









WCRP Academy

Science Planning Sessions Highlights

October 2024

Publication No: 10/2024

https://wcrp-academy.org



Bibliographic information

This report should be cited as:

WCRP Academy, 2024. Science Planning Sessions Highlights. October 2024. Manila and Bohol, Philippines. WCRP Publication No: 10/2024

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Impressum

This report was written by the WCRP Academy:

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1. Introduction

The WCRP Academy Steering Group (SG) conducted a science planning workshop from October 9-10 2024, in Bohol, Philippines. The workshop followed the successful launch of the WCRP Academy Support Unit (SU) at the Manila Observatory and interactions with faculty and students at the Ateneo de Manila University.

The workshop aimed to reflect on the work of the Academy thus far, and identify specific strategies to address existing challenges and improve the performance of the Academy in promoting climate science training. Joining the SG in the workshop in Bohol were members of the Support Unit and the WCRP Secretariat (see Annex A for participants list).

Sessions were organized around various topics across the 2-day event. On day 1 of the workshop, participants of the workshop discussed recent WCRP Academy updates, the work of the Support Unit, priorities for the Academy, strategies for increasing the visibility of the Academy both within and outside of WCRP, and possible partners for both collaboration and funding. On day 2, the group discussed the stocktake surveys conducted in 2021-2023 as well as the 2024 catalogue stocktake, the proposed new website design and content, possible locations for the next SG meeting, and the mentorship and future leaders development workshop planned for 2025.

Christopher Lennard, Co-Chair of the WCRP Academy Steering Committee, opened the workshop by outlining the guiding principles and flow of the sessions. Each session was facilitated by one Steering Group member and one Support Unit member; presentations were given per topic which was then followed by lively discussions by all participants.



Figure 1. WCRP Steering Group, Support Unit staff and the WCRP Secretariat liaison reflecting on the work of WCRP Academy and discussing future plans and strategies.

Summary of the Sessions

In the succeeding sections, we present the discussion highlights of various sessions held during the WCRP Academy science planning workshop.

2. Reflection on WCRP Academy to Date

Ma. Laurice Jamero, manager of the WCRP Academy Support Unit, provided updates about the accomplishments of the Support Unit since its establishment in April 2024. She shared milestones such as the signing of the letter of agreement with WMO, onboarding of the Support Unit staff, and the creation of the Year 1 work plan. The Support Unit's early achievements include the completion of a series of stocktakes (including of the Academy's own catalogue), continuous development of the online catalogue and website, the launching of WCRP Academy newsletter as well as the increase in the number of subscribers.

Discussions then focused on how the Academy, with the help of the Support Unit, can continue to expand its connection with the climate science community. Various ideas were raised including marketing the WCRP Academy during strategic training events, and connecting with Early Career Researcher (ECR) networks. In addition, social media was discussed as a good way to increase the Academy's visibility, with the possibility of creating and managing the WCRP Academy's own Facebook and Instagram accounts. Moreover, the Support Unit shared their plans to document best practices for climate science training based on the experience of WCRP's own Core Projects and Lighthouse Activities, which could then provide insight and inspiration to other training providers relating to training content as well as logistics(i.e., how training is designed and implemented). The outcome of this exercise is envisioned to become a best practice document, which can then be shared as an official WCRP publication. Narelle van der Wel, Science and Communication Officer of the WCRP Secretariat, also provided general WCRP updates to the group. She shared details about recent meetings, the Global South Fellowship, as well as the new funding model - that is, baseline funding with applications for strategic funding that are evaluated by the Joint Scientific Committee (JSC). Furthermore, she shared that a variety of views exist about the Academy and what its key objectives are, noting that many people think that the Academy actually runs its own training programs. This warrants further work on clarifying within the WCRP what the Academy is and is not. Although the Academy cannot provide its own training given its current resourcing, it is a path that could be considered if additional funding becomes available.

3. WCRP Future Leaders Programme

Reflecting on the achievements of the Academy so far and where we would like to see ourselves in the future, the group identified the top priorities for the Academy over the next few years. Doing this, the SG was able to conceptualize the **WCRP Future Leaders Programme**.

The WCRP Future Leaders Programme is envisioned to become the flagship program of the Academy, as we strive to "equip current and future climate scientists with the knowledge, skills and attributes required to tackle the world's most pressing and challenging climate research questions."

The WCRP Future Leaders Programme will shape the next generation of future climate scientists through implementing the following thoughtfully designed activities over the next few years:

1. Creating a vibrant online community of aspiring climate scientists

The WCRP Academy aims to continuously improve its website and expand its functionalities by creating an online forum that will enable prospective training recipients to register their research interests, share training wishlists, receive language support, access additional training resources, provide feedback on past training events, view localized job boards and funding opportunities, and find and interact with like-minded individuals within the community.

2. Increasing opportunities for capacity development

The WCRP Academy will identify and share best practices in delivering climate science training from the most recent experiences of the WCRP community as well as other partners and training providers. The Academy will, as an outcome of its mentoring workshop, provide a scoping report summarising the current state of mentoring/ leadership development in the WCRP community, alongside a proposal for how the WCRP, via the Academy, could incorporate mentoring structures and programmes into their activities.

3. Amplifying the visibility and work of the WCRP Academy

The WCRP Academy will increase its visibility within the climate science community through building strategic partnerships with training providers and university consortiums, and participating in training events with the aim of enriching the learning experience especially of early career researchers. The Academy also envisions building a network of regional champions to inspire more young individuals to enter the field of climate science, introduce various resources available for pursuing this field, and collectively work on addressing barriers to access.

Table 1. WCRP Future Leaders Programme: Components and Proposed Activities

	Creating a vibrant community of aspiring climate scientists	Increasing opportunities for capacity development	Amplifying the visibility and work of the WCRP Academy
Near-term (Month 1 - 12)	Website updates to include: - Search Engine Optimization - Usage statistics - Feedback section - Training wishlist Continuous curation of training catalogue, including ability to search by region, language, etc.	Sharing of best practice tools for organizing climate science training Mentoring best practices Continuous global stocktaking of training needs (including through survey forms on the website)	Social media presence and campaigns Exploring strategic partnerships, including with ECR networks Academy presentations at conferences and other events
Medium-term (Month 12 - 24)	Website language support Job board Training resources / Library section	Hosting webinars on climate science training and capacity development Increasing Academy visibility at localized activities and workshops	Organizing roadshows and side events at conferences

		Based on best practices, endorse top training events with Academy Badges	
Long-term (Month 24 - 36)	Online forum for training recipients, allowing them to: -register and create their profiles on the website - express interest in / upvote training events, share training wishlists, ideas, fellowship opportunities and other resources with fellow training recipients	Mentoring program Academy fellowship program	Building a network of regional champions for climate science education

4. Strategies for Increasing the Visibility of the Academy

Feba Francis and Dinah Faye Balleco, members of the Steering Group and Support Unit respectively, led the discussion on identifying specific ways to increase the visibility of the Academy inside and outside the WCRP. They kicked off the session by presenting three possible pathways for achieving this: *job listings, social media,* and *word of mouth*. For job listings, they gave examples of platforms such as <u>Climlist, Earthworks Jobs</u>, and <u>Met-Jobs</u>. For social media, they reiterated the importance of creating WCRP Academy accounts on Instagram, Facebook, X, and Bluesky.

Social media: The SU shared how posting on the WCRP social media accounts previously has led to a significant increase in the number of newsletter subscribers and registered training providers with the Academy. Thus, the SG agreed to further harness the power of social media, starting with the WCRP Academy establishing its own social media presence (as opposed to relying on WCRP accounts run by the Secretariat) and creating accounts on platforms its target audiences typically use. While building its subscriber base, all members of the SG and SU were also encouraged to promote the Academy through their own social media accounts by re-sharing the posts made by WCRP related to the Academy. To generate social media content more readily, it was also suggested to explore whether training events added to the Academy's online catalogue once approved can be automatically published across our social media accounts.

Word of mouth: Increasing the visibility of the Academy can also be done through "word of mouth" which means that members of the SG and WCRP who have credibility and large networks can share and talk about the work and potential of the Academy. The SG should also be prepared to introduce the Academy to potential funders and partners, with the SU helping develop relevant materials such as pitch decks, brochures and concept notes that will effectively promote the Academy's vision and plans. Furthermore, it was suggested that the Academy be present and visible in more broad-based climate conferences such as the Conference of Parties (COP) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) (the SU can help facilitate this, as Manila Observatory often participates in climate negotiations).

Newsletters were also discussed as another possible means for increasing the visibility of the Academy. With this, the SU now plans to publish newsletters on a quarterly basis, with the SG offering ideas on possible content (including listing job/fellowship opportunities that early career

researchers may find interesting, but are currently not covered by the online training catalogue). Given that the WCRP Secretariat also publishes newsletters, the need to coordinate the timing of publishing newsletters and to coordinate calls for contribution from WCRP members was emphasized. The Academy may also request the Secretariat to highlight our events and initiatives in upcoming WCRP-wide newsletters as needed.

5. Fundraising Plans

In order to realize the priorities identified by the WCRP Academy (see Table 1), funding and/or in-kind support are required. Most of the near-term activities will ideally be funded by the Academy budget approved by the Joint Scientific Committee (JSC) for 2025. However, in future years this budget is uncertain, and external funding will likely be needed to support its medium-term and long-term activities. With this, the SG also highlighted the need to develop a funding concept note that can be shared with the donor organizations to propose the WCRP Future Leaders Programme and discuss the funding required. Furthermore, the SU was tasked to conduct in-depth research on potential funders.

6. Journal Paper

A preliminary draft for the Academy journal paper was written by the Academy, with Lora Batino, the previous Science Communication officer, serving as first author. It was based on the findings of the global stocktake surveys conducted in 2021-2023 and primarily discusses the role of the WCRP Academy in addressing the training needs of climate scientists.

During the meeting, the SG discussed "climate literacy" as the primary focus of the journal paper and recommended additional references, which can be used as well as reputable journals where the paper can be submitted for publication.

With regard to the timeline, Lora plans to prepare the second draft of the journal paper by the end of 2024, after which a final round of review by the SG will be conducted within early 2025. Once this is completed, the paper will be submitted to the target journal.

7. Structure of the Steering Group and Advisory Board

The Academy is planning to propose the creation of an Advisory Board, which can provide high level input and feedback on future directions of the Academy to the Steering Group and Support Unit. The SG envisions that the inclusion of an Advisory Board into the Academy structure would foster ease of two-way communication between other WCRP activities and the Academy. The Board will be composed of representatives from WCRP core projects and lighthouse activities, a member of the JSC, EMCR representatives, and other key stakeholders (e.g., providers and users of the Academy services, and funding agencies). Terms of reference will be prepared to clearly define their role/function.

8. Findings from Global Stocktakes

8.1. Stocktake surveys from 2021-2023

Lora Batino presented the stocktake surveys conducted by the Academy from 2021-2023. These were conducted to assess the training needs of current and aspiring climate scientists.

Survey 1 (2021) identified the training needs of current and future climate scientists and examined gaps in availability and access from the perspective of training recipients. It gathered a total of 414 unique survey responses from training recipients. The responses showed a good gender balance and a fairly even split between respondents living in the Global North and Global South. Respondents were mostly working full time in universities or research institutions, and roughly half had obtained a PhD as their highest level of education. Results show that 74.3% of the Global North participants like to access additional climate science training while 100 % of the Global South participants expressed the said desire; a huge percentage of them are participants who are taking their PhD. When asked if the climate science training and education available in their country is adequate to allow researchers to work effectively on climate change and associated fields, a huge percentage (58.7%) from the Global North participants answered "Yes" while 60.7% of the participants said "No". Moreover, the participants were also asked about the most important climate process-based training areas (in any field associated with climate) that climate scientists need to address current climate science challenges and emerging challenges. Their top answers were the following: analysis of model results other than model evaluation, development of systems for providing forecasts and projection, collecting observations (in-situ, field studies, remote sensing, ...), analysis of observations, and verification of forecasts and projections. When asked about the most important general training areas that climate scientists need, their top answers were the following: coding/programming, capacity development/exchange, science communication (journals, grants, proposals), geographic information systems, and qualitative methods (e.g. qualitative statistics, interviewing methods, etc.). Lastly, when asked about the obstacles to the provision of adequate climate science training and education in the country, their top answers were financial barriers and lack of local expertise.

Survey II (2022) includes in-depth interviews of Survey I participants who were randomly selected from those who expressed interest to be contacted by the Academy again. The survey results show that there are systemic barriers to accessing climate training and obtaining financial support can be very competitive; the socio-economic and political situation of a country also directly impacts the availability of funding. It was also found out that climate training opportunities from the Global North are viewed as more accessible and economically attractive, while climate training opportunities are inadequate in the Global South. Local experts, studies, and datasets are also limited in the region. Online training opportunities are more accessible, especially if they are freely available. However, poor internet connectivity and unreliable electricity remain significant barriers, which is why face-to-face training is still preferred, especially when there are hands-on exercises and intensive courses. In terms of the nature and type of training, the survey results show that there is a preference for short courses, seasonal schools, and expert webinars. There is also interest in topics such as climate impacts, climate extremes, adaptation, risk, and mitigation. Furthermore, there is a call for more inclusion of indigenous and local knowledge in the training. In terms of language, it was noted that offering training in English is generally okay, although local translation can be helpful for reaching non-English speakers.

Survey III (2023) mainly targeted training providers to have an understanding from the supply side of climate training. A total of 23 institutions that provide climate training completed the survey. The

respondents can be broadly classified into two main groups: research institutes and universities/educational institutions. The results show that most of the provided training is available for free, and those that require funding are usually conducted in-person at the country where the organization is based. The following are the topics covered by climate training: Climate forecasting, Interpreting weather information, Climate projections, Climate model downscaling, Remote sensing, Ensemble Model Data, Permafrost, Marine heatwaves, Risk assessments, Data assimilation, and Use of specific tools and software. Almost half of the training opportunities require some prior knowledge of any climate-related field and there is no preferred mode (in-person, online, hybrid) of delivering climate training. In terms of language, almost all of the organizations offer training in English, with two offering the training in Spanish.

8.2. Catalogue Stocktake (2024)

Acknowledging the centrality of the catalogue to the Academy's operations, Dinah Faye Balleco, the current Science Communication Officer of the Academy, and Francis Uldric San Juan, an Academy intern, conducted an internal catalogue stocktake to better understand the training opportunities offered by the Academy. Information such as modality, location of in-person and hybrid events, eligibility, language, costs, and funding were examined to understand general trends and characteristics of the trainings. They presented the results of this stocktake to the Steering Group. The results of this stocktake will also be presented at the next JSC meeting.

Analysis of the catalogue shows that the Academy was able to offer 97 events since 2021, many of which have already concluded, while some can still be accessed on-demand. Some events indicated a category as the theme of their topic while others indicated more than one. Specifically, the majority of the events identified the Physical Science Basis of Climate Change as one of its main themes (74), while 45 tackled Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability and 21 discussed Mitigation of Climate Change. Training providers deliver these events in the form of webinars (30.9%), conferences (30.9%), workshops (16.5%), seasonal schools (7.2%), short courses (10.3%), and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (4.1%). 44.3% of these events are delivered online and 22.7% are delivered in-person; 33% are hybrid. The Academy classifies an event that has any online alternative as hybrid, such as the availability of live streams and online course work. Moreover, a huge percentage of in-person events are held in Europe (46.2%) and a smaller number of events are held in Asia (23.1%). Other events are held in North America (3.8%), South America (3.8%), Africa (3.8%), and Australia (3.8%). For hybrid events, many of them did not specify a location (20.5%), while a huge percentage was held in Europe (41%) and others were held in other continents: North America (17.9%), Asia (12.8%), South America (5.1%), and Africa (2.6%).. When it comes to the language used for the training, 95% of the events used the English language as one of its languages, while very few events used other languages such as Portuguese, Chinese, Spanish, French, Arabic, and sign language. Furthermore, for costs/fees, 44.3% of the events required payment for the training from training recipients, while 55.7% did not. In addition, 40.2% of the events provided funding support (uncertain if full or partial), while 59.8% did not.

It was also investigated whether training provided a Certificate of Completion for training recipients. It was discovered that 56.7% of the events provided a Certificate of Completion, while 43.3% did not. The catalogue stocktake also revealed the types of organizers of the events: WCRP-affiliated (26.5%), University (15.95), Government-operated research institution (15.9%), Intergovernmental organization (5.3), International research institution (4%), Research institution (4%), Network (4%), Local NGO (2.65), NGO (2%), and Research initiative (1.3%). Moreover, most of these organizers are based in Europe (27%), followed by those that are internationally based (23.4%) and based in North America

(17.7%), Asia (15.6%), South America (5.7%), Africa (8.5%), and Australia (2.1%).

The results of the internal catalogue stocktake provide several insights that can guide the Academy in curating training events. First, there should be more effort to populate the catalogue with events related to Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, and Mitigation of Climate Change. Second, the huge number of webinars and conferences (equal in percentage) being held imply a willingness of the scientific community to take advantage of technology in learning. Third, the modality of events in the catalogue is due to a confluence of factors (e.g. pandemic, the effectiveness of online platforms). Although pandemic restrictions have largely been lifted, it is worth noting that online and hybrid events are still widely used by the scientific community, while in-person events are simultaneously being organized more. Given that events with online alternatives can be more accessible to a larger audience, the continued use of online and hybrid events is welcomed. However, in-person events are mostly held in Global North countries (Europe, in particular). This suggests that offering in-person events in Asia, Africa, and South America can improve the accessibility of WCRP Academy events. When it comes to language, since English is mostly used for the events, it will be helpful for the scientific community to consider using and incorporating other local languages in their events, if useful with translation services. Including sign language services can also improve the accessibility of training opportunities. Lastly, some information asked from training providers in the process of adding events in the catalogue is ambiguous. Therefore, there should be better instructions given to event organizers to be more mindful in listing down their events, as the accuracy of the information they put is important for training recipients and researchers.

9. Presentation and Discussion on the Academy Website

The new web developer, Ken Ramirez, presented his suggested design and layout changes for the WCRP Academy website (see Annex C). The SG approved the proposed re-design and gave further suggestions for improving the website, such as adopting the UN Accessibility Guidelines, adding a form to be filled out by training recipients that will include specific information like gender (which will enable them to specify), adding resources section for additional readings/training materials, conducting quick user survey to get feedback of those visiting the website, and a feature that will show them the WCRP newsletter. The SG advised the SU to reflect in the website the near-term activities identified as priorities for the Academy (see Table 1).

For other futuristic steps, the Academy plans to incorporate usage statistics wherein courses will be labeled to help market each course. For example, courses with more than 100 participants can be labeled as "high demand" while those with less than a hundred can be labeled as a "new course". Badges can also be given to users to give them incentive and motivation in continuing to progress in their field.

10. Mentoring Workshop

Melissa Hart, co-chair of the WCRP Academy, facilitated the planning of the 2025 mentoring and future leaders' development workshop that the Academy hopes to organize. Currently, the Academy strives to connect communities who require some form of climate science training, with communities who can provide this training. In addition to science capacity development, the Academy also recognises the important role that we could play in promoting leadership development of promising climate scientists through mentorship and guidance.

There are a range of mentoring and/or future leader development initiatives already being undertaken across the WCRP(e.g. fresh eyes on CMIP, or the EMRC Symposium at the OSC 2023). However, these initiatives are often confined within specific projects or activities, potentially overlooking opportunities for their application across the entirety of the WCRP. Further, there are other examples of successful mentoring programs whose models may be beneficial to WCRP.

The goal of this workshop is to bring together a select group of participants from across WCRP activities, alongside members from outside organisations, who apply novel mentorship methods to develop the leadership potential of their members. It is planned to be a 2-day in-person workshop with a relatively small number of participants (around 30 participants) with options for remote participation. Since the SG wants to hold it in the Global South, it was decided to align its timing to the next SG meeting in Cape Town (see succeeding Section).

The SG identified potential participants for the mentoring workshop. These include specific organizations such as the WCRP Regional Information for Society (RIfS), Asia Oceania Geosciences Society (AOGS), Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society (AMOS), Asia Pacific Network (APN), International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), and Walker Institute.

The workshop will begin with a series of practice sharing talks where different groups can share their mentoring and leadership development initiatives, including challenges and opportunities. This will be followed by interactive world cafe-like activities to answer driving questions such as: "What has your experience of mentoring in the WCRP been?", "What does an ideal mentee/mentor look like?" and "How can we best incorporate mentoring into WCRP?" The workshop will also strive to shine a light on the unique challenges faced by women, early career, Global South, and other underrepresented scientists in accessing and making the most out of available mentoring opportunities both inside and outside of the WCRP.

The workshop will enable the Academy to gain a better appreciation of the current state of mentoring/leadership development within the WCRP community, and to finetune our proposed WCRP Future Leaders Programme accordingly.

11. Next Steering Group Meeting

The leading choice for the location and date of the next SG meeting is Cape Town in September 2025, where RIfS/CORDEX will also be organizing an event. The aforementioned mentoring workshop will also be held in parallel to these events to maximize opportunity and resources.

Annex A. List of Participants

Category	Name
	Christopher Lennard (Co-chair)
	Melissa Hart (Co-chair)
WCRP Academy Steering Committee	Qingyun Duan
	Dorcas Kalele
	Feba Francis
	Ma. Laurice Jamero (Manager)
	Jayvy Gamboa (International Liaison Officer)
WCRP Academy Support Unit	Dinah Faye Balleco (Science Communication Officer)
Werr Academy Support Offic	Lora Batino (Previous Science Communication Officer)
	Kenneth Angel Ramirez (Web Developer)
	Francis San Juan (Intern)
WCRP Secretariat	Narelle van der Wel (Science and Communications Officer)

Annex B. Agenda

Wednesday, October 9th

Time	Activity	Lead (1 SG + 1 SU)
0900—1000	 Welcome Remarks Reflection on the Academy to date and update from the support unit Updates from WCRP Budget Objectives for this workshop 	Melissa/Chris/Lau/Narelle
1000—1100	Priorities if the Academy had full funding An Academy wishlist	Dorcas SU: Lau
1100—1200	Strategies for increasing the academy's visibility, both within and outside of WCRP	Feba SU: Dinah
1200—1300	Lunch	
1300—1400	Metrics for success - this will also help us attract funding if we can show the impact we are having	Chris SU: Lau
1400—1500	Possible partners for collaboration and funding	Chris SU: Jayvy (collaboration - ECR

		networks)
1500—1600	Next stocktake Internal Stocktaking: Academy Catalogue	SU: Dinah + Kiko (catalogue stocktake), Lau (past stocktakes)
1600—1700	Journal paper Figures for journal paper Journal for current paper Do we have a second paper narrative from the remaining survey results?	Clifford/Chris (journal) Lau/Lora

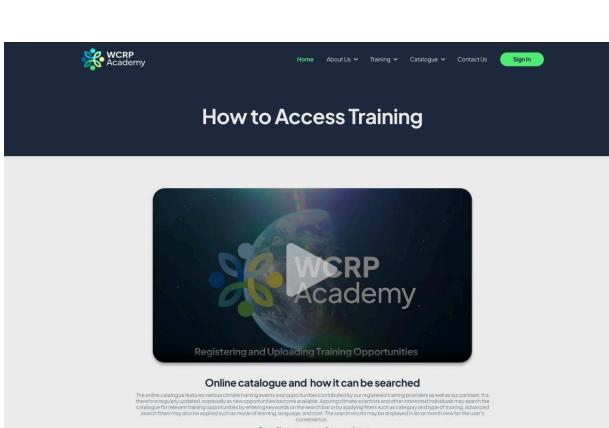
Thursday, October 10th

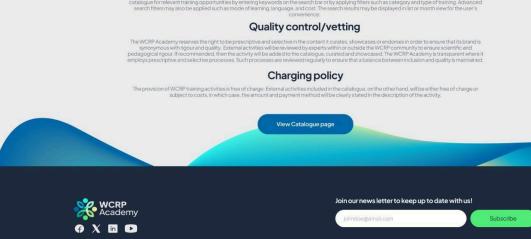
Time	Activity	Lead (1 SG + 1 SU)
0900—1000	Structure of the advisory board/steering group, and terms of reference • Roles and responsibilities of the steering group • Question: Is there a need to bring in new members? What sort of members?	Narelle
1000—1200	Mentoring workshop Identifying the following: • Location • Participants	Melissa, Yun SU: Jayvy
1200—1300	Lunch	

1300—1400	 SU workplan Social media accounts, establishing partnerships Guidelines - data gathering proposal Feedback on discussion re: priorities/scope 	SU: Lau
1400—1500	Website Revamped home page (desktop and mobile version) Revamped catalogue	SU: Ken
1500—1600	Next SG meeting • 3 options: with pros and cons ○ Indonesia - CLIVAR ○ Cape Town ○ IPCC WGII and WGIII events ○ AOGS - Singapore - end of July, Geoscience Conference ○ AGU ○ Targeting Asia	SU: Kiko

Annex C. Screenshots of the Proposed Redesign of the Academy Website







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Become a Training Provider



The WCRP Academy aims to advance climate science knowledge by promoting quality climate science training for all in a free catalogue. Our purpose is to increase accessibility to vetted training for early-career scientists and the Global South. The WCRP Academy targets climate scientists across all professional and career levels, with a special focus on the training needs of early career scientists and the Global South.

Participate

Join Our training Providers

When you register as a training provider, you can directly share information about your upcoming climate science training events and activities through our online training catalogue. Feature your training opportunities on our online training catalogue and reach our wide audience of climate scientists.

Educational Goals

Register as a training provider



Join our news letter to keep up to date with us!

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