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RIfS Regional Information for Society

Report on the 3rd Annual Meeting

Regional Information for Society Scientific Steering Group

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Executive Summary

The Regional Information for Society (RIfS) Scientific Steering Group (SSG) had its third annual hybrid meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, on September 15-18, 2025, at Calders Hotel and Conference Centre. The meeting was hosted by Bruce Hewitson, one of the RIfS SSG co-chairs, who is based at the University of Cape Town.

The meeting was attended by:

- The SSG: 10 members of the SSG (Bruce Hewitson, Silvina Solman, Lincoln Alves, Dragana Bojovic, Alessandro Dosio, Louis-Philippe Caron, Kevin Horsburgh, Rongkun Liu, Julie Dado, Wendy Sharples), and one additional member participating online (Paul Block).
- One of the RIfS' contacts with the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC), attended in-person on Days 3-4 (Anna Sorensson). Another JSC liaison attended online (Roberto Sanchez).
- In addition to Silvina Solman, one of the other CORDEX co-chairs participated remotely during CORDEX-related discussions (José Manuel Gutierrez).
- A co-chair of the Global Extremes Platform (GEP) was present online for GEP-related discussions (Xuebin Zhang).
- Co-chairs of the Robust Information Working Group (RIWG), formally established in July 2025 building on an Interim Working Group (IWG), joined online on Day 1 for a discussion of the group's emerging work plan (Douglas Maraun, Monica Morrison, Genito Maure). These co-chairs are not members of the SSG. Monica Morrison also joined on Day 2 for a discussion on the Responsible Data Use Task Team (joint with CMIP) established in June 2025.
- Sarika Govender, from the University of Cape Town, attended in the morning on Day 1 to reflect on the experience of the 'Building Actionable Climate Information for Africa Adaptation workshop' organized by RIfS and CORDEX Africa during the preceding week in Cape Town.
- Members of the IPO staff (Naomi Goldenson, Anne Debrabandere, Eleonora González Porcel, Timothy Lam). A member of the GEP support unit (SU) staff from Nanjing, China joined online for GEP-related discussions (Ying Han). Africa project contractor Thomas Minda.
- The RIfS contact at the WCRP Secretariat attended in-person (Maureen Wanzala).
- Representatives from two other WCRP Core Projects (Ines Tritscher for APARC, Keith Alverson from CliC), along with representatives from two WCRP Lighthouse Activities (Ted Shepherd for My Climate Risk, Gabi Hegerl for Safe Landing Climate) joined briefly online, in the interest of strengthening collaborations and coordination.

Highlights of the meeting

During these four days, we:

- Reflected on the experience of key events that RIfS organized during our second year of spinning up (Several years of planning brought RIfS to that moment in 2023 when the IPO was established, and initial activities began to be developed).
- Heard updates on CORDEX and GEP.
- Heard in-depth report-backs on 3 new RIfS activities (Robust Information Working Group, Responsible Data Use Task Team, Africa Task Team), and several other initiatives in development (Climate Literacy, Mapping Barriers and Challenges, and the ANDEX collaboration) and discussed their next-steps.
- Discussed ideas for collaboration with several other WCRP activities.
- Over the final two days, engaged in strategic planning focused on the existing activities in development, collaboration opportunities with other WCRP activities, and gaps in the implementation of the Science Plan where we would like to put more effort into it. This

was achieved through interactive sessions to gather input and breakout group discussions. Finally, decisions were also made regarding potential publications, procedures and budgets.

Key outcomes

- Existing RIfS activities and projects were evaluated by the SSG, and feedback was provided.
- Clarity on policies and procedures (more below) for our activities and collaborations.
- Preliminary budgets for RIfS activities till the end of the current funding cycle (March 2027) were approved.
- A set of actions were identified for publishing existing works, developing future activities and fostering collaborations, with members of the SSG taking responsibility for championing each (details on subsequent pages).

Clarity on procedures

- Endorsement policy was discussed to manage requests and prevent overload. A standardized request form will be designed. This form will require applicants to justify their request, explain alignment with RIfS objectives, and specify expected contributions. Selection criteria and a review and follow-up process will also be established to ensure transparency, reporting, and accountability.
- The Terms of Reference will aim to clarify the expectations for participation, including dealing with the nomination of co-chairs, and the handling of inactive members.

Contents

1. RIfS update after 2 years

The co-chairs opened the meeting by welcoming participants and reminding them of WCRP's and RIfS's mission: to innovate, provide leadership, and work together with society for the benefit of future generations. It is more challenging than it seems, and everyone is encouraged to actively engage during the week. Co-chairs also highlight the importance of in-person meetings and the inclusive space offered to all. A roundtable allowed participants to share personal and professional updates.

1.1. Update from the IPO

The IPO Director gave a brief presentation on the progress made to date. It was noted that the IPO began to take shape at the end of 2023 and had a complete team of four members by 2025. A major milestone for 2025 was the approval of the consolidated science and implementation plan. The importance of funding, both for the IPO itself and for activities, was underlined, and participants were reminded that activity funds from the IPO must be spent by March 2027. The IPO team roles were also explained so that members would know whom to contact when needed. The work that led to the establishment of the first seven formal RIfS bodies in 2025 was also highlighted.

In the discussion that followed, it was confirmed that SSG members are encouraged to look for opportunities for co-funding and co-branding of activities, but the SSG as a governance body must be consulted, in line with the forthcoming endorsement policy. It was emphasized that success will depend on the active involvement of SSG members in developing new activities, with transversal strategic actions being considered as playing a critical role.

1.2. The Africa workshop

RIfS and CORDEX Africa organized the workshop 'Building Actionable Climate Information for Africa Adaptation workshop', September 8-11, 2025, in Cape Town. https://www.wcrp-rifs.org/actionable-info-africa-2025/. The workshop included around 65 in-person participants and 15 virtual attendees, ranging from city managers to advanced climate modelers. The event aimed to cover the entire continent, acknowledging Africa's cultural resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions. While mitigation remains important, adaptation was emphasized as the primary focus. The workshop highlighted the importance of understanding local contexts, bridging communities, and avoiding duplication of efforts.

Over the four days, participants shared diverse perspectives, emphasizing the value of a variety of opinions, the need for concrete action plans alongside high-level discussions, strong engagement to continue work post-workshop, the importance of support for CORDEX Africa CMIP6 downscaling and bottom-up initiatives, attention to the S2S timescale, and the need to better integrate English and French-speaking participants as well as online and in-person attendees. Concerns were raised about ensuring the CORDEX community is fully informed and involved regarding ongoing and future actions. The workshop also discussed leadership issues and the role of innovation through CLARE pilot projects.
To summarize, the activities confirmed strong engagement and willingness among participants to advance climate adaptation initiatives in Africa. Towards implementing the next steps, there is a clear need for concrete, actionable plans beyond high-level discussions. Efforts will be made to better integrate English and French-speaking participants, connect online and in-person attendees, and strategically utilize interactive tools. CORDEX community engagement, leadership alignment, and stakeholder-driven bottom-up approaches will remain central to

future activities, with innovation and replication promoted through CLARE pilot projects and the subsequent scaling-up of actions.

2. Reports on ongoing activities

2.1. CORDEX

The COordinated Regional Downscaling EXperiment (CORDEX) is an existing WCRP project with a wide network of regional activities (across 14 regions), which has been brought under the RIfS umbrella within WCRP's organizational structure. An update on CORDEX by Silvina Solman, one of its co-chairs and RIfS co-chair, emphasized its main role as a coordination platform between Points of Contact (POCs). The presentation covered the CORDEX structure, ongoing activities, including progress on CMIP6 and CMIP7 fast-track projects and three-year flagship pilot studies—scientific challenges such as coordinating convection-permitting models across regions and with external partners like Copernicus, and the 15-year collection of work, which includes two manuscripts on regional adaptation and global coordination. Next steps focus on coordinating regional efforts for global phenomena, such as monsoons, and addressing coordination challenges arising from funding limitations.

Discussions highlighted disparities in simulation quality and coverage between regions. Some regions, including Africa, North America and Central Asia, face challenges due to limited institutional support, while others such as Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia are performing well. To alleviate this inequality issue, the CORDEX-CORE protocol ensures a minimum number of simulations across all domains using a standardized protocol with POCs, increasing homogeneity and equity. While underrepresented regions require additional simulations, the protocol mandates that all models use the same GCM/RCM combinations, providing a backbone for fairness, with further discussions planned to address remaining gaps in CMIP7. To track the progress of protocol implementation, the CORDEX website and ESGF nodes provide information on available simulations, GCM/RCM scenarios, and ongoing or planned runs.

Long-term questions were raised about CORDEX's role in a future shaped by global high-resolution models and how to ensure the actionability of CORDEX outputs compared with non-CORDEX models. Guidance was given on how researchers outside the CORDEX community can access information on flagship pilot studies, including consulting the CORDEX website, annual reports, conference minutes, and directly contacting POCs for data not yet publicly available.

2.2. GEP

The Global Extremes Platform (GEP) is another activity reporting to the RIfS SSG. Xuebin Zhang, one of the co-chairs of GEP, gave an update of GEP's latest development and its activities over the last year, including a data portal for climate extreme indices, two Working Groups under GEP, a Contact Group for Weather and Climate Extremes, and a joint Task Team with WMO.

The new Global Extreme Indices Data Portal (https://globalextremeindices.com/) is ready for launch following extensive SSG review. It will provide open access to datasets serving both research and user communities. To ensure consistent usage and clear interpretation, the portal primarily includes ETCCDI-based indices that are more generalizable but not context-specific. Collaboration with the World Bank is underway to ensure the data products meet the stakeholders' needs, such as national climate risk assessments and climate impact analysis, particularly in the Global South. User feedback and usage statistics will be gathered to guide future improvements.

There are two Working Groups under GEP, namely the Working Group on Event Attribution (WGEA) and the Working Group on Annual Assessment of Weather and Climate Extremes (WGAWCE). WGEA was formed in late 2024 and since then, has been working actively on developing surveys, drafting a review paper and guidance on operational attribution, and collaborating with the WMO Global Climate Report team and related expert groups to improve data sharing and best practices in attribution. WGAWCE is expected to be established by the end of 2025, aiming to deliver retrospective scientific syntheses of extreme weather events in the context of climate change using extremes indices and indicators that inform high-level policy discussions. The first in-person meeting is planned for early 2026 in Switzerland.

A new contact group for Weather and Climate Extremes consisting of 25 early-career scientists from all WCRP core projects and lighthouse activities has been established to enhance communication, visibility, and leadership development. A joint task team with WMO is being formed to review global indices of extremes and produce a joint review report clarifying definitions and promoting the best practices in the usage of indices. The task team will have balanced representation from both organizations.

2.3. Robust Information Working Group

The Robust Information Working Group (RIWG) became a formally established body of RIfS in July 2025, elevated from an Interim Working Group that was established following an expert meeting on Robustness of Climate Change Information for Decisions in April 2024. Douglas Maraun, one of the co-chairs of RIWG, reported on the initial year of its activities, emphasizing the central aim of defining what constitutes “robust” climate information and developing processes that ensure such information is fit for decision-making. Four task teams (Robust Information in Context, Attributes of Robust Information, Ethics/Values/Transparency, and Climate Literacy) have been established, with membership spanning universities, research centers, and meteorological agencies worldwide. Key activities to date include the planning retreat in Airlie, Virginia in December 2024, which helped establish scope and internal structure, approval of the Terms of Reference, and development of a draft strategy and work plan for 2026.

The session highlighted the work plans of the task teams. Task Team 1 is focused on improving scientist–stakeholder interactions and creating a community of practice to develop guidelines and standards towards integrity and utility of climate information. Task Team 2 is tasked with identifying attributes that define robustness and producing guidelines to standardize their use. Task Team 3 addresses procedural ethics and transparency, including how to incorporate user values. Planned next-year activities include stakeholder mapping, surveys, development of assessment procedures, and early engagement with IPCC and CMIP7 processes.

The discussion emphasized the challenges of uptake and adoption. Members noted the importance of linking efforts with other RIfS activities, avoiding duplication with the Responsible Data Use Task Team, and leveraging synergies with CMIP7 and the IPCC process. Demonstrating robustness concepts through real-world examples was identified as essential, though insufficient on their own; minimum standards and procedural checks will also be needed. Stakeholder engagement will begin with existing networks before expanding outward, with the intent to build ownership among users. Overall, the group recognized that mainstreaming robust information practices will be a long-term process requiring both technical and institutional alignment.

2.4. Responsible Data Use Task Team (Joint with CMIP)

The Responsible Data Use Task Team (RDU-TT), jointly coordinated by RIfS and CMIP under WCRP, was officially established in late spring 2025 and began operations in June of the same year. The Task Team was created in response to a growing concern within the climate science and user communities: although CMIP and CORDEX datasets have become essential resources for assessing climate risks and informing adaptation strategies, these data collections were originally designed for scientific model intercomparison rather than for direct policy or decision-making purposes. This has resulted in increasing risks of data misuse, misinterpretation, and even maladaptation - a challenge explicitly highlighted in the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report.

Recognizing these challenges, the Task Team's overarching mission is to promote the ethical, transparent, and responsible use of CMIP and CORDEX data, strengthening the credibility and practical value of climate information used in research, planning, and policy. Its specific objectives are to (i) reduce instances of data misuse through improved guidance, (ii) enhance transparency and open-data standards, and (iii) develop accessible, user-oriented materials that bridge the gap between complex scientific datasets and real-world applications.

Since its creation, the Task Team has established a solid foundation and made notable progress. A group of fourteen members has been convened, representing diverse geographic regions and professional backgrounds, with efforts ongoing to further improve gender balance and disciplinary breadth. The Terms of Reference were developed collectively, ensuring that all members contributed to shaping the mandate and governance of the initiative. Through a collaborative prioritization exercise, the group agreed upon three core areas of work designed to yield concrete practical results within its initial 18-month mandate:

1. An atlas of climate data misuse, envisioned as a wiki-style repository documenting real examples of data misinterpretation, explaining why such uses are problematic, and suggesting alternative approaches;
2. A responsible CMIP use starter kit, aimed at supporting new users through decision-making trees, best-practice guidance, and concise, easy-to-understand materials that encourage consistent and transparent data handling; and
3. A case study collection highlighting real-world experiences that connect data use with adaptation and policy outcomes, emphasizing lessons learned and reproducibility.

In parallel, the Task Team has contributed actively to refining the Rapid Evaluation Framework (REF), a CMIP-linked tool designed to facilitate efficient and consistent model evaluation. This work includes preparing a clear description of the REF's scope, intended uses, and limitations, along with two complementary sections: one identifying "red flags" that signal potential misuse, and another outlining "good practice" examples to illustrate correct application. The revised document is currently under review and will be submitted to the SEMA Panel for publication on its website in October 2025. Following this milestone, the Task Team plans to develop more detailed responsible-use guidelines, explicit considerations for REF diagnostics, and a platform for community dialogue to enhance transparency and user feedback.

Another central component of the Task Team's work is its collaboration with the Fresh Eyes on CMIP initiative, a network of early-career researchers launched in 2023 to introduce new perspectives and innovative thinking into CMIP processes. Initially structured around specific task teams such as data preparation, benchmarking, and scenario design, Fresh Eyes has evolved toward a project-based collaboration model. The Responsible Data Use project represents one of the key intersections between both initiatives, providing opportunities for early-career scientists to engage in complementary or longer-term activities. Coordination

between the Task Team and Fresh Eyes is facilitated through shared leadership, where one of the Task Team co-chairs (Monica Morrison) also serves on the Fresh Eyes Steering Committee ensuring consistent alignment and collaboration.

Although still in its early phase, the RDU-TT has quickly demonstrated tangible progress and a clear strategic direction. Its actions are helping to address a critical gap in the climate information landscape: ensuring that the vast and technically complex datasets produced under CMIP and CORDEX are used appropriately, transparently, and in ways that genuinely support adaptation, resilience, and sustainable development. By combining scientific rigor with accessibility and user engagement, the Task Team is contributing meaningfully to improving the integrity and impact of climate data use across research, policy, and practice communities worldwide.

Looking ahead, the RDU-TT will focus on consolidating its initial achievements into tangible and shareable outputs. The immediate priority for 2025 is the publication of the Rapid Evaluation Framework (REF) guidance, followed by the development of prototypes for both the Atlas of Climate Data Misuse and the Responsible CMIP Use Starter Kit. The Task Team will also continue to strengthen its collaboration with initiatives such as Fresh Eyes on CMIP, EuroCORDEX, and other WCRP working groups, ensuring alignment with broader community efforts on data transparency, equity, and accessibility. Through these coordinated actions, the Task Team aims to leave a lasting legacy of practical guidance, improved standards, and enhanced trust in the use of global climate datasets for adaptation, mitigation, and decision-making processes worldwide.

2.5. Africa Task Team and CLARE collaboration

The Africa team is focused on producing robust and actionable climate information with specific regional emphasis. CLARE is funding Southern leadership to promote socially inclusive and sustainable resilience, and the project plans to establish an Africa-based science officer and two Africa-based postdoctoral positions for a two-year period. The goals include synthesizing CLARE and other initiatives in Africa, fostering new partnerships, enhancing climate literacy across stakeholders, and building a collaborative African research community. During the SSG meeting, three co-chairs of Africa Task Team were unanimously approved.

2.6. ANDEX collaboration

Updated information was provided on the collaboration between RIfS and ANDEX. One of the ongoing initiatives is the creation of a portal that will serve as a repository of case studies connecting climate science with regional decision-making in South America. This initiative arose from the activity developed by RIfS in conjunction with ANDEX in 2024.

The initiative includes a survey of the ANDEX community—the first version of which was tested in 2025—conducting in-depth interviews, and creating a digital repository that, among other results, will lead to a manuscript. So far, the participants have been scientists from the physical and social sciences in the Andean region, a clarification that is part of the position statement of the data collection instruments and the study itself. There are plans to add the voices of regional decision-makers in the future. The repository is designed as a learning tool, collecting both positive and negative experiences to help identify gaps in communication between scientists and decision-makers. Discussion highlighted the usefulness of the activity for broader RIfS initiatives, the value of profiling participants, connections with WCRP Joint Programming initiatives, the importance of coordinating survey questions for consistency, and the potential to formalize the ANDEX collaboration within the RIfS workplan.

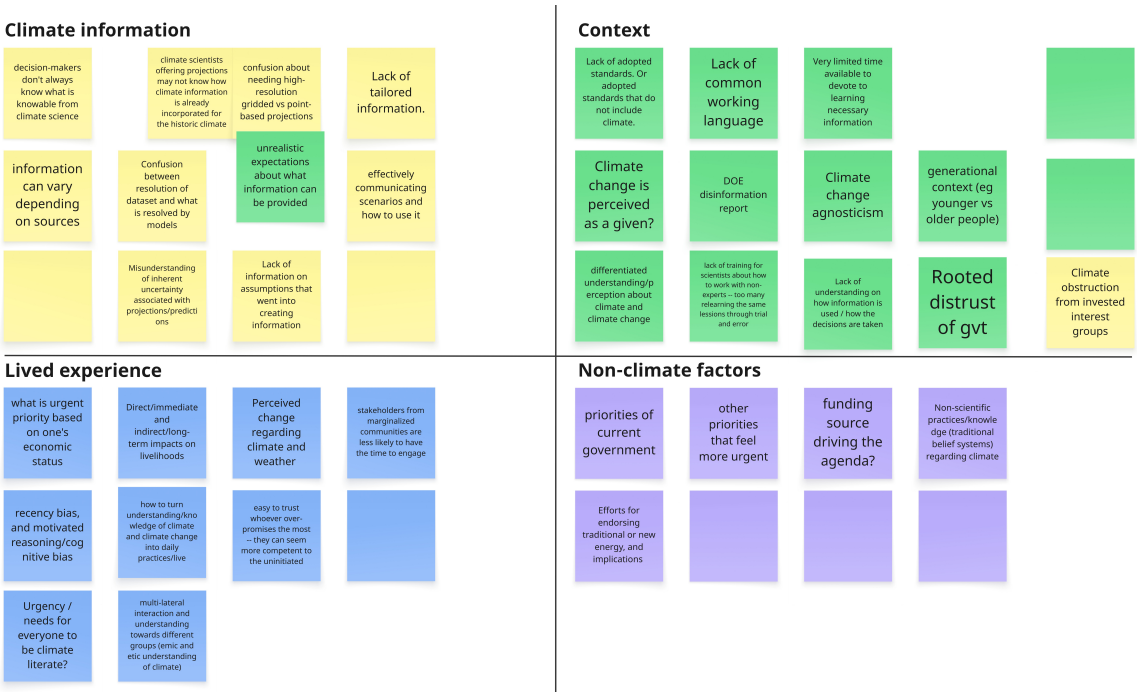
2.7. Climate Literacy

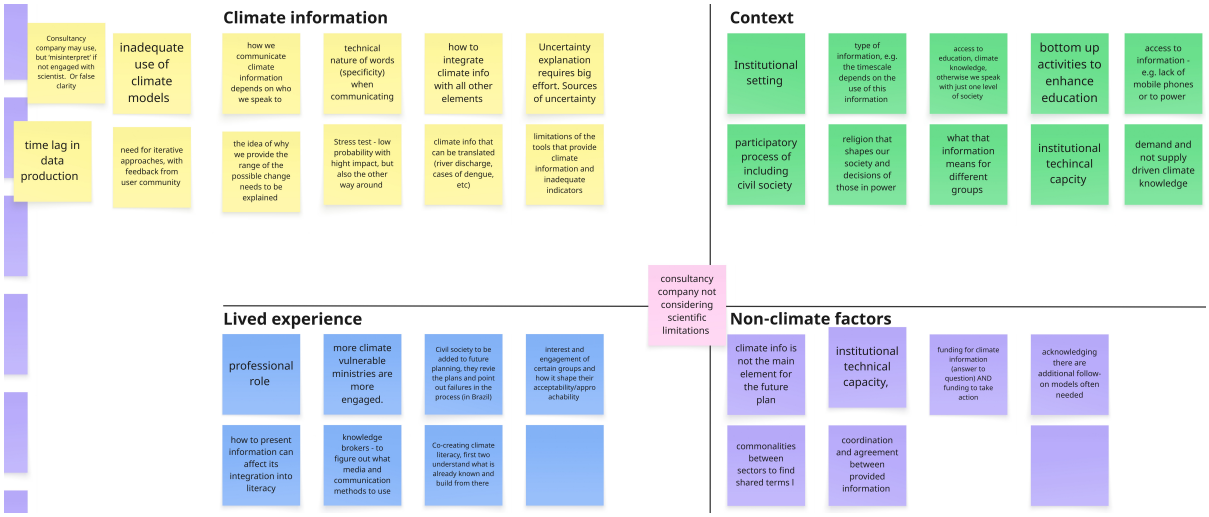
The topic of Climate Literacy has often been mentioned across formal activities and is emerging as a cross-cutting theme of RIfS. In this session, the attendees explored the idea of Climate Literacy and its position within RIfS.

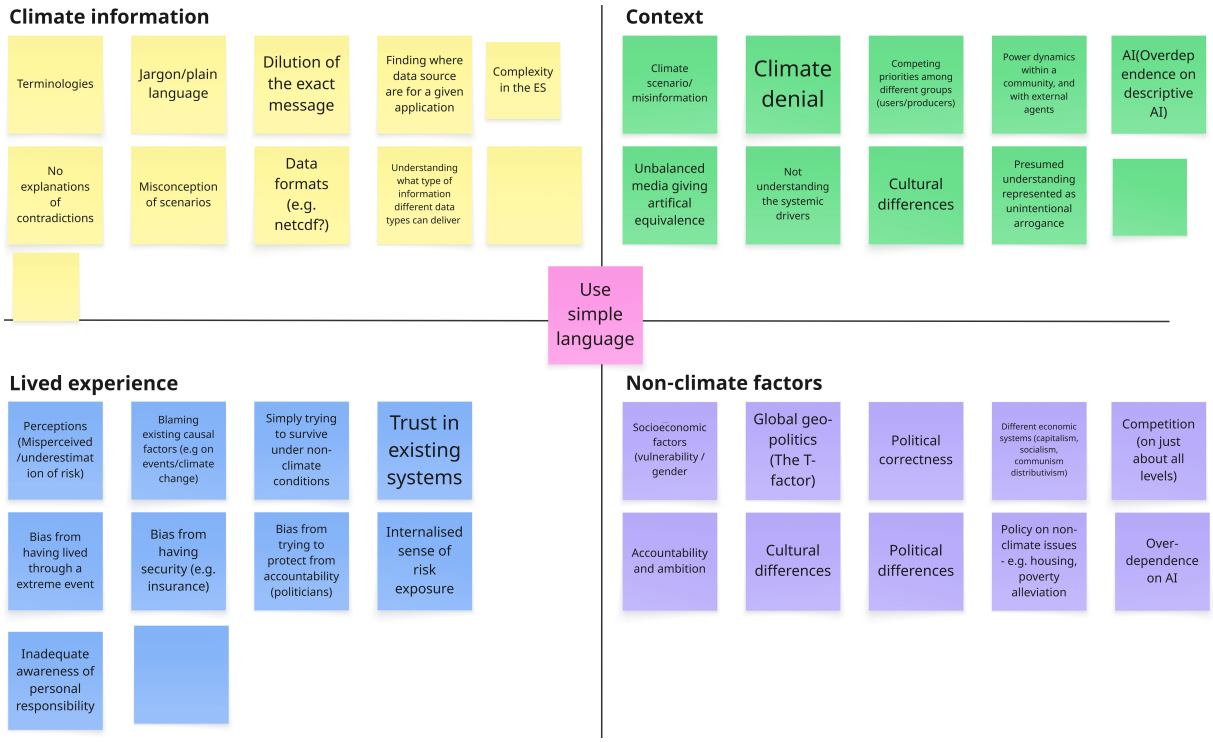
First of all, Dragana Bojovic presented how Climate Literacy is currently positioned at RIfS, and the outcomes of the Climate Literacy webinar (mainly for the Africa Workshop participants) on 2 September, where the four literacy capacities that play into our engagement with information for adaptation were recognized: (a) climate information, (b) context, (c) lived experiences, and (d) non-climatic factors.

Following the presentation, the attendees were divided into three groups for discussions, exploring the challenges and opportunities where climate literacy may be relevant to these four categories (see figures below). The same exercise was conducted in the mentioned Climate Literacy webinar, where participants identified the main barriers as (1) the lack of accessibility and decision-relevance of climate information, (2) diverging priorities, values, timelines and risks across different political, institutional and cultural contexts, (3) power dynamics and challenges in community inclusion, and (4) systematic issues of governance, education, infrastructure and the political economy overshadowing climate change as a priority.

In addition to this, the attendees of the SSG meeting supplemented the discussion by pointing to certain issues found particularly over the Global North, mainly (1) the lack of consideration of scientific limitations in the delivery and use of climate information products, coupled with a lack of accountability of scientists, and (2) perception of climate change in the society, ranging from climate denial and obstruction to climate change agnosticism, underpinned by misinformation (from all parties) and distrusts against the establishments.







It was agreed that the Climate Literacy initiative will be taken forward to be formalized as a standing body of RIfS, with its exact format to be determined, following into a perspective piece.

2.8. Mapping Barriers and Challenges

This session focused on identifying actions and practical activities on how RIfS can overcome or support others in addressing the main barriers and challenges to transforming regional

climate information into actionable value for policymakers and society. Lincoln Alves, the co-lead of the 'Mapping Barriers and challenges' initiative, first presented a series of barriers documented in over 20 peer-reviewed studies. Participants then discussed as a whole and in breakout groups on cross-cutting findings from the shared synthesis.

The types of barriers discussed were Human Capacity, Technological Capacities, Funding Limitations, Institutional Infrastructure & Language and Communication Barriers. Key issues raised during the session, including unequal access to funding, institutional infrastructure gaps, language barriers, limited research networks, and inequities between regions and communities. Other barriers mainly encompass science-decision interface challenges, such as mismatch of scales (regional vs. local), difficulties communicating uncertainty, lack of interdisciplinary collaboration, and insufficient climate literacy on both provider and user sides.

The central discussion revolved around whether RIfS should directly address structural barriers. Proponents suggest that structural barriers shape climate information uptake by decision makers and is part of RIfS mandate to consider contextual realities of policy and decisions that should include capacity, equity and access. Others argue that RIfS has little influence on institutional or systemic inequities and should continue focusing on addressing scientific issues such as robustness of climate information, and that previous attempts within WCRP to address structural issues, such as the Kigali Declaration, have shown very limited impact.

While there was no consensus on scope, participants agreed that RIfS could have practical impact in communication, training, and capacity building within its scientific remit into the future. The RIfS co-chairs decided to sunset the "Mapping Barriers and Challenges" initiative after producing a white paper that consolidates existing literature and key reflections from the session.

3. RIfS in the context of WCRP

3.1. My Climate Risk (MCR)

Ted Shepherd of MCR shared a brief overview about this WCRP Lighthouse Activity and ongoing actions of their working groups which focus on education, early career researcher (ECR) engagement and bottom-up approaches' philosophy. It was followed by discussions related to the planned joint MCR Philosophy Working Group and ad hoc "Ethics in Climate Adaptation Research" group to be held in Kenya in April 2026. RIfS expressed interest, particularly in how they can engage in the process, given that RIfS has a Task Team (TT) on Ethics of Climate Information. MCR's long-term plan and its relationship with RIfS have also been discussed, noting that MCR activities can feed into various WCRP groups, including RIfS. Areas of potential collaborations were identified such as those on regional sea level impacts and the engagement with the ANDEX community.

3.2. Safe Landing Climates

Gabi Hegerl presented the structure and research themes of Safe Landing Climates, including their ongoing work on tipping points and climate pathways. She also detailed their plan to submit an assessment paper on high-impact climate events, tipping points, and irreversible regional impacts well before the IPCC WGI publication deadline. This assessment aims to revisit tipping point estimates using different lines of evidence. Gabi noted that this is a challenging process, as author teams must determine if current evidence is robust enough. Regional sea level activities were discussed, noting that this topic within Safe Landing Climates activities encountered challenges in terms of organizing, and that it's a high impact topic spanning from early warnings for rapid ice melting to coastal adaptation and policy choices.

Potential collaboration with RIfS was identified in areas such as regional irreversibility, limits to adaptation, severe regional-scale outcomes, and global extremes

3.3. Atmospheric Processes and their Role in Climate (APARC)

Ines Tritscher presented the current activities of the APARC Core Project. The subsequent discussions centered on establishing potential linkages between APARC and RIfS. Specific questions were raised about the best point of connection for RIfS within APARC to gain deeper insight into regional dynamics and processes, and whether APARC currently has related activities concerning tipping points and irreversibility. Potential interaction with the GEP and CORDEX communities was also suggested.

4. Planning and vision

4.1. Identifying Gaps and Future Directions

To identify existing gaps of RIfS where an activity may be developed, the attendees used a digital board to identify unmet needs and opportunities across existing and proposed RIfS structures. Participants submitted sticky notes indicating perceived gaps, which are then placed below the formalized bodies they believed most relevant. This placement informed the mapping of thematic gaps across RIfS.

4.2. Prioritizing our efforts

The IPO presented a calendar showing the events (a) planned for RIfS, and (b) happening in the broader Climate Science community till the end of the current funding cycle (March 2027). The aim of setting this calendar up is to reconcile (a) and (b) to piggy-back each other and avoid time clash. The attendees questioned whether the calendar would welcome continued inputs for emerging plans, and it was agreed upon that it may continue to be used and revisited in future meetings.

4.3. Plan for the Year

(i) Community Workshop

During the SSG meeting, the RIfS Community Workshop was in its very early stage of planning, with its target date during the 2nd quarter of 2026. Naomi first provided some updates on the RIfS Community Workshop planning, including its potential objectives and the tentative time and venue, followed by a discussion on the focus and the organizational aspects of the workshop. The attendees built a consensus that the timing of the workshop will need to depend on its objectives, to be agreed upon after involving CORDEX and GEP into the planning process. Key themes under consideration include the involvement in the IPCC 7th Assessment Report, summarizing the outcomes of CMIP Community Workshop and CMIP6 CORDEX downscaling, stocktaking the outcomes of RIfS activities, and developing a framework to elevate the accountability of scientists.

(ii) RIfS Webinar Series

The attendees discussed the possibility of organizing a RIfS-wide webinar series. Advocates argue that RIfS-wide webinar series would serve as an opportunity to enhance visibility of RIfS, foster community engagement, and showcase ongoing work. However, some participants noted the abundance of webinars organized by various WCRP activities and the IPCC community, and it might be more cost-effective for RIfS to serve as a connecting bridge of relevant webinars. It was agreed upon that a successful RIfS webinar series should offer some

distinctive elements of being conversational, featuring interactivity for participants to express their views on a topic.

(iii) Global South Inclusion Task Team

Anna Sorensson reminded the attendees of the Kigali meeting's recognition that not everyone is comfortable with ideas/recommendations predominantly coming from the Global North and that the Global South concept (with all its controversy) is not only about economic difference, but also, for example, unsymmetrical power relations that come from historical circumstances. There have been fewer scientists from Global South in WCRP co-chair positions. Events and capacity building activities disparity: fewer in-person and hybrid events taking place in the Global South, making it even more difficult for Global South scientists to attend these events. Online-only events, on the other hand, have large participation of Global South speakers, showing that despite their strong interest their participation is limited by external factors.

There is a need for meaningful exchange about barriers that Global South scientists face. There will be a survey and interview coming up for people in WCRP to stimulate thinking about differences. This will be complemented by regional focus groups to collect evidence for recommendations to WCRP on solutions of how to be more inclusive with respect to Global South. These workshops will be online only.

(iv) North America Regional Workshop

A suggestion was made by the IPO to plan some region-specific but overarching workshops over the next year. It is linked to the budget discussion and the fact that the activity funds need to be spent until March 2027. The overarching community workshop (see (i)) could happen in April 2026, with two regional meetings in late 2026 and early 2027 respectively (possible locations in North America and Asia).

The attendees agreed that regional meetings broaden RIfS-collective understanding of different regions and bring cohesive regional voice for donors. However, we will need regional champions. There were also suggestions to explore the void and recognise what no one else is doing, before launching new activities.

For the suggestion of North America Regional Workshop, it is expected to open possibility for fundraising and identifying challenges specific for the continent, bearing in mind its history – and barriers and challenges that indigenous communities have been facing – as well as present turbulent times. Other specificities include privatization and responsible data use, weak model intercomparison work, and plethora of scattered downscaling activities. Strengthening collaboration with regional downscaling activities in the region, for example, CORDEX-NA, is recognized as an important element of this regional workshop planning.

(v) Regional sea-level

The attendees heard from Kevin Horsburgh and Wendy Sharples on the topic of sea-level rise at regional perspectives. Kevin gave an overview of the sea-level data platforms developed by several national and regional initiatives in different parts of the world. Although there is no shortage of good quality tools, there is a lack of leadership fostering coordination of this regional effort, as evidenced by the absence of clear place within WCRP around this topic. Wendy then presented on sea-level rise as an important issue for Australia since most of its population is based along the coast. Coastal erosion is expected to increase and 40% of

beaches are expected to disappear by 2100, and coastal properties might become uninsurable. Coastal hazards are hard to model, and adaptation measures are informed by questionable downscaled information. In addition, impact modelling is still mainly based on CMIP5 projections.

Participants expressed concern that the new WCRP policy brief on sea-level rise is dominated by its physics but not much about adaptation. They also note that sea level is very regionally varied and the impact is dominated by local activities but less so on the global climate signal. Accordingly, it is imminent for RIfS to explore an activity on Regional Sea Level, potential collaboration with other WCRP groups, under these guiding principles: (i) Making a clear connection to Robust climate information, (ii) Setting up a Pan-WCRP initiative, (iii) Better integration with the understanding of land subsidence, (iv) Considering the geographical imbalance of what is available and what is good information, (v) Considering the decision-makers' needs, and (vi) Considering global sea-level ties to global vulnerability across scales. Other than a potential exploration with CLIVAR, CliC is interested in setting up a collaboration on the topic of sea-level rise with RIfS with a stronger focus on local impacts and adaptation actions.

(vi) Publications

The group worked on a coordination structure. Besides individual papers, there were also discussions around collating efforts of RIfS and common themes into Special Issues and Collections. Among these, one suggestion is to utilize an existing Special Issue in Environmental Research: Climate on constructing climate information from a bottom-up perspective, started by My Climate Risk in 2022 and open for submission until late 2026. A proposal was made to develop a Collection in npj Natural Hazards on climate- and weather-induced extreme hazards, in collaboration with RIfS, WWRP, ICIMOD, and other organizations, to be open for submission during 2026, potentially serving as a thematic umbrella showcasing related studies across WCRP components.

Participants also briefly discussed the formalities of RIfS publication and whether and how to acknowledge RIfS affiliation. It was clarified that RIfS papers do not require formal SSG approval, but all should remain visible to the group for transparency and potential endorsement when papers explicitly represent RIfS work. The idea of an internal repository or indexed document hub was raised to make key documents easier to locate, and one could refer to CORDEX's approach when setting up a public repository. Regarding publication fees, it was confirmed that the budget will be available once specific journals are chosen.

5. RIfS Governance

Three main items were addressed towards establishing a stable governance structure: governance rules (ToR), the endorsement policy, and budgeting.

5.1. Terms of Reference

On governance, members agreed that the current draft is a useful starting point but requires clearer language and refinement. It was emphasized that governance should be a standalone document, separate from the science plan. Membership was discussed, with agreement around a target of 15 members and 3 co-chairs. Expectations for participation should be formalized, with a process for inactive members to step down after repeated non-engagement. Co-chairs may approach inactive members directly, but JSC intervention can be requested when needed. The co-chair nomination process should involve the SSG with justification, while final approval rests with the JSC. CORDEX may propose a co-chair, subject to RIfS and JSC

approval. Governance policies will align with WCRP membership guidelines and the RIfS document, with a general non-compliance and non-performance policy to be drafted for the next SSG meeting.

5.2. Endorsement Policy

The second part of the session addressed the development of the endorsement policy. RIfS considered the scope of endorsements, distinguishing between research projects (with defined timeframes) and events, while acknowledging that WCRP does not endorse competitive proposals. To manage requests and prevent overload, a standardized request form will be designed, referring to other similar templates. This form will require applicants to justify their request, explain alignment with RIfS objectives, and specify expected contributions. Selection criteria and a review and follow-up process will also be established to ensure transparency, reporting, and accountability. Next steps include drafting the criteria, refining the form, and preparing a revised procedure for consideration at the next SSG meeting.

5.3. Budgeting

This session consisted of three main parts on the budgeting of RIfS – (a) Report back on where we are with RIfS budget and proposed additional spending, (b) Proposal for funding requests and approvals, and (c) RIfS fundraising strategy.

6. Summary and Next Steps

RIfS has expanded substantially over the last 2 years, with a large range of activities established to attract a fast-growing community. As a result, the challenges of consolidating RIfS' activities to structurally align them with its overarching objectives, as well as defining the scope of RIfS which expands into the society with diffuse edges, have also grown substantially. The meeting served to focus on and strengthen the foundation of existing RIfS activities upon discussion between the SSG and activity leads, and evaluation by the SSG. On this basis and through collaborative sessions, the SSG sit together and set the future directions of RIfS and made suggestions of strategic development, both making use of our own community and in collaboration with other WCRP activities. It also identified some key cross-cutting themes where strengthened efforts are needed, such as climate literacy, and brainstorming potential activities to address the untouched science questions in the Science Plan.

This meeting consolidated the intellectual foundation that the RIfS community have collectively built over the last two years and set the stage towards concrete actions in the future. For the intellectual foundation, it streamlined the scientific frontiers that RIfS addresses into concrete topics of potential publication, which also led to a clear timeline. For concrete actions, plans were laid out till the end of the current funding cycle in March 2027 with a particular emphasis on a Community Workshop and Regional Workshops that will bring together the growing RIfS community to address the science frontiers, stocktake RIfS' efforts in the co-creation of climate information, and engage with the donor community, both globally and with specific regional focuses.

Among the highlights of this meeting, the clarifications regarding certain procedures—such as governance and approval policies—are particularly noteworthy. This will ease the administrative burden proceeding into the next steps of our activity development with broadening participation.

Annex 1 - List of Participants

In person:

- Bruce Hewitson, Co-chair RIfS – University of Cape Town
- Silvina Solman, Co-chair RIfS – University of Buenos Aires
- Lincoln Alves, SSG member – INPE
- Dragana Bojovic, SSG member - Barcelona Supercomputing Center
- Louis-Philippe Caron, SSG member - Ouranos
- Wendy Sharples, SSG member, Australian Bureau of Meteorology
- Kevin Horsburgh, SSG member - GCF
- Rongkun Liu, SSG member - ICIMOD
- Julie Dado, SSG member - Manila Observatory
- Alessandro Dosio, SSG member, European Commission Joint Research Centre
- Naomi Goldenson, RIfS IPO
- Anne Debrabandere, RIfS IPO
- Eleonora González Porcel, RIfS IPO
- Timothy Lam, RIfS IPO
- Thomas Minda, CLARE-funded contractor
- Maureen Wanzala, WCRP Secretariat
- Sarika Govender, University of Cape Town
- Anna Sorensson, JSC liaison

Online:

- Paul Block, SSG member - University of Wisconsin - Madison
- José Manuel Gutierrez, CORDEX co-chair – University of Cantabria
- Xuebin Zhang, GEP co-chair – University of Victoria
- Ying Han, GEP Support Unit - Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology

Presenters:

- Monica Morrison, Robust Info WG co-chair - NCAR
- Douglas Maraun, Robust Info WG co-chair – University of Graz
- Genito Maure, Robust Info WG co-chair - Eduardo Mondlane University
- Lisa Alexander, JSC liaison
- Roberto Sanchez-Rodriguez, JSC liaison
- Keith Alverson, CliC representative
- Ines Tritscher, APARC IPO
- Ted Shepherd, MCR co-chair – University of Reading
- Gabi Hegerl, Safe Landing Climate co-chair – University of Edinburgh

In person attendees at the Cape Town SSG Meeting, Sept 2025.

Annex 2 – Meeting Agenda

Day 1 – Monday September 15th

Session 1	9am Welcome from co-chairs 9:10am IPO update 9:30am Personal/professional updates 10:30am Report-back from Africa Strategic Workshop
Session 2	11:15am continue report-back from Africa workshop, and discuss lessons learned Activity updates, part 1: 11:45 am CORDEX 12:30 Status of community workshop planning
Lunch	1-2pm
Session 3	2:00pm Group photo 2:15pm Climate Literacy
Break	3:45-4:15pm
Session 4	Activity updates part 2: 4:15pm Robust Information Working Group

Day 2 - Tuesday September 16th

Session 1	Activity updates part 3: 9am Africa Task Team and CLARE collaboration 10am ANDEX collaboration
Break	10:45-11:15am
Session 2	Potential Links with Other WCRP Activities 11:15pm My Climate Risk 12:00pm Safe Landing Climates 12:45 APARC
Lunch	1-2pm
Session 3	2:00pm “Mapping Barriers and Challenges”
Break	3:45-4:15pm
Session 4	Activity updates part 4: 4:15pm Responsible Data Use Task Team 5pm GEP
	Group dinner

Day 3 — Wednesday, Sept 17th

Session 1	9am RIfS: Where we are now 9:45 Gaps in coordination where RIfS could develop an activity.
Break	10:45-11:15am
Session 2	New activities 11:15am Regional workshops 12:00 Regional sea level and coastal impacts 12:45pm Global South Inclusion Task Team

Lunch	1-2pm
Session 3	2pm Test case for Endorsement policy 2:15pm Working Session: • Governance rules update • New activity & endorsement policy • Timeline to 2027 Science Plan
Break	3:45-4:15pm
Session 4	Report-back from working session. Discuss and agree next step 4:15pm Governance rule report-back 4:45pm New activity and endorsement report-back

Day 4 — Thursday, Sept 18th

Session 1	9am Report-back on Timeline to 2027 Science Plan 9:30am Overview of 2026 outlook
Break	10:45-11:15am
Session 2	11:15am Publication planning
Lunch	1-2pm
Session 3	SSG business [closed session]
Break	3:45-4:15pm
Session 4	Short presentation from Lincoln Emergent priorities and AOB