



WMO Voluntary Cooperation Programme 50 Years on

Mary Power, Kuniyuki Shida, and Lina Sjaavik

Development and Regional Activities, World Meteorological Organisation

The Voluntary Cooperation Programme (VCP) of the World Meteorological Organization is a demand-driven programme, that supports National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing states established by WMO in 1967 and has been in continuous operations since then.

In 2017, the programme celebrated 50 years of meeting the needs of WMO Member NMHS through direct financing; transfer of expertise and technology between Members; twinning programmes and direct interventions. Its success is due largely to the willingness of WMO Members NMHSs to make financial contributions to the programme, to share scientific knowledge and the latest technological advances and to make their experts available to WMO for deployment to support capacity development projects freely or on cost only basis.

The VCP Database dates back to 1976, and is a catalogue of over 2000 requests from 153 members in all WMO regions. Since its inception, the VCP Trust Fund has supported an array of requests, including support for observation systems, technical expert services, installation of technical equipment, human resource development and strategic and legal frameworks for the NMHS. In the past five years, we have seen a shift from the traditional and more technical elements of the NMHS service chain to an increase in requests for institutional strengthening such as Strategic Planning, Business Plan development and legislation support and outreach systems such as TV Media Studios, and social media.

Another important mechanism within the VCP to support the capacity development in NMHS, is the facilitation of bilateral development projects, directly from one NMHS to another. The Informal Planning Meeting (IPM) of the VCP, a network of International Advisors of NMHS contributing to the VCP meet on a yearly basis to discuss the VCP, and regional and national development projects, as well as having significant interaction amongst the group during inter sessional periods. Over the past decade, WMO has recorded a significant increase in bilateral projects, and currently, development projects equal to a value of approximately USD 40 Million are implemented annually in Africa, Asia, SIDS and Latin America.

While the VCP along with donor countries provide equipment, fellowships, expertise and financing, the recipient countries ensure their effective use by providing considerable counterpart contributions from national resources, such as local infrastructure, staffing and operational costs. WMO is striving to expand this network by creating more linkages among NMHSs, bringing more members into the programme and therefore strengthening the spirit of cooperation and friendship.

In addition to this development support mechanism, WMO also implements major development projects financed by Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), Development Banks and Climate Financing Instruments with a current portfolio in the region of 100M USD covering countries in all WMO Regions.