

**Systematic Observations Financing Facility
MPTF OFFICE ANNUAL FUND NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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|---|---|------------------|----------|------------|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| <div style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Fund Title & Number</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title: Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) Number: SOF00 <div style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Participating Organization(s)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Meteorological Organization (WMO) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) World Food Programme (WFP) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) <div style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Fund Cost (US\$)¹</div> <p>Total approved budget as per ToR \$200 million USD (target by 2025)</p> <div style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Fund Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</div> <p>Assessment/Review - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: 30.10.2023 Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy </p> | <div style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</div> <p>Global</p> <p>UN Early Warnings for All</p> <div style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Implementing Partners</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) <div style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Fund Duration</div> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Overall Duration</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Start Date</td> <td style="text-align: right;">18 November 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Original End Dat (<i>as per the MoU</i>)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">31 December 2031</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current End date</td> <td style="text-align: right;">31 December 2031</td> </tr> </table> <div style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Fund Submitted By</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Markus Repnik Title: Director of the SOFF Secretariat Participating Organization (Lead): Celeste Saulo, Secretary General, WMO Email address: csaulo@wmo.int; mrepnik@wmo.int | Overall Duration | 10 years | Start Date | 18 November 2021 | Original End Dat (<i>as per the MoU</i>) | 31 December 2031 | Current End date | 31 December 2031 |
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¹ Official financial information is in the Financial Report prepared by the MPTF-Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) was co-created by the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme and legally established at the 26th session of the Conference of Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in November 2021. This followed a breakthrough resolution at the 2021 Extraordinary World Meteorological Congress which approved the WMO Unified Data Policy, along with two other sweeping initiatives – the Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) and the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) – to dramatically strengthen the world’s weather and climate services through a systematic increase in much-needed observational data and data products from across the globe. GBON defines in clear and quantitative terms the commitments of the WMO Members to acquire and internationally exchange basic surface-based observations. It offers a new approach in which the basic surface-based observing network is designed, defined and monitored at the global level.

SOFF aims to close the climate and weather observations data gap in countries with the most severe shortfalls in observations, prioritizing Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. Improving the availability of weather and climate observations from the most data sparse areas is essential for weather forecasts, early warning systems and climate information services that save lives and livelihoods as well as protect property across the whole globe. The lack of such observations limits countries' capacity to adapt to climate change and build resilience.

In 2022, SOFF effectively set up the governance structure of the fund, developed an [Operational Manual](#) and key programmatic documents and defined the work plan for the first implementation period. Since November 2022, 62 countries have been programmed for SOFF support through three decisions made by the SOFF Steering Committee in 2022, [Decision 3.4](#) and in 2023 [Decision 4.4](#), and [Decision 5.4](#).

In 2023, based on the list of countries approved for SOFF programming, three batches of SOFF Readiness phase support were approved by the SOFF Steering Committee. 60 of the 62 countries have received Readiness funding since March 2023 ([Decisions 4.3](#), [Decision 5.3](#), [Intersessional Decision 1.1](#), and [Decision 6.2](#)). Two countries yet to receive SOFF Readiness funding include Sudan and Guatemala. In Sudan, all SOFF-related activities are on hold while Guatemala is expected to be approved in 2024.

The outputs of the SOFF Readiness phase as outlined in the Operational Manual include the GBON Gap Analysis², GBON National Contribution Plan³, and the Country Hydromet Diagnostic⁴. In 2023, 60 SOFF beneficiary countries received Readiness funding and worked on the completion of the outputs together with 20 active peer advisors (advanced National Meteorological and Hydrological Services), 9 implementing entities (UN organizations and Multi-lateral Development Banks). Out of the 60 countries included in the first, second and third programming batches, 6⁵ have completed Readiness phase with many others nearing completion. An additional country (Haiti) was approved for Readiness funding in November 2023 ([Decision 6.2](#)).

With [Decision 6.3](#), the 6th SOFF Steering Committee meeting in November 2023 approved Investment Phase funding requests for 6 countries, namely South Sudan, Maldives, Rwanda, Kiribati, Belize and Mozambique, with a total funding window of USD 30.5M. Among these, 4 countries have already received their first

² The GBON Gap Analysis defines the gap between the mandatory requirements of the GBON regulations and the existing country surface and upper-air networks. In other words, it serves as the basis for identifying the number of observing stations that need to be installed or rehabilitated to comply with the mandatory requirements of the GBON regulations

³ GBON National Contribution Plan identifies the infrastructure, human and institutional capacity needed to achieve a progressive target toward GBON compliance, including the sustained operation and maintenance of the national observing network.

⁴ The Country Hydromet Diagnostics is offered on a demand basis (not mandatory) to beneficiary countries and IE.

⁵ Numbers reflect reporting from November 2023 [INF-6.1-SOFF-Implementation-Progress-Report-1.pdf \(un-soff.org\)](#)

tranche of Investment funding, while additional countries are in the process of finalizing the project documents in the SOFF UNMPTF Gateway. Two countries with MDBs (IADB and AfDB) as implementing entities are pending initiation of this process until signature of the Framework Agreement with UNMPTF; see [Decision 7.4](#). Implementation of the Investment stage will be initiated in 2024.

I. Purpose

SOFF is a specialized climate fund with the objective to support and accelerate the sustained collection and international exchange of the most essential surface-based weather and climate observations in compliance with the internationally agreed GBON standards ([See SOFF TOR](#)). The current annual report outlines progress on the project documents approved by the SOFF Steering Committee in the reporting period 1 January to 31 December 2023. Reporting on the Investment phase funding implementation will start in 2024.

II. Results

- **Outcomes:**
 - **Outcome 1:** SOFF Readiness phase implementation
 - **Outcome 2:** SOFF Investment phase implementation and sustained compliance with GBON
- **Outputs:**
 - **Output 1.1** GBON National Gap Analysis reports established and verified
 - **Output 1.2** GBON National Contribution Plans developed and verified
 - **Output 1.3** Country Hydromet Diagnostic
 - **Output 2.1** GBON institutional and human capacity development
 - **Output 2.2** GBON infrastructure in place
- **Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned & best practices:**

As of November 2023, SOFF implementation is on track to meet the targets set under the [updated work programme](#) for the first SOFF implementation period. Factors such as organizational delays, complex country geography, challenges in liaising with the partners for certain beneficiary countries and overall capacity constraints were reported by peer advisors and beneficiary countries as causes of delays in Readiness phase completion. Consequently, in some cases the initial estimated timeframe to complete the SOFF Readiness phase was not sufficient to complete all outputs and extension of delivery period was requested by several countries. This lesson learned will be considered in the signing of any new assignment agreements and is being considered by the SOFF Secretariat and WMO technical authority.

To share lessons learned and best practices, the SOFF Secretariat has created a community of practice for SOFF partners and is planning regular communications, webinars and learning opportunities. Through this engagement of SOFF peer advisors and implementing entities some of the challenges experienced to date are being addressed as implementation progresses.

- **Qualitative assessment:**

In 2023, SOFF has demonstrated success in establishing the fund and setting up a strong network of technical and operational partners to achieve effective governance and implementation of SOFF. The partners and collaboration established in the first 1.5 years of operation are highlighted in the [SOFF Action Report](#). Implementation is currently on track or exceeding initial targets approved for delivery. An [updated Work Programme](#) for the First Implementation Period (July 2022 – June 2025) was approved by the Steering Committee in November 2023⁶. It proposes an increased level of ambition while delivering within the previously set funding target of USD 200 million by 2025. The initial 2020-2025 targets set through Decision 1.6 were to deliver SOFF Readiness support to 55 countries and Investment support to 35 countries. The updated targets are to provide Readiness support to 75 countries (36 percent increase) and Investment support to 50 countries (43 percent increase). The previously set target for the Readiness phase has already been achieved and exceeded with 60 currently receiving Readiness funding as outlined above. According to the targets outlined in section 3 of the updated Work Programme, SOFF is currently exceeding its targets for delivery. The sections below present in detail the progress against the 3 outputs of the SOFF Readiness phase for the 60 approved funding requests. The updated Work Programme aims to support 50 countries with SOFF Investment Phase funding by June 2025. In 2023, 6 countries were approved for Investment Phase funding. Reporting on Investment phase implementation will begin in 2024.

⁶ Numbers reflect reporting from November 2023 [INF-6.1-SOFF-Implementation-Progress-Report-1.pdf \(un-soff.org\)](#)

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Using the **Programme Results Framework from the Project Document / AWP** - provide an update on the achievement of indicators at both the output and outcome level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, clear explanation should be given explaining why, as well as plans on how and when this data will be collected.

| | <u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets | Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any) | Source of Verification |
|--|---|--|--|
| Outcome 1 SOFF Readiness phase implementation Indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of beneficiary countries approved for SOFF Readiness phase Progress toward 3 Readiness phase outputs Baseline: 0 Planned Target⁷: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original target 55 countries by June 2025 Updated target 75 countries by June 2025 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 60 countries supported with SOFF Readiness phase funding Significant progress toward Readiness phase outputs, including the completion of the Readiness phase by 6 countries with additional countries nearing completion. | N/A | All Readiness Phase investment funding requests and outputs available on SOFF website: SOFF Document Library - Systematic Observations Financing Facility (un-soff.org) |
| Output 1.1 GBON National Gap Analysis reports established and verified Indicator 1.1.1 Number of GBON National Gap Analysis reports produced and verified Baseline: 0 Planned Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 by 2025 | Targets achieved under Indicator 1.1.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 | N/A | All Readiness Phase investment funding requests and outputs available on SOFF website: SOFF Document Library - Systematic Observations Financing Facility (un-soff.org) |

⁷ [Decision-6.7-Updated-SOFF-Results-Framework-1.pdf \(un-soff.org\)](https://un-soff.org/Decision-6.7-Updated-SOFF-Results-Framework-1.pdf)

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|--|--|-----|--|
| <p>Output 1.2 GBON National Contribution Plans developed and verified</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.1 Number of GBON National Contribution Plans developed Baseline: 0 Planned Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 by 2025 | <p>Targets achieved under Indicator 1.2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 | N/A | <p>All Readiness Phase investment funding requests and outputs available on SOFF website: SOFF Document Library - Systematic Observations Financing Facility (un-soff.org)</p> |
| <p>Output 1.3⁸ Country Hydromet Diagnostics developed and verified</p> <p>Indicator 1.3.1 Number of CHDs developed Baseline: 0 Planned Target:</p> | <p>Targets achieved under Indicator 1.3.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 | N/A | <p>All Readiness Phase investment funding requests and outputs available on SOFF website: SOFF Document Library - Systematic Observations Financing Facility (un-soff.org)</p> |
| <p>Outcome 2 SOFF Investment Phase Implementation and sustained compliance with GBON</p> <p>Indicator: Number of beneficiary countries approved for SOFF Investment phase Baseline: 0 Planned Target⁹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated target 50 countries by June 2025 | <p>Targets achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 countries approved for SOFF Investment phase funding Implementation planned to start in 2024 | N/A | <p>All Investment Phase documents available on SOFF website: SOFF Document Library - Systematic Observations Financing Facility (un-soff.org)</p> |

⁸ Not formally included in the results framework but monitored as an outputs of the SOFF Readiness phase

⁹ [Decision-6.6-Updated-SOFF-work-programme-July-2022-June-2025-1.pdf \(un-soff.org\)](https://un-soff.org/decision-6.6-updated-soff-work-programme-july-2022-june-2025-1.pdf)

| | | | |
|--|---|-----|--|
| <p>Output 2.1: GBON institutional and human capacity developed¹⁰</p> <p>Indicator 2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # NMHS staff trained • # Institutional capacity building activities • # National consultations <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Planned Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 staff trained • 20 institutional capacity building activities • 60 national consultations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation planned to start in 2024 | N/A | Decision-6.6-Updated-SOFF-work-programme-July-2022-June-2025-1.pdf (un-soff.org) |
| <p>Output 2.2 GBON infrastructure in place</p> <p>Indicator 1.3.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of surface stations rehabilitated and/or installed with SOFF support • # of upper air stations rehabilitated and/or installed with SOFF support • Baseline: Defined in National Contribution Plan <p>Planned Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 surface stations • 1¹¹ upper air station | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation planned to start in 2024 | | |

¹⁰ [Decision-6.7-Updated-SOFF-Results-Framework-1.pdf \(un-soff.org\)](#)

¹¹ Most countries that are part of the first batch of investment funding requests aim to rehabilitate or install upper air stations in the third year of the investment phase i.e. 2026

iii) Highlighting success

Success Story: SOFF Investments in Maldives

Maldives is an Early Warnings for All initial focus country, and with support from the peer advisors – Finnish Meteorological Institute in collaboration with the Indonesia Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysical Agency – and UNEP as SOFF Implementing Entity, it has already completed the SOFF Readiness phase. Currently lacking GBON-compliant stations, Maldives is receiving USD 4.8 million for the Investment phase to upgrade four existing surface stations, install one new surface station and upgrade an obsolete upper air station. UNEP is also supporting the development of a GCF project-proposal “Toward Risk-Aware and Climate-resilient communities – Strengthening climate services and impact-based multi-hazard early warning in Maldives” (approved at the concept note level) that will provide additional resources to holistically strengthen the meteorological value chain. UNEP, as a GCF Accredited Entity and SOFF Implementing Entity, will seek to maximize synergies between SOFF investments and complementarity investments and capacity development efforts.

Success Story: SOFF at COP28

SOFF at COP28: At COP28, the global recognition of systematic observation and SOFF was increased, including through the first Global Stocktake, Earth Information Day and SOFF high-level events. Engagement at COP28 deepened partnerships, including the Framework for Collaboration with major multilateral climate funds which was signed and additional pledges to SOFF UN climate fund secured. Find additional information here: [SOFF at COP28: Increased Recognition, Showcasing Action - Systematic Observations Financing Facility \(un-soff.org\)](https://un-soff.org/)

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

[An independent external review](#) was commissioned to assess SOFF design and early implementation and deemed the trajectory to date as very successful and validated that the SOFF has delivered on its commitments in all areas. SOFF is considered to be highly relevant, transparent, and effective. Across all stakeholder groups, SOFF is seen as the best available option for countries to upgrade, maintain and operate their observation systems in a sustainable fashion and as foundational for additional investments of other partners. The review concluded that SOFF’s early success has led to high expectations for further SOFF implementation, and that adequate funding will be crucial for SOFF to continue meeting these expectations.

The [SOFF Action Report](#) outlines in additional detail the progress and success of 1.5 years of SOFF implementation and the ambitions of the SOFF fund.

IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)

At the 6th SOFF Steering Committee, the [Updated Results Framework](#) for the first implementation period was endorsed and approved.

An [Updated Work Programme](#) for the first implementation period was also approved by the 6th SOFF Steering Committee.

V. Resources (Optional)

- **SOFF Secretariat human resource:** [Decision 6.9](#) document provides an update on the SOFF Secretariat budget, based on Decision 1.7. This update does not alter the budget approved by the Steering Committee for the Secretariat for the period 2022-2025 but reflects reallocation of resources for the SOFF Secretariat to effectively respond to business needs. Despite substantial increase in SOFF ambition, targets and corresponding workload, SOFF Secretariat budget will not increase.
- **SOFF Secretariat financial management:** WMO established a SOFF Secretariat Trust Fund. According to the SOFF Steering Committee [Decision 1.7](#), MPTFO disbursed USD 3 million to this trust fund for the SOFF Secretariat operation. The sixth Steering Committee held on 27 November 2023 through [Decision 6.9](#) approved the additional amount of USD 2,088,920 which was disbursed by UNMPTF on 11 December 2023.