



World Meteorological Organization  
Organisation météorologique mondiale

Secrétariat

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Our ref.: DRA-AP/RELOC/RO

GENEVA, 16 October 2013

Annexes: 2 (available in English only)

Subject: Hosting of the Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific (RAP Office)

Action required: Notification to be sent to the WMO Secretariat **by 18 November 2013** if it is the intention of your Government to host the RAP Office

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to recall that the location of the Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific (RAP Office) has been maintained in Geneva since its establishment in 1979. The Tenth World Meteorological Congress (Cg-X (1987)) agreed that the RAP Office should continue to be at the WMO Headquarters and that the future location should be decided on the basis of the future sessions of Regional Associations II (Asia) and V (South-West Pacific). The thirteenth session of RA II (Hong Kong, China, December 2004) agreed that the RAP Office should remain in Geneva for the time being, and such decision was supported by the fourteenth session of RA V (Adelaide, Australia, April/May 2006).

The Sixteenth Congress (Cg-XVI, Geneva, May 2011) considered the benefits for Regions III and IV achieved through the relocation of the Regional Director to the Region and recommended that the Secretary-General consider a similar approach for other Regions. Congress adopted Resolution 34 inviting the Secretary-General to review, in consultation with the presidents of the regional associations concerned, the current set-up of the WMO Regional Offices and WMO Offices in the Regions and propose measures for improving their effectiveness and efficiency, including appropriate relocations, within available resources.

The fifteenth session of RA II (RA II-15: Doha, Qatar, December 2012), in considering the relocation of the Regional Office for the Region, recognized the advantages of the location of the Regional Office being in the Region in particular in terms of cost-effectiveness, and agreed that the president of RA II, in collaboration with the president of RA V, proceed with seeking potential candidates for hosting the Regional Office from all Members of RA II and RA V, so as to make an assessment of the candidates using the regionally agreed criteria (see Annex I for more detailed information on the review of regional office location).

To: Permanent Representatives of Members of Regional Association II (ASE-631)  
Permanent Representatives of Members of Regional Association V (PSW-442)

cc: Presidents and vice-presidents of Regional Associations II and V (for information)

The generic criteria, as well as the procedures and timeline, for the assessment of appropriate location of the RAP Office in the Regions, developed by the Secretariat in light of ensuring the efficient, cost-effective and sustainable operation and management of the Regional Office, were endorsed by RA II-15 and also by the RA V Management Group (see Annex I, paragraphs 6 and 12 for regionally agreed generic criteria and timeline, respectively) and both Management Groups of RA II and RA V requested the Secretariat to send out a letter accordingly to seek potential candidates for hosting the RAP Office from all Members of RA II and RA V.

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your kind examination of the possibility of hosting the RAP Office in your country, in view of various benefits of having a UN System Organization's regional office for enhancing visibility and further promoting weather, climate and water services, and to invite you to notify the Secretariat, if your Government intends to host the RAP Office. The WMO minimum requirements, i.e. expected support to be provided by your Government, for hosting a Regional Office are given in Annex II.

Upon receipt of letters of intent from Members, these candidate Members will be duly informed of the detailed selection procedures and criteria agreed by the Management Groups of RA II and RA V, and will be invited to complete a survey/assessment questionnaire for more detailed information including available Government support to facilitate the objective assessment by the Management Groups. Please note that, as agreed by RA II-15, the possibility of maintaining the RAP Office in Geneva will also be assessed with the same selection criteria and procedures.

In response to the request made by Congress in Resolution 34 (Cg-XVI) and based upon the above-referenced assessment by the RA II and RA V Management Groups, the Secretary-General will make a proposal within the available resources for the location of the RAP Office.

I would be grateful to receive your notification, if it is the intention of your Government to host the RAP Office, preferably **by 18 November 2013**, to allow consolidation of potential locations of the RAP Office for the above assessment.

Yours faithfully,



(E. Manaenkova)  
for the Secretary-General

## REVIEW OF REGIONAL OFFICE LOCATION

### Background

1. Cg-XVI (Geneva, May 2011), considering the concerns of RA I and the benefits for Regions III and IV achieved through the relocation of the Regional Director to the Region, as well as opinions that the location of the Regional Directors and Offices in Geneva has advantages in terms of coordination with the WMO Secretariat and Programmes, recommended that the Secretary-General consider, in consultation with the presidents of RAs concerned, conducting a comprehensive review of the regional offices resources and location and propose measures to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. The Secretariat took the initiative to review the Regional Office location, with a special focus on efficient and effective management and operation of the Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific (RAP Office).

### Historical review of the establishment of Regional Offices and Sub-regional Offices

2. The historical background of the Regional Programme and the establishment of Regional Offices and WMO Offices in the Regions (previously called Sub-regional Offices) were reviewed with a special focus on the procedures within the WMO framework and the host country agreements for the establishment of Offices in the Regions (see Appendix). It should be noted that the location of the RAP Office was maintained in Geneva since its establishment in 1979. Tenth Congress (Cg-X (1987)) agreed that the RAP Office should continue to be at the WMO Headquarters and that the future location should be decided on the basis of the future sessions of RA II and RA V. The Sub-regional Office (currently called WMO Office) for the South-West Pacific was established in Apia, Samoa, in May 1998 with the support of the Government of Samoa and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and the WMO Office for West Asia was established in Manama, Bahrain in November 2006 with the support of the Government of Bahrain.

### Preliminary consultations with potential candidate Members for hosting the Regional Office

3. Through the Secretariat's preliminary consultations with Members in 2011, some Members (Macao, China; Singapore; and Thailand) indicated their Government's interests in hosting the RAP Office. WMO requirements were discussed with the above Members and a clear guidance on concrete procedures was required, including the criteria and timeline for selection of the location of the RAP Office from several candidates.

4. Through the Secretariat's further consultations with Members during October 2012 to May 2013, India, Qatar and the Republic of Korea also indicated their Governments' interests in hosting the RAP Office.

### Criteria for consideration of location of Regional Offices (in the Regions)

5. The generic criteria for the assessment of appropriate location of Regional Offices in the Regions were proposed by the Secretariat in light of ensuring the *efficient, cost-effective and sustainable* operation and management of the Regional Office. The generic criteria, as well as the procedures and timeline, for review of the location of the RAP Office were proposed to the fourth session of the RA II Management Group (MG-4: Doha, Qatar, February/March 2012) and the eighth session of the RA V Management Group (MG-8: Geneva, June/July 2012). The RA II and RA V Management Groups agreed in principle the proposed generic criteria.

6. Regional Association II (Asia), at its fifteenth session (RA II-15: Doha, Qatar, December 2012), endorsed the generic criteria for consideration of the Regional Office location which were updated by the Secretariat (Updated criteria are indicated by italics) as given below:

- (a) Efficiency [*Note: The criteria for efficiency are proposed from the standpoint of how efficiently the Regional Director can perform duties and responsibilities of the Regional Director/Office.*]:
- Linkage with WMO Programmes and technical and administration departments/offices for collaboration and coordination (time difference to be considered);
  - Connection to Members, RA presidents and subsidiary bodies;
  - *Presence of partners* (UN, international and regional organizations and financial institutions) for collaboration and increased advocacy;
  - Accessibility/geographical convenience (number of available direct flights, flight time to possible venues of regional events, visa issuance, etc.);
  - Accessibility to the info/data and info exchange (with IT support); *Internet connection facilities*;
  - Availability of international conference facilities, *equipped with interpretation system and availability of local transportation*;
- (b) Cost-effectiveness:
- Staff salary rate (post adjustment);
  - Cost of living and quality of life for staff (e.g., housing, education, healthcare services);
  - Office running cost (including security cost);
  - Accessibility (mission cost for Office staff and participants for the meetings; cost for holding sessions);
  - Availability of Government support (including staff costs, office space, furniture and running cost; and programme/activity cost);
  - *Facilities for currency exchange*;
- (c) Sustainability:
- Political stability of the Government (neutrality of Member and overall social stability);
  - Security;
  - Environmental friendliness;
  - Government commitment to support for longer term (e.g., 4-year period of initial agreement, and continuation).

7. RA II-15 requested the RA II Management Group (MG) to further consider the regional criteria including the possible weight given to specific criteria. The RA II Management Group (MG-7: Geneva, May 2013) and the RA V Management Group (MG-9: May 2013) agreed to further develop regional criteria if any and the possible weight given to specific criteria for selection of the location of the RAP Office from several candidates.

### **Basic assessment of the options of hosting the Regional Office in Geneva and in other location**

8. RA II-15 reviewed the basic analysis made by the Secretariat on the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the location of the RAP Office in Geneva and in the Region. It recognized the advantages of the location of the Office being in the Region in particular in terms of cost-effectiveness. On the other hand, it noted weakness in the closer day-to-day coordination with the WMO Secretariat and Programmes when the Office is located in the Region. In this connection, RA II-15 noted that the Secretary-General assigned the function of regional coordination to a dedicated officer within the Development and Regional Activities (DRA) Department (see Appendix, Figure 1) to overcome the weakness of relocation of the Office to the Region in the criterion of linkage with WMO Programmes and technical and administration departments/offices for

collaboration and coordination [Note: A Senior Programme Manager for Regional Coordination assumed the duties and responsibilities on 1 July 2013]. RA II-15 also appreciated the recently implemented improvements in video-conferencing and remote access to WMO's financial and administrative management system which further contributed to improved coordination.

9. RA II-15 further agreed that the option of hosting the Regional Office in Geneva should be retained for consideration along with other possible locations.

#### **Procedures for the selection of the location of the RAP Office**

10. RA II-15 agreed that, with close collaboration with the president of RA V and its Management Group on this issue, the president of RA II, in consultation with the RA II Management Group, proceed with seeking potential candidates for hosting the Regional Office from all Members of RA II and RA V, and make a recommendation to the Secretary-General on the appropriate location of the Office before Cg-17 (May 2015) based on the assessment of the candidates using the regionally agreed criteria.

11. In May 2013, both RA II and RA V Management Groups agreed on the updated timeline and procedures of pursuing the potential relocation of the RAP Office (as given below) and requested the Secretariat to send out a WMO letter accordingly to seek potential candidates for hosting the Regional Office from all Members of RA II and RA V including those Members already expressed their intentions/interests.

12. The (*updated*) regionally agreed procedures and timeline are given below:

- (i) Development of the generic criteria for the assessment of appropriate location of Regional Offices in the Regions and agreement in principle by the Management Groups of RA II and RA V (done: February-August 2012);
- (ii) Basic assessment of efficiency and cost-effectiveness of relocation of the RAP Office based on the regionally agreed criteria (done: September-November 2012);
- (iii) Agreement by RA II-15 on potential relocation of the RAP Office (done: December 2012);
- (iv) Agreement by the RA V Management Group on potential relocation of the RAP Office (done: May 2013);
- (v) WMO official letter to RA II and RA V Members to seek potential candidates (August-October 2013);
- (vi) *Development/Agreement by RA II and RA V Management Groups of the selection criteria (with region-specific criteria and/or weighting factor) and procedures (October-November 2013);*
- (vii) *Identification of possible government support by potential candidate Members (December 2013);*
- (viii) Assessment of all potential candidates (including Geneva) based on the regionally agreed criteria (by March 2014);
- (ix) Selection of location of the Office in light of assessment results (June 2014);
- (x) Decision by Cg-17 on the location of the RAP Office at the selected place (May 2015);
- (xi) Finalization of arrangements for and conclusion of official agreement with the host government (September 2015);
- (xii) Completion of relocation of the RAP Office (December 2015).

[Note: (vi) and (vii) are new actions proposed by the Secretariat in line with the decisions of the RA II and RA V Management Groups.]

#### **Expected composition of the Regional Office**

13. The Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific (RAP Office) is expected to be composed of:

- (a) 1 Regional Director (D.1) to be funded by WMO (core staff);
- (b) 1 Programme Officer (P.4) to be funded by WMO (core staff);
- (c) 1 Secretary provided by the host country (core staff);
- (d) 1 or 2 Programme Officer(s) financially supported by the host country;
- (e) 1 or 2 Seconded Expert(s) from Member(s); and
- (f) 1 or 2 other support staff (clerk, driver, etc.) provided by the host country.

### **WMO requirements for a WMO Office in the Region**

14. As it has been the case in the past with the current WMO Offices in the Regions, the host country and/or national and regional, international organizations in the host country are expected to provide: Office space; Office facilities, utilities and services; and local support staff.

15. The privileges and immunities provided for in the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the UN specialize Agencies, including the following, should be granted by the host country:

- (i) The Offices should function in full independence and freedom of action to which it is entitled as an international organization. The Offices should also enjoy freedom of meetings, including freedom of discussions and decisions within the framework of their normal functions;
- (ii) All necessary measures should be taken to facilitate the entry into, residence in, and departure from the host country of all persons called upon to act in an official capacity of the Organization;
- (iii) The Organization, through the Offices, will be allowed to hold accounts in all currencies, freely transfer its funds, currencies, legal tenders and other transferable securities, convert into other currencies all currencies and legal tender possessed by it;
- (iv) The Offices and their staff should be exempted from all jurisdictions for acts resulting from the exercise of their functions as well as from all currency restrictions and local and national taxes;
- (v) The host government should ensure the security of the Offices and their staff. In the event of crisis, repatriation facilities should be accorded to the members and their families.

16. The host country is also expected to bear the operational running costs of the offices including stationery, communications (postal, telephone and electronic correspondence) and other specific costs.

17. The hosting of the Regional Office will be subject to a host country agreement to be concluded between WMO and the host Government.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### Regional Office

1. The WMO First Congress established six WMO Regions with related regional associations (RAs) in 1951 (Resolution 32 (Cg-I)). The subsequent progressive development of WMO's Programmes has led to a corresponding growth in the regional activities, which were therefore given a separate identity by the Seventh Congress (1975) under the title "Regional Programme". The Regional Offices within the WMO Secretariat provide support to the Regional Associations, thus the Regional Programme, and other WMO Programmes as appropriate.
2. The establishment of supporting regional structure in the Secretariat started with the decision of the Fourth Congress (Cg-IV: 1963) to establish a post entitled "Regional Representative for Africa", in response to a recommendation of the third session of RA I (Africa) (III-RA I: 1962). The post was established at the WMO Secretariat in Geneva in 1964. A similar post for "Latin America" was subsequently approved by the Fifth Congress (Cg-V: 1967) and was established at the Secretariat in 1968. The Regional Offices for "Africa" and "Latin/South America" have evolved from these posts of Regional Representatives. The Fifth Congress (Cg-V: 1967) adopted the term "Regional Offices", while the Seventh Congress (Cg-VII: 1975) changed the title "Regional Representative" to "Regional Director".
3. The Regional Office for Asia and South-West Pacific was set up in 1979 at the Secretariat, initially under the title "Regional Office for Asia" upon a recommendation of the sixth session of RA II (VI-RA II: 1975). The Eighth Congress (Cg-VIII: 1979) approved the decision of EC-XXX (1978) on the appointment of the WMO Regional Director for Asia, and decided that this office should serve both Region II and Region V. The Ninth Congress (Cg-IX: 1983) later changed the title of the Office to the "Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific".
4. The location of the Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific was maintained in Geneva since its establishment in 1979. The Tenth Congress (Cg-X: 1987) agreed that the Regional Office for Asia and South-West Pacific should continue to be at the WMO Headquarters and that the future location should be decided on the basis of the future sessions of RAs II and V.
5. Noting the advantages and effectiveness of having Regional and Sub-regional Offices closer to the Members concerned, the Executive Council, at its fifty-sixth session (EC-LVI: 2004), had requested the Secretary-General to take the measures required, in consultation with regional presidents, to relocate the Offices based in Geneva. The issue was discussed at the thirteenth session of RA II (XIII-RA II: Hong Kong, China, December 2004). RA II Members, however, expressed support for the idea that the Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific should remain in Geneva in view of the advantages of its location at WMO Headquarters to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the Regional Programme and related activities. In that regard, the Association agreed that the Office should remain in Geneva for the time being and that the issue would be addressed after a careful evaluation of the operations of the Sub-regional Office for West Asia.
6. The fourteenth session of RA V (XIV-RA V: Adelaide, Australia, May 2006) supported the decision of the thirteenth session of RA II that the Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific should remain in Geneva.
7. The fourteenth session of RA II (XIV-RA II: Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 2008), noting with satisfaction that the WMO Office for West Asia in Bahrain has played a key role in the sub-region, expressed its appreciation to the Government of Bahrain for its considerable support for the establishment and operation of the WMO Office and requested Members to continue support for this Office.

8. The fifteenth session of RA II (RA II-15: Doha, Qatar, 2012), in considering the pros and cons of the relocation of the Regional Office for the Region, recognized the advantages of the location of the Regional Office being in the Region in particular in terms of cost-effectiveness, while also recognized a risk of losing cost-effectiveness in case of possible economic crisis of the potential hosting Member and from other reasons. RA II-15 agreed that the president of RA II, in collaboration with the president of RA V, make a recommendation to the Secretary-General on the appropriate location of the Office before Cg-17 (May/June 2015) based on the assessment of the candidates (including Geneva) using the regionally agreed criteria.

### WMO Offices in the Regions (WMO Sub-regional Offices)

9. Twelfth Congress (Cg-XII: 1995) decided to harmonize the functions of the Regional Offices with those of the Technical Cooperation Department and agreed to the proposal for the establishment of Sub-regional Offices to ensure cost-effective services to Members. Subsequently, the Secretary-General took actions to establish Sub-regional Offices in RA II and RA V, as follows:

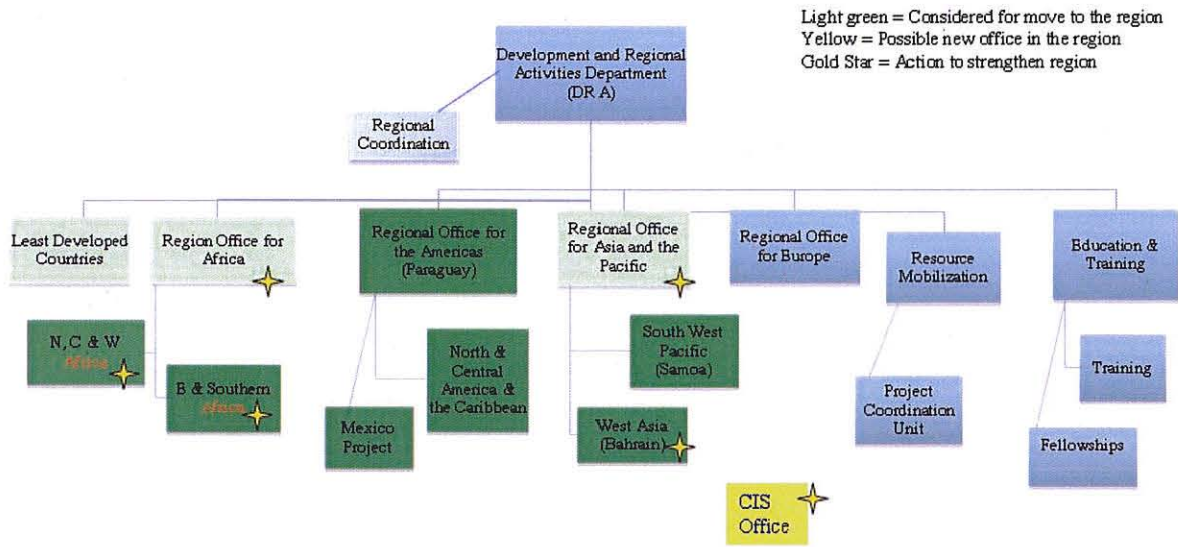
- Manama, Bahrain – for West Asia (Established on 13 March 2003 through Service Note No. 9/2003; Agreement concluded with the Government of Bahrain on 25 November 2004; and became operational on 12 March 2007);
- Apia, Samoa – for the South-West Pacific (Agreement concluded with the Government of Samoa and SPREP on 1 May 1998; and became operational on 12 April 1999).

10. Since the Fifteenth Congress (Cg-XV: 2007), the Sub-regional Offices have been referred to as WMO Offices in the Regions (e.g., WMO Office for West Asia; WMO Office for the South-West Pacific). Currently, there are five such WMO Offices in the Regions (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1 - Location of WMO Offices in the Regions**

	City	Country	Located in	Agreement signed on/in	Establishment announced on/in	Became operational on
WMO Office for NCW Africa	Lagos/Abuja	Nigeria	Nigeria Met Agency/UN House	17.12.1996	3.2.1997	
WMO Office for ES Africa	Nairobi	Kenya	Kenya Met Dept.	17.4.1998	July 1998	
WMO Office for West Asia	Manama	Bahrain	UN House	25.11.2004	13.3.2003 & 22.11.2006	12.3.2007
WMO Office for SW Pacific	Apia	Samoa	SPREP Campus	01.5.1998	15.5.1998	12.4.1999
WMO Office for NCAC	San José	Costa Rica	Met Service HQ	13.12.1996	3.2.1997	8.2.1997
WMO Office for South America	Asunción	Paraguay	Min. of Defense		22.11.2006	
(Regional Office for the Americas)				5.12.1983		





**Figure 1 - Organizational Structure of the Development and Regional Activities (DRA) Department (as of July 2013)**

# WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION



## DRA-AP/RELOC/RO, ANNEX II

### MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A WMO OFFICE IN THE REGION

(Expected minimum support provided by the Government of hosting Member)

1. Services
    - Post office box and postal service
    - Telephones and faxes for international calls and fax
    - Telephones for national/local calls only
    - Internet access: 24/24 hours, 7 days a week
  
  2. Premises (Office space) and installations – adequate office space, including electricity connections, light, water and sewage services, night watchman services, cleaning and air conditioning, with the following distribution:
    - Regional Director's Office (Office for Representative) 1
    - Offices for Programme Officer and regional officers/consultants 3
    - Office for Secretary(ies) and archives 1
    - Library 1
    - Meeting room for 8 persons and working space for experts/consultants 1
    - Toilets 1
    - Parking lot 4
  
  3. Office furniture and equipment
    - Large desks with armchairs 2
    - Medium-size desks with chairs 4
    - Computer desks 3
    - Conference table with chairs 1+8
    - Book shelf with doors and locks 1
    - Book shelves 4
    - Book stands with partitions 3
    - Cabinets for office supplies and materials 4
    - Coffee tables 2
    - Visitor chairs 6
    - Air conditioning (summer/winter) equipment 3
    - Safe 1
    - Other office accessories (curtains, carpets, flag mast, hangers, waste baskets, etc.)
  
  4. Full-time support staff for the Office
    - One English-speaking secretary
    - French and local/sub-regional languages would also be helpful
  
  5. Recurrent cost (electricity, telephone/fax fees, Internet fee, postage, and fuel (actual))
-