



Investment Phase: Progress update

Kiribati

July 2026

Systematic Observations
Financing Facility

**Weather
and climate
data for
resilience**



General Information

Country	Kiribati	
Implementing Entity	UNEP	
Agreement effectiveness date	03 April 2024	
Duration	60	
Anticipated end date	03 April 2029	
Reporting period	From: 01 January 2026	To: 30 June 2026
Approved amount	Total: USD 11,155,102 UNEP: USD 10,582,652 WMO: USD 572,450	
Disbursed amount	Total: USD 9,715,184.39 UNEP: USD 9,524,386.8 WMO: USD 190,797.59	

Summary

Highlights of key achievements

From 01 January to 30 June 2026, implementation of the SOFF Investment Phase in Kiribati continued through stakeholder engagement, institutional capacity strengthening, human resource development, and preparatory activities for Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) observation infrastructure. Coordination among the Kiribati Meteorological Service (KMS), the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) remained strong throughout the reporting period and supported progress across governance, technical planning, procurement preparation, and infrastructure development activities. Key achievements included the convening of the 4th Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting and a special PSC meeting; stakeholder consultations on Kiritimati Island; progress in gender and stakeholder engagement planning; recruitment of additional national personnel; completion of technical designs for new and existing upper-air facilities; and progress in procurement preparations for land-based and upper-air observation infrastructure.

Under Output 1.1 – National consultations including with civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders, the Project Management Unit (PMU), in collaboration with KMS and representatives from the aviation sector, undertook a mission to Kiritimati Island from 9 to 16 January 2026 to support stakeholder engagement, implementation planning, and site assessments for upcoming SOFF activities. During the mission, consultations were held with the Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands Development (MLPID), government agencies, airport authorities, community representatives, and other local stakeholders. Discussions focused on project objectives, implementation arrangements, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and opportunities for collaboration in support of meteorological infrastructure development. Community consultations were conducted to raise awareness of the project, gather local perspectives, and support preparation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Gender Action Plan. The mission also included a technical site survey for the proposed upper-air observation station on Kiritimati Island to assess site suitability, infrastructure availability, accessibility, and environmental conditions. Participation in the consultations included women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, community leaders, and other stakeholder groups. Community consultations in Poland and Banana recorded 53% female and 47% male participation. Separate courtesy meetings with MLPID and Island Council decision-making bodies recorded 17% female and 83% male participation.

The [4th PSC meeting](#) was successfully convened on 19 January 2026 at the YCL Conference Room in Antebuka, South Tarawa. The meeting was attended by 16 participants, comprising 10 women and 6 men, representing 63% female participation. The meeting brought together representatives from implementing agencies, government ministries, development partners, and other stakeholders to review implementation progress, discuss challenges and mitigation measures, and provide strategic guidance for upcoming activities. The meeting also considered the proposed 2026 workplan and procurement priorities and reaffirmed support for the implementation of planned infrastructure investments. Representatives from UNEP and BoM participated in the meeting as part of the joint mission to Kiribati conducted from 13 to 20 January 2026. During the mission, UNEP and BoM also held coordination meetings with KMS, met with representatives of other United Nations agencies and the Australian High Commission, and conducted technical planning discussions covering procurement, infrastructure implementation sequencing, and budget planning.

Building on the outcomes of the PSC meeting, KMS organized a [SOFF workplan development workshop](#) on 5–6 February 2026 at the YCL Centre in Antebuka, Tarawa. The workshop provided an opportunity for government agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, and other stakeholders to review implementation priorities, discuss planned activities, clarify stakeholder responsibilities, and provide recommendations for strengthening implementation arrangements. The workshop contributed to the refinement of the annual workplan and supported improved coordination among participating institutions. The workshop was attended by 19 participants, comprising 11 women and 8 men, representing approximately 58% female participation.

KMS also supported outreach activities during the celebration of [World Meteorological Day](#) on 23 March 2026, contributing to public awareness and education on meteorological services and the importance of weather and climate observations.

In addition, a Special PSC meeting was convened on 11 June 2026 at the Office of Te Beretitenti (OB) Boardroom in Tarawa to review and endorse the 2026 workplan and associated budget revisions. The meeting brought together 16 participants, including 14 members attending in person and two UNEP representatives participating virtually. Women represented 69% of participants. During the meeting, PSC members reviewed implementation progress, endorsed budget reallocations across several project activities, approved the 2026 workplan, and endorsed the Procurement Management Plan (PMP) to facilitate the implementation of planned procurement activities. The meeting also discussed implementation bottlenecks and measures to accelerate delivery of project activities during the remainder of the year.

Under Output 1.2 – NMHS institutional capacity developed, progress was made in strengthening institutional approaches to gender mainstreaming and stakeholder engagement. During the reporting period, KMS engaged a consultant to undertake a review of the draft Gender Analysis, Gender Action Plan, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan developed under the project. The review is intended to strengthen the quality, relevance, and practicality of the documents and ensure alignment with national policies, project objectives, and international good practice. The assignment includes assessment of identified gender gaps within the meteorological sector and review of proposed actions to promote equitable participation, professional development, and leadership opportunities. The review also seeks to strengthen stakeholder consultation and engagement mechanisms to ensure that project implementation remains inclusive, accessible, and culturally appropriate. The draft documents were informed by consultations undertaken across Kiribati, including stakeholder engagement activities on Kiritimati Island and other outer islands. Finalization of the Gender Analysis, Gender Action Plan, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan is expected during the next reporting period.

In addition, BoM participated in the [SOFF–Weather Ready Pacific \(WRP\) Joint Event](#) held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, on 3 June 2026. The event, coordinated by the SOFF Secretariat, provided an opportunity to strengthen regional coordination, identify efficiencies across initiatives, and support future collaboration on meteorological infrastructure, maintenance, and capacity development across the Pacific region.

Under Output 1.3 – NMHS human capacity required to operate the GBON network developed, KMS continued to strengthen operational capacity through the recruitment of additional national personnel. During the reporting period, an Assistant Technical Officer based on Kiritimati Island was recruited to support meteorological observation activities, operation and maintenance of observing equipment, and implementation of project activities within the Line Islands. The position strengthens KMS's local technical presence on Kiritimati Island and will support future operation of the upper-air observation station. In addition, KMS recruited a Driver to provide logistical and operational support for maintenance missions, field activities, stakeholder consultations, and transportation of personnel and equipment. These recruitments contribute to strengthening KMS's institutional capacity and operational readiness for implementation of SOFF-supported observation infrastructure and related activities. With these recruitments, the total number of SOFF-supported staff employed under the project reached 11, comprising 5 women and 6 men, representing approximately 45% female representation.

Under Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 – New and improved land-based stations and related equipment, ICT systems, data management systems, and standard operating practices in place, BoM and KMS continued preparatory activities for the upgrading and expansion of the national observation network. During the reporting period, technical assessments and verification of site conditions were completed for 5 existing Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) targeted for upgrading under the SOFF Investment Phase. Site information collected during the January 2026 mission supported the finalization of the Statement of Requirements, which defines technical specifications, equipment requirements, installation needs, and support services required for implementation. Procurement planning progressed during March 2026, and the procurement activity was formally registered following completion of internal governance reviews and approvals. The procurement process is now positioned to proceed to the next phase following completion of the required administrative processes.

Further opportunities for improving efficiency were also identified during the reporting period through coordination between the SOFF project and the Australian Government-funded Partnerships for Aviation (P4A) programme. Preliminary assessments indicated that Aviation Weather Observing Systems (AWOS) being installed at Bonriki, Kiritimati, and Kanton may contribute to GBON observation requirements. BoM is engaging with the WMO Technical Authority to determine whether these systems may be recognized as GBON-compliant observation infrastructure, potentially reducing duplication and improving overall implementation efficiency.

Under Output 2.3 and 2.4 – New and improved upper-air stations and related equipment, ICT systems, data management systems, and standard operating practices in place, significant progress was achieved in preparation for upper-air observation infrastructure development. During the reporting period, technical reviews and assessments of the proposed upper-air station on Kiritimati Island were completed, and recommendations from BoM technical specialists were incorporated into the final design. The detailed engineering design for the new upper-air station was subsequently finalized, covering building specifications, utilities, and supporting infrastructure required for operational functionality and long-term sustainability. Following completion of the design, procurement processes for construction materials were initiated and tender documentation was published in accordance with national procurement procedures. KMS continued to coordinate closely with the Project Management Unit and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy (MISE) to support procurement and prepare for subsequent construction activities.

Progress was also achieved in relation to the existing upper-air station infrastructure. A technical assessment undertaken by MISE concluded that the existing building remains structurally sound but requires rehabilitation works, including replacement of the deteriorated roofing system. The scope of rehabilitation was expanded to include improvements to perimeter fencing and upgrades to water storage facilities. Detailed engineering designs and cost estimates were completed, and procurement processes were initiated through the national government procurement portal. These activities represent important preparatory milestones for strengthening upper-air observation capacity and supporting future compliance with GBON requirements.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Implementation during the reporting period highlighted the importance of timely approval processes and coordination among implementing partners. Additional time was required to secure endorsement of the 2026 workplan following changes in PSC membership and leadership and the need for further stakeholder input. This affected the scheduling of some activities and procurement processes during the reporting period. The special PSC meeting held on 11 June 2026 helped address this challenge by endorsing the workplan, proposed budget reallocations and Procurement Management Plan, enabling implementation to progress.

Administrative lead times associated with travel arrangements, scheduling constraints affecting the availability of some stakeholders, and longer-than-anticipated procurement timelines also influenced the scheduling of activities. These experiences highlighted the importance of early administrative and procurement planning and timely coordination of specialized technical inputs.

The reporting period also demonstrated the value of early stakeholder engagement and close technical coordination among KMS, UNEP, BoM, MISE and other stakeholders. Regular communication and joint planning activities helped strengthen implementation planning and support progress on infrastructure and capacity-development activities.

Next Steps

Procurement activities for upgrading the 5 existing AWS are expected to proceed following endorsement of the Procurement Management Plan. BoM will also provide technical guidance on site assessments, infrastructure requirements and the sequencing of related activities to support procurement of the 9 co-located manual and automatic weather stations. Additional consultations and site-verification activities are planned in Butaritari, Beru, Arorae, Tabuaeran and Kiritimati, together with further site confirmation in Maiana and Abemama.

BoM will continue engaging with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Technical Authority to determine whether the Aviation Weather Observing Systems installed under the Partnerships for Aviation programme at Bonriki, Kiritimati and Kanton could contribute towards GBON requirements. The outcome of this assessment will inform subsequent infrastructure planning and help avoid duplication of investments.

For upper-air infrastructure, procurement documentation and technical specifications will continue to be developed for the required equipment, including radiosondes, hydrogen-generation equipment, logistics arrangements and installation services. Preparations will also continue for construction of the new upper-air station on Kiritimati Island, rehabilitation of the existing upper-air facility, and development of the proposed storage room in Tarawa. Required unexploded ordnance and site-clearance activities for the storage room are planned as prerequisites for construction, alongside preparations for the planned groundbreaking of the upper-air station and storage facility. Preliminary logistical planning for the proposed upper-air station at Kanton is also expected to continue, with particular attention to transport, mobilization, supporting infrastructure and installation requirements.

Further efforts will focus on finalizing and launching the Gender Gap Analysis, Gender Action Plan and Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which are expected to be completed by the end of August 2026. Design work for KMS facilities on outer islands will also be advanced.

BoM will commence preliminary planning for the 2nd Basic Instruction Package for Meteorological Technicians (BIP-MT) training course and will continue to provide technical advisory support, quality-assurance reviews, and specialist technical inputs for observation infrastructure activities. Technical coordination among KMS, UNEP, BoM, WMO and national stakeholders will continue to support implementation and progress towards GBON compliance.

Progress of implementation

Output	Indicator	Target					Actual					Status	Milestones achieved	Challenges and risks	
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5				
1. GBON institutional and human capacity developed															
1.1 National consultations , including with CSOs and other relevant stakeholders conducted	Number of inception workshops (1.1.7)	1	1	1	1	1		4	1			Achieved	The inception workshop and the inauguration of the PSC were conducted on 11 June 2025 The 2nd PSC meeting was held on 1 September 2025, followed by the 3rd PSC meeting on 15 October 2025 The 4th PSC meeting was successfully convened on 19 January 2026 Special PSC meeting was convened on 11 June 2026 to review and endorse the 2026 workplan and associated budget revisions	Delays in endorsement of the 2026 workplan affected the pace of implementation during the first half of the reporting period. The Special PSC meeting helped address this issue and enabled implementation to progress.	
	Percentage of female participation in the inception workshops (<i>please also indicate the actual number in brackets</i>) (1.1.8)	50	50	50	50	50		53.33% (8) 63% (8)	69% (11)			Achieved	Out of 15 total participants, 8 women (53.33%) attended the first three PSC meetings. The 4th PSC meeting brought together 16 participants, including 10 women and 6 men, achieving 63% female participation. The SOFF workplan development workshop had 19 participants, including 11 women (58%). The special PSC meeting had 16 participants		

Output	Indicator	Target					Actual					Status	Milestones achieved	Challenges and risks
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5			
													including 11 women (69%).	
	Number of stakeholder workshops held (1.1.9)	0	1	1	1	1		2				Achieved	SOFF Kiribati Stakeholder Engagement Workshop was conducted from 12 to 13 June 2025 SOFF workplan development workshop on 5–6 February 2026	
	Percentage of female participation in the stakeholder workshops (<i>please also indicate the actual number in brackets</i>) (1.1.10)	0	50	50	50	50		69.9% (9), 58% (11)				Achieved	SOFF Kiribati Stakeholder engagement workshop had 9 women participants (69.9%) The SOFF workplan development workshop had 19 participants, including 11 women (58%).	
	Years in which stakeholder engagement plan will be drafted (1.1.11)	1	1	0	0	0			1			Delayed	A consultant was engaged to review the draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). The review is ongoing and is expected to support finalization of the document.	
1.2 NMHS institutional capacity required to operate the GBON network developed	Years in which Gender Gap Analysis and Gender Action Plan will be drafted (1.2.7)	0	0	1	1	0			1			On-track	A consultant was engaged to review the draft Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan. The review aims to strengthen the quality and practicality of the documents and ensure alignment with national policies and project	

Output	Indicator	Target					Actual					Status	Milestones achieved	Challenges and risks
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5			
													objectives. Finalization is expected during the next reporting period	
	Years in which participation is planned (tentatively) (1.2.8)	1	1	1	1	1			1			On-track	BoM and Director of KMS participated in the SOFF-Weather Ready Pacific (WRP) Joint Event held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, on 3 June 2026	
1.3 NMHS human capacity required to operate the GBON network developed	Number of staff salaries paid (1.3.6)	11	11	11	11	11		8	11			Achieved	Total number of SOFF-supported staff employed under the project reached 11, comprising 5 women and 6 men, representing approximately 45% female representation.	
	Years in which trainings will be conducted (1.3.7)	1	1	1	1	1		1				On-track	8 KMS officers (4 female/4 male), participated in the Basic Instruction Package for Meteorological Technicians (BIP-MT) course at the BoM Training Centre in Melbourne from 1 September to 7 November 2025.	BoM will commence preliminary planning for the 2 nd Basic Instruction Package for Meteorological Technicians (BIP-MT) training course during the second half of 2026
2. GBON infrastructure in place														
2.1 New land-based stations and related equipment, ICT systems, data management systems and standard operating practices in place	# of new stations installed as per the GBON National Contribution Plan (2.1.1)	0	0	4	5	0						On-track	Potential opportunities were identified to leverage Aviation Weather Observing Systems (AWOS) installed under the Partnerships for Aviation (P4A) programme at Bonriki,	Confirmation from the WMO Technical Authority is required before potential integration of AWOS infrastructure into GBON implementation arrangements.

Output	Indicator	Target					Actual					Status	Milestones achieved	Challenges and risks
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5			
													Kiritimati, and Kanton. BoM plans to engage the WMO Technical Authority to assess whether these assets can contribute toward GBON requirements.	
2.2 Improved land-based stations and related equipment, ICT systems, data management systems and standard operating practices in place	# of stations improved as per the GBON National Contribution Plan (2.2.1)	0	5	0	0	0						Delayed	Site verification activities were completed for 5 existing AWS. A Statement of Requirements was finalized, procurement was registered, and required governance reviews and approvals were completed.	Procurement activities experienced bottlenecks associated with governance requirements, approval pathways, and documentation requirements.
2.3 New upper air stations and related equipment, ICT systems, data management systems and standard operating practices in place	# of new stations installed as per the GBON National Contribution Plan (2.3.1)	0	1	1	0	0						On-track	The detailed engineering design for the new upper-air station on Kiritimati Island was finalized following technical review by BoM and KMS. Procurement documentation was prepared and procurement processes for construction materials were initiated.	Procurement of upper-air equipment remains dependent on progress of shelter construction. Kanton Island implementation continues to present logistical challenges
2.4 Improved upper air stations and related equipment, ICT systems, data management systems and standard operating practices in place	# of stations improved as per the GBON National Contribution Plan (2.4.1)	0	1	0	0	0						Delayed	A technical assessment of the existing upper-air station was completed. Engineering designs were developed for roof replacement, rehabilitation of perimeter fencing, and upgrading of water storage facilities.	Implementation remains dependent on ongoing procurement processes and contractor mobilization.

Output	Indicator	Target					Actual					Status	Milestones achieved	Challenges and risks
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5			
													Procurement processes were subsequently initiated.	
3. Sustained compliance with GBON														
3.1 GBON land-based stations' commissioning period completed , country-specific standard cost for operations and maintenance established, and data sharing verified by WMO Technical Authority	# of stations commissioned as per the GBON National Contribution Plan (3.1.1)	0	5	9	14	14						Not yet started		
3.2 GBON upper air stations' commissioning period completed , country-specific standard cost for operations and maintenance established, and data sharing verified by WMO Technical Authority	# of stations commissioned as per the GBON National Contribution Plan (3.2.1)	0	2	3	3	3						Not yet started		

Attachment: [Kiribati SOFF Investment Phase Annual Narrative Report 2025](#)