

Dear SEECOF participants,

As you are aware, Regional Climate Outlook Forums (RCOFs) are considered to be a very important process to facilitate the development of consensus-based climate prediction and information for the season, having a critical socio-economic significance. Such information has been applied in several parts of the world to reduce climate-related risks and support sustainable development.

Eighteen South East European Climate Outlook Forums (SEECOFs) have been held until now, and the time has come to prepare the next SEECOF. As we agreed, it is useful to have two SEECOFs per year, one focussing on the summer season (June, July, August) and another one on the winter season (December, January, February). However, due to the resource limitations and in the light of the significant efforts needed to prepare and conduct two face-to-face SEECOF sessions per year, it has been decided to arrange SEECOF-19, focussing on summer 2018, as an online-COF, co-facilitated by the South-East European Virtual Climate Change Centre (SEEVCCC), and to plan for a face-to-face SEECOF-20 aiming at the next winter season.

The purpose of this message is to explain the procedure of the online-COF and to invite your participation. **All contributions and discussions should be posted exclusively on the SEECOF Forum on www.seevccc.rs/forum website.**

SEECOF-19 comprises 3 steps, which all require your participation.

Step 1 deals with the qualitative verification of the SEECOF-18 winter forecast (December 2017 – February 2018), and is facilitated by Dr. Kreso Pandzic, Ms. Jasminka Smailagic and Mr. Branko Bijelic. You are invited to provide:

- information on high-impact events of the last winter season,
- brief assessments of the correctness of the SEECOF-18 Climate outlook, and
- comments on user perceptions of the SEECOF-18 Climate outlook

by 13th April to: <http://www.seevccc.rs/SEECOF/SEECOF-19/STEP-1/>. Based on your National climate reports for winter season 2017/2018, monitoring results of the RA VI RCC Node on Climate Monitoring and RA VI SEEVCCC/RHMSS and their own considerations, the SEEVCCC team will provide a qualitative summary of the correctness and perception of the SEECOF-18 outlook by 14th May.

Step 2 comprises an assessment of the current state of climate, including large-scale climate patterns worldwide, and assessments of its likely evolution in the course of the next months. For this, a draft for discussion will be provided by Mr. Christian Viel (Peter Bissolli or Mr. Dmitry Kiktev) by 16th May on: <http://www.seevccc.rs/SEECOF/SEECOF-18/STEP-2/>. In the following three weeks you are invited to contribute to the discussion of this draft. This discussion will be moderated by Dr. Roxana Bojariu, Ms. Zara Petrosyan, Ms. Slavica Micev and Dr. Ismail Demir. Based on your inputs the final assessment will be elaborated by Dr. Roxana Bojariu, Mr. Ismail Demir and Mr. Branko Bijelic by 29th May.

Step 3 aims at building the Consensus statement for the Climate outlook for summer 2018. The first draft for discussion will be provided by Mr. Christian Viel and Mr. Goran Pejanovic by 18th May and will be put on: <http://www.seevccc.rs/SEECOF/SEECOF-18/STEP-3/>. In the following 1-week discussion period, participants are invited to feed in their own outlooks and contribute to the discussions in order to come to a consensus outlook. The discussion will be moderated by Dr. Roxana Bojariu, Dr. Vladimir Djurdjevic and Mr. Ilian Gospodinov. From 22nd to 25th May the final version of the consensus statement will be elaborated by Mr. Goran Pejanovic, Dr Ithzak Carmona and Mr. Ilian Gospodinov and on 31st May the outlook will be released (WMO and SEEVCCC Websites; press release – details to be discussed).

Also, we should point out that WMO experts (Mr. Rupa Kumar Kolli, Ms. Anahit Hovsepyan, etc.), as well as the experts from GPCs (UKMO, Meteo-France, Roshydromet and ECMWF), will provide us with background assistance in the SEECOF-19 process. This means that the participants of the SEECOF-19 Forum, and especially our colleagues previously mentioned with reference to the preparation of the Final documents for all 3 steps of the SEECOF-19 Forum, will be given assistance in any upcoming specific issue, where necessary.

All communication will be facilitated exclusively over the SEECOF Forum on www.seevccc.rs/forum website and final results of Steps 1 to 3 will be posted on WMO's and SEEVCCC's WebPages.

Finally, we would like to invite and encourage your active participation in and contribution to the successful implementation of the online-COF.