



Sixth Steering Committee **27 November 2023**

Positioning Plan for SOFF at COP28

Decision 6.10

Systematic Observations
Financing Facility

**Weather
and climate
data for
resilience**



Decision 6.10: Endorsement of the Positioning for SOFF at COP28

The Steering Committee

Welcomes

- The SOFF Secretariat's efforts in reaching out to WMO Climate Policy Advisors and having them consulted for this document.
- The expected increased visibility of SOFF at COP28 including through two SOFF high-level events.

Endorses the Positioning Plan for SOFF at United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28)

Encourages

- The Steering Committee members and their COP-Delegations to actively position SOFF in COP negotiations as outlined in the plan.
- The Steering Committee members and their COP-Delegations to actively participate at and contribute to SOFF events.
- The LDC Group on Climate Change and AOSIS to actively support SOFF fundraising efforts at COP28.

Requests

- The SOFF Secretariat representatives at COP28 to assist Steering Committee members' COP-Delegations in their efforts to position SOFF in COP outcomes.
- The funding members of the Steering Committee to consider SOFF events at COP28 for pledge announcements.

The Positioning Plan for SOFF at UNFCCC 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) suggests key messages for Steering Committee members' COP-Delegations to use for COP28 negotiations and provides details on two high-level SOFF events and additional events that SOFF is engaging in.

Positioning Plan for SOFF at COP28

The aim of further positioning SOFF in the UNFCCC process and at COP28 is to (i) strengthen international support for Systematic Observation and closing the Global Basic Observation Network (GBON) gap; and (ii) build a strong recognition of the importance of SOFF and the required additional contributions to the SOFF UN fund to deliver on the SOFF updated work programme (Decision 6.6).

Systematic Observation has been mentioned in several UNFCCC documents and COP decisions, including [UNFCCC Convention](#) (Article 4 and 5), [Paris Agreement \(Article 7, Paragraph 7 c\)](#) and the [COP27 cover decision \(Chapter VII\)](#).

SOFF itself has been mentioned by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) in [FCCC/SBSTA/2021/L.5](#), encouraging “Parties and relevant organizations to support the Facility in order to enhance and sustain implementation of the Global Basic Observing Network in developing countries, including the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS).” [FCCC/SBSTA/2022/L.20](#) “noted with appreciation the progress in supporting systematic observation, such as through the development of the Systematic Observation Financing Facility. It encouraged the Facility to continue to prioritize the least developed countries and small island developing States in its provision of support and to evaluate opportunities to support developing countries. It also encouraged efforts to further strengthen support for sustained systematic observations of the ocean, cryosphere, land, biosphere and atmosphere.”

COP28 will be an important decision point on a new funding arrangement responding to loss and damage. UNFCCC listed SOFF as part of the Loss and Damage financing architecture in its [“Synthesis report on existing funding arrangements and innovative sources relevant to addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change”](#).

To further position SOFF in the UNFCCC process, the SOFF Secretariat has developed three approaches:

Briefing the Scientific Community on SOFF

The SOFF Secretariat briefed and engaged with the WMO Policy Advisory Committee. Upon consultation by the Secretariat, feedback received from the two Climate Policy Advisory Committee co-chairs and several members is reflected in the attached SOFF Policy Brief (Annex 1). The brief is expected to be submitted, as part of the WMO submission, to UNFCCC ahead of COP28.

Additionally, following the submissions to UNFCCC by Spain and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States as well as WMO on

the Earth Information Day, the SOFF Secretariat stands ready to provide a SOFF update to Parties at the COP28 Earth Information Day.

Suggestion of key messages for COP Negotiators

COP28 is an important milestone and provides an opportunity to bring systematic observation, GBON and SOFF to the forefront of climate change negotiations and to adequately reflect it in COP outcomes and corresponding COP and CMA decisions. The SOFF Secretariat has consulted several stakeholders to seek guidance on what key messages could support further positioning of SOFF – please see Annex 1 for detailed text.

To strengthen SOFF in the climate negotiations, SOFF partners are encouraged to actively position SOFF in COP negotiations and support SOFF fundraising efforts. The SOFF Secretariat is ready to assist Steering Committee members' COP Delegations in their efforts at COP28.

SOFF Events at COP28

SOFF will organize two high-level events:

- Joint event with ECMWF, “Innovative finance – better weather forecasts – effective climate action”, 4 December, 17.30-19.00 at Benelux and EIB Pavilion (see concept in Annex 2)
- “Weather and Climate Data for Resilience”, 9 December, 17.30-18.30 at Benelux and EIB Pavilion (see concept in Annex 3)

SOFF is also expected to be featured in several events of SOFF partners. For details see a tentative list in Annex 4.

To showcase collaboration SOFF Steering Committee members and partners are asked to maximize SOFF visibility by actively participating in and contributing to these events. Steering Committee members, especially funding members, are encouraged to use the opportunity of high-level events to announce potential additional pledges.

Annex I: SOFF Policy Brief to UNFCCC

UNFCCC COP28 Policy Brief: Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF)

1. COP28 as important milestone for SOFF

SOFF is a specialized UN climate fund to support countries in closing the Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) weather and climate data gaps, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

SOFF creation was spearheaded by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and co-created by WMO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

SOFF's design combines grant-based, long-term finance and peer-to-peer technical assistance. SOFF brings together National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS), UN organizations and development banks to support beneficiary countries in a coherent and systematic manner in closing the Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) gap.

According to the WMO Global GBON gap analysis of June 2023, LDCs and SIDS generate and internationally exchange less than 10 percent of the internationally mandated GBON data. Closing the GBON data gap will lead to better forecasts and early warnings. SOFF therefore is a foundational element and delivery vehicle of the UN Early Warnings for All initiative.

UNFCCC COP28 is an important milestone and provides an opportunity to bring systematic observation, GBON and SOFF to the forefront of climate change negotiations and to adequately reflected it in COP outcomes and corresponding COP and CMA decisions.

2. SOFF at COP28 – proposed decision language, key messages, events

➤ Proposed decision language

Recognize the need to enhance coordination of activities by the systematic observation community and the ability to provide useful and actionable climate information for mitigation, adaptation and early warning systems.

Emphasize the importance and urgency to address existing gaps in the Global Climate Observing System, particularly in developing countries.

Encourage Parties and other relevant organizations to support the further enhancement of the Systematic Observation Financing Facility (SOFF), including by providing financial support, in order to address the gaps and strengthen

systematic observation in developing countries, particularly in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Invite development partners, international financial institutions and the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, to provide support for implementation of the Early Warnings for All initiative through supporting SOFF as a vital opportunity and coordinated mechanism for strengthening observations in LDCs and SIDS, including through provision of climate finance.

➤ **Proposed key messages that could be reflected in various agenda items**

Cover decision: Emphasizing the importance and urgency to close basic weather and climate observation gaps and welcome SOFF as the mechanism to enhance and sustain the implementation of the Global Basic Observing Network in developing countries, particularly in LDCs and SIDS.

Global Stocktake: Ensuring universal coverage of early warning systems by 2027 including universal GBON compliance supported by SOFF.

Global Goal on Adaptation: Ensuring that the composite metric that is developed for the Global Goal on Adaptation includes GBON compliance.

SBSTA: Building on [FCCC/SBSTA/2021/L.5](#) emphasizing urgency to close the GBON gap in developing countries, particularly in LDCs and SIDS and highlight the importance of SOFF and welcoming its speed of implementation.

Loss and Damage: Recognizing that systematic observation and early warnings help to minimize and reduce losses and damages and note that SOFF is playing an important role and is listed as existing funding arrangement and innovative source relevant to addressing loss and damage (Transitional Committee TC2/2023/3).

➤ **Events**

Earth Information Day: The submission of Spain and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States from 27 July 2023 requested a progress update on SOFF. The SOFF Secretariat stands ready to brief parties and provide an update on SOFF implementation.

ECMWF-SOFF joint event "Innovative finance – better weather forecasts – effective climate action": ECMWF has substantially contributed to SOFF development and is a member of the SOFF Advisory Board. At the recent Steering Committee meeting, ECMWF presented ways to further strengthen the [ECMWF-SOFF collaboration](#). This collaboration will be showcased at an event co-hosted by ECMWF and SOFF. The event will take place at the Benelux pavilion, 4 December 17.30.

SOFF High-level event: The main SOFF event is expected to launch the first SOFF Action Report, showcase the work of SOFF frontrunner countries, present the SOFF collaboration framework with the multilateral climate funds, and provide the space to publicly announce additional pledges. It will take place at the Benelux pavilion, 9 December 17.30.

SOFF contributing to other events, including

- Canada, 3 Dec, 16.00, Canadian Pavilion
- Finland, 3 Dec, 17.00, Finnish Pavilion
- African Development Bank, 4 Dec, 14.30-15.30, Africa Pavilion
- Nordic Development Fund, 4 Dec, 16.00, Nordic Pavilion
- Interamerican Development Bank, 8 Dec, 14.00, IDB Group Pavilion
- Netherlands, 10 Dec, 11.30, Benelux Pavilion

3. About SOFF

SOFF is a new and specialized UN climate fund

SOFF is a specialized UN climate fund to support countries in closing today's [Global Basic Observing Network \(GBON\)](#) weather and climate data gaps. Established by the World Meteorological Congress, GBON for the first time clearly defines the minimum set of weather and climate data that all countries shall internationally exchange. While mandatory, as of June 2023, LDCs and SIDS generate less than 10 percent of the GBON data.

SOFF recognizes the global public good value of GBON data as any forecast for any part of the globe beyond three days requires GBON data from across the globe. SOFF provides long-term, results-based grant financing and long-term peer-to-peer technical assistance delivered by advanced met offices on a cost-recovery basis ([national met offices from 28 countries](#), including advanced met offices from the Global South). SOFF investments are channeled through [9 Implementing Entities](#) – World Bank, regional development banks and UN organizations (UNDP, UNEP, WFP, IFAD) – that are requested to combine SOFF resources with their own financing or resources drawn from the multilateral climate funds for comprehensive packages of support spanning the whole meteorological value chain.

SOFF is a delivery vehicle of the UN Early Warnings for All initiative

SOFF is a foundational element and delivery vehicle of the UN Secretary-General's [Early Warnings for All initiative](#) and its Executive Action Plan launched at COP27 – warnings are only as good as the data they are built upon.

SOFF is speedily delivering

SOFF opened its doors for business in July 2022 and as of today the Steering Committee has programmed support to 62 countries including all 30 initial focus countries of the UN Early Warnings for All initiative. Out of these 62 countries, 59

countries are already receiving SOFF support. The average that it took for these countries from the Steering Committee programming decision to developing countries' funding requests to Steering Committee funding approval has been 3,9 months. At its next meeting ahead of COP28, the SOFF Steering Committee is expected to approve SOFF investment funding, the second out of three SOFF phases, to an initial group of frontrunner countries that successfully completed the readiness phase.

While the Steering Committee has substantially increased the SOFF ambition level (the initial target set was to program 15 countries for readiness phase support in the first year of SOFF operation), SOFF is confronted with high demand – 39 additional countries have requested SOFF support, including through a formal decision of the WMO Africa Regional Association for a comprehensive African SOFF regional program covering all African countries.

Peer-to-peer technical assistance

SOFF is built on long-term peer-to-peer collaboration and support among NMHS, harnessing their operational experience as providers of peer technical advice. WMO members provide hands-on peer-to-peer technical and institutional assistance, including South-South peer support. This ensures sustainability, coherence, credibility, and trust of technical assistance provided.

SOFF Collaboration Framework with multilateral climate funds

SOFF has developed a collaboration framework with the major multilateral climate funds represented in the SOFF governance structure, expected to be announced at COP28. This framework was [requested by the June 2023 SOFF Steering Committee](#). It spells out how SOFF will partner in a seamless manner with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Climate Investment Funds (CIF), Adaptation Fund (AF), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the CREWS initiative to strengthen systematic observation and the use of observational data for effective decision making.

Potential expansion of SOFF financial support to lower Middle Income Countries (MICs)

Following a resolution of the World Meteorological Congress (May 2023) and the decision of the 5th SOFF Steering Committee (June 2023) the SOFF Steering Committee at its meeting 27 November 2023 will consider a proposal for a phased expansion of SOFF investment and compliance support to lower MICs.

Annex II: Joint ECMWF and SOFF COP28 event

Innovative finance – better weather forecasts – effective climate action

4 December, 17.30-19.00 at Benelux and EIB Pavilion

The event will focus on the importance of closing the basic observations gap in developing countries for better forecasts and predictions. We will discuss the importance of accurate weather forecasts for protection of life and property and better decisions including adaptation to climate change.

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) is an intergovernmental organisation producing highly accurate numerical weather predictions from days to months ahead. The Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) is a specialized UN fund to support countries in closing today's basic weather and climate observation data gaps according to Global Basic Observing Network (GBON).

Tentative Programme

Welcome remarks and Facilitation by *Luc Jacobs*, Director and Special Envoy for Climate and Environment, Belgium

Keynote by *Selwin Hart*, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Climate Action and Just Transition

Panel and Q&A: Innovative Finance for better forecasts

- Moderation: *Markus Repnik*, Director, SOFF
- *Ladislav Chang'a*, IPCC Vice-Chair
- *Rabab Fatima*, High Representative, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)
- *Natalie Flores*, SBSTA Vice-Chair, UNFCCC
- *Karin Isaksson*, Managing Director, Nordic Development Fund (NDF)
- *Katrín Jakobsdóttir*, Prime Minister, Iceland
- *Srilata Kammila*, Head of Climate Change Adaptation, United Nations Development Programme

Panel and Q&A: From better forecasts to better climate action

- Moderation: *Florence Rabier*, Director-General, ECMWF
- *Inger Andersen*, Under Secretary-General, United Nations and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

- *Daniel Gellens*, Director-General Royal Meteorological Institute (remote)
- *Juan Lavista Ferres*, Vice President and Chief Data Scientist of the AI for Good Lab, Microsoft
- *Carla Montesi*, Director, European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships
- *Nirivololona Raholijao*, Director-General, Meteo Madagascar

Closing Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization

Speakers to be confirmed.

Annex III: SOFF COP28 event

Weather and Climate Data for Resilience

9 December, 17.30-18.30 at Benelux and EIB Pavilion

To save lives and livelihoods as well as protect property across the whole globe, we must improve the availability of weather and climate observations from the most data sparse areas. These are vital for weather forecasts, early warning systems and climate information services. The lack of such observations limits countries' capacity to adapt to climate change and build resilience.

Join this event by the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) bringing together global leaders and visionaries dedicated to closing the basic weather and climate observations data gap. It promises to be an opportunity where partnerships strengthen, and where we collectively take steps towards Early Warnings for All.

Tentative Programme:

- Facilitator: *Maarten van Aalst*, Director-General and Chief Science Officer, Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute

Welcome and Setting the Scene

Our esteemed host will kick off the event, setting the stage for better data for better early warning systems and climate action. A deep dive into the progress, achievements, and lessons learned since SOFF kickstarted operations.

- *Selwin Hart*, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Climate Action and Just Transition
- *Markus Repnik*, Director, SOFF

SOFF Action

Hear first-hand accounts from the entities implementing SOFF operations, the countries benefiting from SOFF support and peer advisors providing technical assistance.

- *Cindy McCain*, Executive Director, World Food Programme (video message)
- *Ishaam Abader*, Chief Executive Officer, South African Weather Service
- High-Level Representative, Mozambique

SOFF Collaboration

Distinguished representatives of the global climate funds will share their perspectives on the power of collaboration and efficient partnership.

- *Jennifer Topping*, Executive Director, UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office

- Heads of Adaptation Fund (AF), Climate Investment Fund (CIF), Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility (GEF)

SOFF Support

Welcome global leaders' financial pledges that will shape the course of finance for systematic observations.

- *Leonore Gewessler*, Federal Minister of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, Austria
- *Zakia Khattabi*, Minister of Climate, Environment, Sustainable Development and Green Deal, Belgium
- *Anne Beathe Tvinneim*, Minister of International Development, Norway
- High-Level Representative, Ireland
- Additional Ministers

Looking Ahead

Gain insight into our vision and strategy planned for 2024 and beyond.

- High-Level Representative, Iceland

Speakers to be confirmed.

Annex IV: Additional events at COP28 with SOFF engagement

Title	Partner/ organiser	Date	Time	Location
UNSG Round Table on EW4ALL initiative	UNSG	1 or 2 Dec (tbc)	tbc	VIP Area
COP Presidency Event on Early Warning Systems	UAE, EW4All	3 Dec	10.30 (tbc)	tbc
UNFCCC EW4All Side Event	UNFCCC, WMO	3 Dec (tbc)	Tbc, 90 min	tbc
Earth Information Day	UNFCCC	3 Dec	10-13.00 and 15-17.00	tbc
tbc (led by CREWS)	Canada	3 Dec	9:00	Canada Pavilion
tbc (about Early Warning Systems)	Finland	3 Dec	17:00	Finland Pavilion
tbc (showcasing partnerships)	AfDB	4 Dec	14.30-15.30	Africa Pavilion
Blended Finance	NDF	4 Dec	16.00	Nordic Pavilion
Preparing for Climate Change through Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems	IDB	8 Dec	14.00-14.45	IDB Group Pavilion
Water at the Heart of Climate Action	Netherlands, IFRC, UNDRR, WMO	10 Dec	11.30-13.00	BeNeLux+EIB Pavilion