCOS website.
- 3.2 The Secretariat shall be composed of a Director and an adequate number of scientific technical and administrative assistant staff to perform the above functions, supported by the Parties organizations and other contributing agencies.
- 3.3 The Director and other recruited secretariat staff will normally have the status of a staff member of WMO and will be appointed by the Secretary-General of WMO. The Director will be nominated by consensus agreement of the Executive Heads of the Parties organizations.
- 3.4 The Director will be accountable, for administrative and financial matters, to the Secretary-General of WMO, in accordance with the provisions in the Financial Arrangements.
- 3.5 The duties of the Director shall include:
- (a) Directing the work of the Secretariat;
 - (b) Supporting the activities of the Steering Committee, expert panels, working groups and task teams;
 - (c) Liaising with the Chair and the members of the Steering Committee;
 - (d) Managing the relations of the Secretariat with the Parties and partner organizations, as well as national governments and regional bodies;
 - (e) Being responsible for raising additional funds beyond the contributions of the Parties; this will be done in collaboration with Chair and the members of the GCOS Steering Committee.
 - (f) Allocating budget against activities according to the priorities and rules agreed by the Steering Committee and following WMO financial regulations;
 - (g) Serving as the channel for communication between the Steering Committee and the Parties, funding organizations and other stakeholders;
 - (h) Collaborating, as required, with the Executive Heads of the Parties.

ANNEX C: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. The planning and implementation activities for GCOS will be financed by the Parties organizations, with funds appropriated in their budgets, and from extrabudgetary resources, which will have to be adequate enough to maintain the basic resources to operate the GCOS Secretariat. Each Party will make appropriate annual financial contributions to the GCOS Climate Observing System Fund (COSF) or through other agreed upon arrangements.
2. The Secretary-General of WMO shall administer the COSF, as funded by the Parties and any extrabudgetary resources in support of GCOS activities. The Fund will be administered in accordance with WMO Financial Regulations.
3. Contributions in-kind such as secondment of staff, provision of facilities, or support for meetings, publications, or other expenses, may be made by sponsoring organizations, supporting nations and participating organizations and agencies.
4. The Fund will adopt a biennial budget and reporting cycle, consistent with the practice of WMO. Corresponding periodic financial reports will be made available to the Parties.
5. The cost of staff seconded to the GCOS Secretariat will normally be supported by the responsible Parties. Alternatively, a Party or participating agency may choose to make a financial contribution to the COSF, in the appropriate amount, to cover the cost of a position. WMO Regulations shall apply to staff positions.
6. A comprehensive budget estimate for all GCOS planning activities and the activities of the Steering Committee and its supporting staff will be submitted by the Director of the GCOS Secretariat to the Executive Heads of the Parties, in due time for consideration in the preparation of programme and budget proposals, as required.
7. Additional contributions and grants to the COSF from sources other than Parties may be accepted by the Secretary-General of WMO, provided the purposes of such contributions and grants are consistent with the overall objectives and tasks of GCOS, as described in this MoU. The specific activities funded from such grants will be treated as an addition to the programme and level of expenditure approved for GCOS.
8. Should the activities of GCOS be brought to an end, then the remaining balance of the COSF, after the settlement of all financial commitments by the Secretary-General of WMO, will either be donated to WMO for the execution of specific scientific and technical activities subject to the agreement of the Parties and other donors of GCOS, or it will be shared among the Parties and other donors in proportion to their respective contributions to the Fund over the previous two years immediately preceding the end of GCOS.
9. These financial arrangements may be modified at any time by mutual agreement among the Parties provided that no modification would result in conflict with applicable WMO Financial Regulations.
10. In case of doubt as to the interpretation or application of any of the present provisions, the Secretary-General of WMO is authorized to rule thereon, subject to prior consultation with the Executive Heads of the Parties.