

Minutes of teleconference on the formation of the Americas Monsoon Working Group, 1700UTC 12 Feb 2016

Note that these minutes have been edited for public display to remove reference about persons not involved in the conversation, including speculation over possible membership.

Attendees

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Agenda

Suitability of the ToR
Possible membership
Important regional issues
Possible activities in year 1-2
Regional funding opportunities

Minutes

Suitability of the ToR

The ToR were regarded as suitable for conveying the broad objectives of the Americas MWG, given they also need to be suitable for other regions.

Elsewhere from the ToR there should be more detailed lists of ideas, contributions to be made to the Monsoons Portal etc., as well as a catalogue of current regional activities relevant to the American monsoon systems. This will enable each Working Group to bring together their networks and activities. However such additional information goes beyond requirements for inclusion in the ToR.

It is important for each WG to define its own priorities: likely to be different for each WG. The Monsoons Panel will offer suggestions but WG members will set the agenda. It is expected that different regional WGs will feature more focus on some aspects of the ToR and less on others.

Membership

Important criteria for WG membership will be a clear scientific interest and publication record in monsoon issues, preferably in the monsoon-affected

countries. Another criterion for membership will be the capacity for the scientist to motivate and lead activities and enough energy (time). One means of testing this will be in their response to additional approaches from the WG leadership: suggestions and opinions being easily given will indicate a good prospect.

[List removed]

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The size of the membership is not restricted, although it should be large enough to cover the range of desired activities from the ToR while small enough to be manageable. A membership of 8-12 may be ok. The proviso is that there is no funding from CLIVAR (see later).

The suggested names above seem to be on the academic side. We discussed how to make connections to met services and end users. Iracema's workplace, the National Institute for Space Research (CPTEC), issues regular forecasts and hosts meetings with end users, thus having a research & application component. The Brasil met service has forecast provision but little research component. It is suggested that the WG makes a bridge to such agencies rather than featuring specific members drawn from these organisations. CPTEC also collaborates with the national met service, using their observations.

Further membership on the application side could be drawn from the team at NOAA responsible for the weekly global monsoon [removed], or from IRI if there are interests in the American monsoon systems.

Due to its size, Brasil is the most affected by the South American monsoon, although most of the other nations of the continent, or parts of them, also fall under its influence.

Important regional issues

For Brasil, prediction on intraseasonal time scales is the key issue. This is relevant for largely agricultural areas as well as the large city regions in Southeast Brasil (Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, etc.) due to risks from extreme events (land slides, flooding). Such predictability relies on the MJO; how models are simulating the MJO and their predictive skill is unclear for South America. Not all phases are relevant to the region, and mean state biases in the Pacific Ocean can also cause problems with teleconnections to South America.

The timing of the monsoon onset and its forecast is also an important issue for agriculture.

There is clear need to make maximal use of existing products and resources, such as the S2S database, which now offers its outputs freely. It would be preferable for the American monsoons research community to take the lead in analysing the S2S database in-region. In addition the type of analyses proposed by Harry Hendon in the S2S Monsoon Subproject could be performed for the region.

The usefulness of seasonal prediction for the South American monsoon is doubted, owing to the prevalence of intraseasonal variations that give different-signed anomalies in different parts of the season.

Means of communicating forecasts and products such as S2S could be aided by CPTEC's monthly user meetings (for those in agriculture, water resources, and other stakeholders). It is thought that the energy industry would keenly use intraseasonal forecasts.

It is not known to what degree end users have the capacity to absorb information from forecasts although some interface may be required to bridge the gap between users and forecast research.

Possible activities in years 1-2

- Collate existing knowledge and evidence of past monsoon activities in the region (e.g. relevant VAMOS work and CLIVAR Exchanges articles, white papers etc.).
- Workshops could be arranged to help build the WG and community to discuss key issues.
- Models need to be assessed systematically for South America on a range of time scales.
- Training course for young scientists could be designed to examine the onset in models and model performance on seasonal time scales.
- The S2S database should be exploited for the South American monsoon. The data are available.
- Pursue efforts to bring sources of observed data together and encourage data sharing within the region.
- Pursue links with the other regional WGs to gain common ground and share experience.

Alice and Iracema see the role of the WG to coordinate these activities and encourage researchers across institutes to work on particular issues, pointing them in the right direction.

Regional funding opportunities

National and state funding opportunities in the region are diminished at present: e.g. a usual annual CFP was not launched last year in Brasil. The background to the Regional WGs is that there will also be little in the way of funding from CLIVAR, even for holding workshops. Therefore the WG will need to coordinate existing research where possible and lead the way in getting institutes to work together on wider regional problems.

Programmes to send students abroad (e.g. Science Without Borders) have ceased, however graduate studies are becoming more attractive now that job opportunities are scarce.

Actions

- Alice and Iracema to contact potential membership and generate a group, to be communicated to Monsoons Panel
- Alice and Iracema to document ideas and suggestions gained from the growing membership
- Alice and Iracema to begin mapping key existing regional monsoon activities, as a live document to be updated as membership develops and network is expanded
- Alice and Iracema to prioritise planned activities over years 1-2 and beyond
- Above lists to be communicated to ICMPO, to share initially via Monsoons Panel webpage on sub-page for the Americas monsoon WG, until the Monsoon Portal is developed fully
- ICMPO to enable sharing of lists and documents via the Monsoons Panel webpage
- Andy and Paul to share discussions with other regional WGs to help develop best practice