



SASCOF-13
South Asian Seasonal Climate Outlook Forum (winter session)
September 26-28, 2018, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Background

Rainfall and temperatures during the months from October to February are of crucial importance to key sectors like agriculture, water, energy and health in the South Asian Region. In areas receiving significant rains during this season, these months usher-in a second agricultural season.

During the winter months South Asian climate is influenced by both tropical (Oct-Dec) and temperate mid-latitude (Dec-February) circulation systems. The reestablishment of prevailing north easterly trade-wind regime over South Asia associated with the southward movement of the ITCZ ushers-in the so-called “Northeast Monsoon” (NEM). Southern parts of South Asia, including peninsular India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and southern coastal areas of Myanmar are influenced by North East Monsoon. Extra-tropical activity dominated by “Western disturbances” influence the northern parts of the region including Afghanistan, Pakistan, north India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Globally, the Regional Climate Outlook Forums (RCOFs) are being organized with the aim to provide consensus seasonal climate information on a regional scale and to serve to interface with user sectors to understand and enhance the use of climate information as orchestrated and supported by the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS). South Asian nations, supported by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), came together to establish the South Asian Seasonal Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF) in 2010. Since then the SASCOF Sessions are being organized every year before the summer monsoon season. Winter sessions of SASCOF’s were started in 2015 keeping in view of the importance of winter seasonal climate to these key user sectors. We had the first winter SASCOF session in Oct 2015, at Chennai, Tamil Nadu India. Thereafter, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in 2016 and Maldives in 2017. The next one is proposed to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka to be hosted by Department of Meteorology (DoM), Sri Lanka.

Seasonal forecasts for winter season therefore need to be issued at two different times - one during September/October for southern region and the other during November/December for northern region.

Forum

The objective of the forum is to prepare consensus seasonal climate information on regional scale that provides a consistent basis for preparing national level outlooks. Such platforms also serve to interact with user sector to understand and enhance the use of climate information.

The crucial role of winter rains and the growing recognition of the benefits of SASCOFs in articulating and sharing seasonal climate information have led to the need for regularly conducting a winter SASCOF. The Department of Meteorology (DoM) has taken a lead to host the 13th session of the SASCOF **scheduled to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka during September 27-28, 2018**. The Regional Climate Center (RCC-Demo), Pune of India Meteorological Department (IMD), UK Met Office (UKMO), the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early-warning System for Asia and Africa (RIMES) and WMO shall provide technical support.

Funding

The UK Met Office working in partnership with the World Bank and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) is implementing the UK aid-funded **Asia – Regional Resilience to**

Changing Climate (ARRCC) programme. The four-year programme, starting in 2018, aims to strengthen weather forecasting systems across Asia. The programme will deliver new technologies and innovative approaches to help vulnerable communities use weather warnings and forecasts to better prepare for climate-related shocks. SASCOF-13 is expected to be funded by ARRCC.

Overview of the agenda

The Day 1 on September 26, 2018 technical session will consider available seasonal prediction output from WMO Global Producing Centre's (GPC's) and the Lead Centre for LRF MME together with presentation of country forecasts and discussions.

Days 2 & 3, September, 27-28, 2018 shall be user oriented sessions focused on sharing, understanding and interpreting the seasonal climate outlook. It is proposed to focus on Agriculture and Irrigation sectors during this session of winter SASCOF as they represent one of the most important users of climate information and winter rains in south Asia play a crucial role in enhancing productivity of the sector. SASCOF-13 will **feature "Climate Services User Forum focused on Water sector (CSUF)".** CSUF will bring together experts in seasonal predictions and operational users from agricultural and irrigation departments of South Asian countries creating a platform for understanding seasonal climate information to make effective use to manage climate risks in the region. The session will recommend further needs of the sector in terms of customized products and tools to support decision-making.

Participation

All South Asia NMHSs, invited national and international experts, WMO and RIMES. Experts from RCCs (Tokyo Climate Center JMA, Beijing Climate Center (BCC), UK Met Office, BoM, Australia and other GPCs, IMD, IITM, Pune.

Outcome

SASCOF-13 will prepare a climate outlook for the 2018 winter season covering the months from October to December. NMHSs from SASCOF member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, as well as several regional and global experts will jointly prepare this consensus outlook. The meeting shall also review requirements for climate monitoring and seasonal forecast products and make suggestions for regular conduct of winter SASCOF forums.

The CSUF special session will interface with users from the Water and agriculture (linked to water) sector to interpret seasonal climate information and understand their specific needs with a view to further customizes climate information.

Outline agenda

Day 1 Technical Session:

[to be attended by NMHSs, GPCs and other relevant national and international institutions]

- Climatological aspects of the winter season over South Asia and the prospects for climate predictions – improving diagnostics and understating drivers of seasonal climate
- Regional climate state monitoring and review of current situation
- Review of the forecast products available from GPCs and other centres
- Country presentations on review of past seasons and forecasts
- Discussion of consensus forecast

Day 2: Forecast outlook for the winter monsoon [Main SASCOF-13 Opening]

[formal Opening Session for SASCOF-13]

High level - Expected attendance – Minister and Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management , DGM, DoM, Local policy makers, media etc.

[Main Forum Sessions to present the seasonal outlook and interact with user sectors]

- Introducing Seasonal and sub-seasonal predictions; RCOF mechanism and products to user sector representatives
- ARRCC Initiatives – an overview;
- Main session to share consensus climate outlook for the next season.
- Q & A Session with user sectors [Panel TBC]

- Articulating user sector expectations – water sector

Day 3: Climate Services User Forum (CSUF) for Water

[Session focused on Water & Agriculture sector representatives from the region]

- Overview and best practices on use of seasonal climate predictions in agricultural sector
- Presentations from international and national agencies involved in enhancing the use of seasonal climate information in the agriculture sector
- Case studies and success stories
- Open forum Wrap-up and recommendations