



Our ref.: 33901/2019/CLW/GCOS/ECVs

10 January 2020

Subject: Consultation on the Requirements for Essential Climate Variables

Action required: Review the suggested revisions to the ECV Requirements  
by **13 March 2020**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Seventeenth World Meteorological Congress in its [Resolution 39 \(Cg-17\)](#) – Global Climate Observing System (*Seventeenth World Meteorological Congress: Abridged final report with resolutions* (WMO-No. 1157)), reaffirmed the continuing strong commitment of WMO to the objectives of the Global Climate Observing System Programme (GCOS) and support for its implementation. [Resolution 20 \(Cg-18\)](#) – WMO contributions to the provision of climate information and services in support of policy and decision-making (*World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Eighteenth Session* (WMO-No. 1236)) and [Resolution 4 \(EC-71\)](#) – Climate coordination panel (*Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventy-first Session* (WMO-No. 1237)) in 2019, decided on the facilitation of WMO members' inputs into GCOS reporting on the status of global observing systems for climate and on implementation needs which include Essential Climate Variable (ECV) requirements. GCOS ECV requirements will be entered into the WMO Rolling Review of Requirements and the WMO Integrated Global Observing System (WIGOS) OSCAR database for the climate monitoring application area.

In 2019, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice<sup>1</sup>, noted the plans of GCOS to provide a status report and an implementation plan in 2021 and 2022 and encouraged Parties, the co-sponsors of the GCOS programme and relevant organizations to actively engage in this work. These reports are timed to feed into the UNFCCC's Global Stocktake.

GCOS is now holding a public consultation on the requirements for essential climate observations needed by users of climate data (called Essential Climate Variables, ECV) which will be published as part of an updated Implementation Plan in 2022. Starting the review now, in early 2020, allows time for careful consideration by the expert panels and discussion with interested parties in 2020, before the drafting of the updated Implementation Plan in 2021 which will be based on the outcome of the review of the ECV requirements.

GCOS has most recently proposed requirements for climate observations in 2016 in its Implementation Plan<sup>2</sup> which was endorsed by the UNFCCC, WMO and IOC of UNESCO<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP 25) and the Fifty-first session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 51) met in Madrid from 2 to 13 December 2019, see [FCCC/SBSTA/2019/L.15](#).

<sup>2</sup> *The Global Observing System for Climate: Implementation Needs*. (GCOS-200, GOOS-214). Publications, WMO, Geneva, 2016.

To: Permanent Representatives (or Directors of Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services) of Members of WMO

cc: Hydrological Advisers to Permanent Representatives

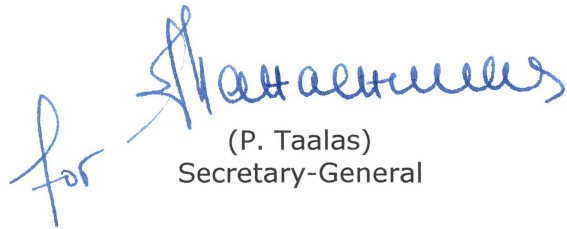
These requirements specify what should be delivered to users of climate data and are therefore independent of the measurement technique. Uses of the data include climate science and projection, climate policy at global and national levels, mitigation and adaptation, and public information.

Experts in the GCOS panels have reviewed these existing requirements and have suggested some revisions as the basis for this consultation. Changes presented in this consultation (including revised requirements, new or deleted ECV products or changed names) may not be adopted, depending on the outcome of the consultation, and should not be regarded as firm proposals. They are simply the basis of the consultation.

We hope that both those who observe and produce datasets of the ECVs as well as users of the data will take part. We would like the consultation to be as broad as possible and therefore would encourage you to forward this invite to a wide range of reviewers. There is a simple registration, (name, email and affiliation) so we can contact reviewers if needed and can credit reviewers in the final publication. All comments will be considered by our experts.

Instructions and the draft requirements are available online on the GCOS website at the following link: <https://gcos.wmo.int/en/ecv-review-2020>. The consultation will start on 13 January and last until 13 March 2020.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Taalas', is written over the typed name. To the left of the signature, the word 'for' is written in blue ink.

(P. Taalas)  
Secretary-General

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<sup>3</sup> Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO).