

**TWENTY-SECOND AFRICAN CONTINENTAL CLIMATE
OUTLOOK FORUM (ACCOF-22):
*Technical Preparation Session***

***“Strengthen User Interface Platforms (UIPs) for Better
Preparedness Against the Strong El Niño 2026/2027”***

Date: 08 to 11 September 2026

Venue: Novotel-Ibis hotel

Location: Cotonou, Benin

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Africa is highly exposed to climate variability and extreme weather associated with large-scale climate drivers such as El Niño. because of its strong dependence on rain-fed agriculture, limited adaptive infrastructure and the transboundary nature of many climate-related risks.

Global climate forecasting centres have now confirmed the onset of a strong El Niño event, expected to peak around November 2026, with impacts potentially extending into the first half of 2027. Past El Niño episodes, particularly the 2015/2016, and 2023/2024 El Niño events have been associated with severe and often compound hazards including drought in parts of Southern and above-average rainfall and flooding in parts of East Africa, as well as the disruption to agricultural seasons, water availability and food insecurity, livestock losses and public health emergencies affecting millions of people.

Timely, accurate and usable climate and early warning information is therefore critical to enable governments, sectoral actors and communities to prepare and respond effectively. A central bottleneck in this chain is not always the quality of forecasts themselves, but the platforms and processes through which climate information reaches decision-makers and end-users. User Interface Platforms (UIPs) systems, portals, bulletins and communication channels used by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and Regional Climate Centres (RCCs) to disseminate forecasts and advisories are frequently underdeveloped, fragmented, or poorly aligned with the practical needs of the sectors that depend on them (agriculture, water resources, health, disaster risk management, and humanitarian response).

A second bottleneck sits upstream. The forecasts flowing into those platforms are produced by centres whose methods differ substantially from one region to the next, in predictors and model inputs, in calibration, in downscaling and in verification standards. Because the systems driving African rainfall operate at scales larger than any single centre's area of responsibility, neighbouring centres can issue diverging forecasts for adjoining areas not because the climate differs at the border, but because the methods do. A draft Common Framework for Seasonal Forecasting Methodologies, Calibration Techniques and Downscaling Approaches is tabled at this session in response, alongside the draft White Paper on Harmonization of Long-Range Forecasting Data, Tools and Methods in Africa. The sunset of the IRI Data Library adds urgency, since it removes infrastructure on which RCC and NMHS workflows and hindcast access currently depend, and a transition to alternatives must be agreed before the peak of the event.

Under the ClimSA Project, ACMAD established the African Continental Climate Outlook Forum to harmonize sub-regional seasonal forecasts into a consensus continental outlook and to translate it into actionable guidance for climate-sensitive sectors. The twenty-second session, ACCOF-22, will be held in October 2026, building on the outcomes of ACCOF-21 and the Continental Dialogue on the Climate-Sector Nexus held in Lusaka in June 2026, which warned that the cost of climate inaction could affect socio-economic sectors in the most exposed areas.

The Forum responds directly to the urgency created by the looming El Niño event: it brings together climate service providers and users to jointly review, test and improve UIPs so that the information reaching decision-makers ahead of and during the event is timely, relevant and actionable. This forum will also be an opportunity for the RCCs and key stakeholders to assess the projected El Niño impacts, harmonize regional outlooks, share lessons, and co-develop actionable climate services and early warnings tailored to vulnerable communities.

The present session, convened from 08 to 11 September 2026 in Cotonou, Benin, is preparatory to that Forum. It settles the methodological and data questions among the producing centres, prepares the continental outlook and its key messages, and finalizes with users the bulletin and policy brief

templates and their production arrangements, so that ACCOF-22 can concentrate on consensus, on adoption and on release. The division of labour between the two meetings is deliberate: this session finalizes the instruments, while ACCOF-22 fills and releases them in October 2026 on the basis of the forecasts made at that time.

II. OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this session is to strengthen Africa's collective capacity to anticipate, prepare for and manage the impacts of the Strong El Niño 2026/2027 through timely, harmonized and actionable climate information.

The specific objectives are to:

- Review and verify the performance of recent seasonal forecasts and assess the current evolution of El Niño and other climate drivers;
- Develop and issue a harmonized continental consensus climate outlook for the upcoming season, integrating sub-regional RCOF products with specific attention to the expected evolution and impacts of El Niño
- Engage Regional Climate Centres, National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, key sectoral users and humanitarian partners in translating the outlook into sector-specific advisories and early action;
- Strengthen coordination and information-sharing across regions and sectors to support a collective, proactive response to the anticipated El Niño impacts;
- Strengthen dialogue between climate service providers and end-users to ensure information is timely, accessible and actionable;
- Identify priority improvements to User Interface Platforms (UIPs) to support anticipatory action and preparedness for the anticipated El Niño impacts;
- Foster cross-country and cross-regional exchange of good practice in climate service co-production.

III. EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results of the Forum include:

- Verified performance of recent seasonal forecasts and an updated technical assessment of El Niño and other climate driver evolution, providing a validated basis for the consensus outlook
- A consensus climate outlook for the upcoming season, integrating sub-regional RCOF products with a dedicated focus on El Niño evolution and its anticipated sectoral impacts over the coming months, produced and shared with decision-makers.
- Strengthened cross-regional and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms and information-sharing channels, supporting a collective and proactive response to El Niño impacts
- Reinforced dialogue and feedback loops between climate service providers and end-users, improving the timeliness, accessibility and usability of climate information.
- Priority improvements to UIPs identified and agreed, better supporting anticipatory action and preparedness planning.
- Good practices in climate service co-production are documented and exchanged across countries and regions, informing future forums and national processes.

IV. PARTICIPATION

Participants for the upcoming ACCOF-22, in Cotonou will include:

- **African Regional Climate Centres (RCCs):** RCC Africa (ACMAD), RCC ECOWAS (AGRHYMET), RCC ECCAS (CAPC-AC), RCC IGAD (ICPAC), RCC SADC (SADC-CSC), Northern Africa RCC-Network, and SWIO RCC-Network
- **African Union Commission (AUC) Institutions**
- **World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Representative;** and
- **Continental and Regional Stakeholders and Representatives from organizations including:** (ABN, NBI, PAFO, Africa CDC, Situations Rooms (AUC, ECOWAS, ECCAS, SADC & IGAD) ARC, AUB, IFRC, GWP, WHO, Save the Children, World Vision, CILSS, Anticipatory Action Task Force (East and West Africa), UNDRR, IOM, DRC, WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, FAO, IOM

The Regional Climate Centres and RCC-Networks attend throughout. Users and stakeholders join from 10 September. The same constituencies will reconvene at ACCOF-22 in October 2026.

V. WORKSHOP FORMAT

The workshop (ACCOF-22) will be conducted in **hybrid Format** (in-person and online) from 08 to 11 September 2026 in Cotonou, Benin.

The forum will feature a series of sessions as follows:

- **From 08 to 09 Sept 2026** dedicated to **technical work**, focusing on analysis of the current state of global, continental and sub-regional climate variability; review and adoption of the Common Framework for seasonal forecasting and the associated data and tools transition; and review and discussion of the forecast output for the expected El Niño event, leading to an updated technical outlook for Africa with its key warning messages and risk hotspots.
- **From 10 to 11 Sept 2026** focus on **user engagement**, Interactive sessions with RCCs and other Partner Organizations to refine needs, challenges, and opportunities for co-production of products and services, and provision of the **Statement of the Continental Climate Outlook, as well as Policy brief for decision maker** for the coming season and interaction with stakeholders; refine needs, challenges and opportunities for the co-production of products and services; and review and finalization with stakeholders of the prototype continental bulletin and policy brief templates, **their content ownership and their production and dissemination arrangements**, so that the Climate Outlook **Statement of the next ACCOFs** are fit for purpose and contains actionable sectorial information.

VI. DATE AND VENUE

The 22nd African Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF-22) technical preparation session, will take place in **hybrid format** from **08 to 11 September 2026** in **Cotonou, Benin at Novotel-Ibis Hotel**, hosted by the **Benin Meteorological Agency**.

VII. ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENT

The organization will be coordinated by **ACMAD** through the **ClimSA project** and, with the support of the Benin Meteorological Agency, the host institution.

VIII. Proposed Agenda

ACCOF-22: Technical Session - Analysis of global, continental, and subregional climate variability, with review and discussion of forecast outputs in the context of the anticipated El Niño.

Time (CAT)	Session Title / Activities	Presenter / Facilitator	Moderator/Chair
DAY 1 Tuesday, 8 September 2026 ACCOF-22 Opening and Climate Situation Assessment (Common understanding of climate drivers and anticipated El Niño conditions)			
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of participants and virtual meeting connection logistics		ACMAD Logistic Team
09:00 – 09:30	Official Opening Ceremony and Welcome Remarks	ACMAD, WMO, AUC, PR of Benin with WMO	ACMAD Communication Team
09:30 – 10:00	Overview of Workshop Objectives, Expected Outputs, and Agenda	ACMAD	
Group Photo & Coffee Break 10:00 – 10:30			
Session 1: Analysis of the Current State of continental, and sub-regional climate variability, as well the Review and Discussion of the forecast output (ACCOF-21 Continental Climate Outlook Statement update, key warning messages, identified climate-risk hotspots)			
10:30 – 11:30	Review the Outcomes of ACCOF 21: including verification of the MJJ and JJA 2026 continental outlook statement and lessons for the coming season	ACMAD	Chair: ACMAD Rapporteur:
11:30 – 12:30	Regional Experiences rainfall season MJJ and JJA 2026 during start of El Niño and other drivers, and of the observed impacts from June to August 2026	Northern Africa RCC-Network, RCC ECOWAS (AGRHYMET), RCC ECCAS (CAPC-AC), RCC IGAD (ICPAC), IOC/SWIO-Network	
12:30 – 13:00	Questions / Discussion	All Participants	
Lunch Break 13:00 – 14:00			

Session 1: (RCC technical session)

14:00 – 15:00	Presentation of forecasts for OND-NDJ 2026-2027 from the different RCCs: West, Central, East, Southern, North Africa and Indian Ocean regions: key warning messages and climate-risk hotspots	All RCCs (10 min each)	
15:00 – 15:30	Presentation of the Continental: Harmonization with the Regional Forecasts inputs	ACMAD, All RCCs	

Coffee Break | 15:30 – 16:00

16:00 – 17:15	Draft of the Continental Outlook Statement, Policy Brief, expected hazards: update of the ACCOF-21 statement and Policy brief, advisories	ACMAD, All RCCs	
17:15 – 17:30	Day 1 Wrap-up	All Participants	

DAY 2 | Wednesday, 9 September 2026

Harmonization of Long-Range Forecasting / Review and adoption of the Common Framework

Session 2: Harmonization of long-range forecasting data, tools and methods (RCC technical session)

09:00 – 09:30	Recap of Day 01		
09:30 – 10:30	Preparation of the RCC inputs to the user engagement segment : briefing on how the forecast production chain will be presented to users	ACMAD, All RCCs	Chair: ACMAD

Coffee Break | 10:30 – 11:00

11:00 – 13:00	Introduction the RCC Common Framework for Seasonal Forecasting (ACMAD/ICPAC) Draft Common Framework for Seasonal Forecasting Methodologies, Calibration Techniques and Downscaling Approaches: Review, adoption,	All RCCs	Chair: ICPAC
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	Scope and purpose; current state across RCCs, including completion of the inventory for the outstanding centres and agreement on areas of convergence and divergence; observational data and reference datasets; hindcast period; model selection and ensemble weighting; calibration and downscaling; AI/ML and hybrid forecasting; common verification framework; uncertainty; sectoral tailoring and impact-based forecasting; standardized communication, categories, colour palette and map templates; governance of the common open-source forecasting software; monitoring, evaluation and learning.		
Lunch Break 13:00 – 14:00			
14:00 – 15:30	Ctnd - Draft Common Framework for Seasonal Forecasting Methodologies, Calibration Techniques and Downscaling Approaches: Review, adoption,	All RCCs	
Coffee Break 15:30 – 16:00			
16:00 – 17:00	- Presentation of the ACMAD AFRIMET Initiative (ACMAD) - Open discussion on alternative solutions to the IRI Data Library sunset, transition pathway: inventory of affected workflows, datasets and operational products	ACMAD / All RCCs	
17:00 – 17:15	Wrap-up of Day 02	All RCCs	

Time (CAT; UTC+1)	Session Title	Presenter / Facilitator	Moderator
DAY 3 Thursday, 10 September 2026: Co-production of Climate Services, for El Niño Sep 2026 to Jan 2027			
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of participants and virtual meeting connection logistics	AUC	
09:00 – 09:30	Official Opening Ceremony and Welcome Remarks	ACMAD, WMO, AUC, PR of Benin with WMO	

09:30 – 9:50	Overview of Workshop Objectives, Expected Outputs, and Agenda	ACMAD	
09:50 – 10:30	Keynote: The Looming El Niño 2026/2027 – Risks & Preparedness • Overview on ENSO and implications • Reflections from past El Niño episodes (2015-16, 2023-24) • Historical regional implications • Observed impacts from June to August 2026	ACMAD	
Coffee Break 10:30 – 11:00			
11:00 – 11:30	How a seasonal forecast is produced:? • From global model output to the continental consensus outlook: inputs, calibration, downscaling, terciles and probabilities, what forecast skill means and where the limits lie (20 min) • Questions & Answers / Discussions (10 min)	ICPAC	
11:30 – 11:55	Presentation of the Continental Climate Outlook update and expected hazards update of the ACCOF-21 statement (15 min) • Questions & Answers / Discussions (10 min)	AGHRYMET	
11:55– 13:00	The value of using climate and weather information in preparedness and response activities challenges and opportunities in the context of El Niño: • UNDRR Presentation on El Nino Preparedness the Role of IBF Task Force by UNDRR • State of El Nino Preparedness in Greater Horn of Africa by AA Task Force IGAD • From Forecast to Action: Staying Ahead of El Nino by IFRC Regional Office • Action Anticipatoire en Afrique de l'Ouest et Central by AA Task Force CILSS • Impact de El Nino sur le démarrage de la Saison Agricole : Cas du Burkina by ARC • Questions & Answers / Discussions (15min)	Users and partners	
Lunch Break 13:00 – 14:00			
14:00 – 14:15	Presentation of the prototype continental climate bulletins and of the Continental Climate Policy Brief template	ACMAD	
14:15 – 15:15	Parallel group work on the bulletin and policy brief templates: - Completeness: does the current structure contain everything the sector needs, measured against its own decisions and against comparable products issued elsewhere in the world? What is missing, redundant, or expressed unhelpfully	Group-1: DRR & Humanitarian Group-2: Agriculture & Food Security	

	- Who provides what? content owner for each section (ACCOF, NMHSs, RECs, sector institutions, users), data source, production deadline, review and clearance, feedback loop - Roadmap and assigned responsibilities for ACCOF-22 in October, where the first bulletins	Group-3: Health	
15:15 – 16:00	Parallel group work on the bulletin and policy brief production exercise: <i>Using the template and the draft Continental Climate Outlook updated statement</i>	Groups 1, 2 & 3	
Coffee Break 16:00 – 16:30			
16:30 – 17:00	Ctnd - Parallel group work on the bulletin and policy brief production exercise:	Groups 1, 2 & 3	
17:00 – 17:15	Day 4 Wrap-up		
DAY 4 Friday, 11 September 2026: Action Planning and Continental Outlook Statement			
09:00– 09:15	Recap of Day 4		
09:15 – 10:00	<i>Presentation of the outcomes of the group work; (15 min each)</i> <i>Finalization of the continental bulletin and policy brief templates and of the responsibility matrix</i>	Groups Rapporteur	
10:00 - 10:20	<i>Presentation on best practices for communication channels, user engagement and feedback mechanisms for early warnings and climate services</i>	AUB	
Coffee Break 10:00 – 11:00			
11:00 - 11:20	<i>Presentation of the RCCs Common Framework for seasonal forecasting methodologies, calibration techniques, and downscaling approaches across African Regional Climate Centres</i>	ACMAD/ICPAC	
11:20 - 11:40	ACMAD AFRIMET Initiative - African alternative solution to the IRI Data Library sunset,	ACMAD	
11:40 – 12:30	• Presentation and Adoption of the update Continental Climate Outlook Statement: • Consolidated recommendations for El Nino preparedness and resilience for Sep 2026 to January 2027 season	ACMAD and All	

12:30 – 13:00	<i>Closing Session</i> • Closing statements • Media interaction	ACMAD, Benin Met	
Lunch Break 13:00 – 14:30			