

Workshop on the Development of National Drought Policies in Southern South America

Week of 18-22 May 2020, Montevideo, Uruguay.

Organized by SISSA - Sistema de Información sobre Sequías para el sur de Sudamérica, Centro Regional del Clima para el sur de América del Sur

Foreword. This document provides justification for, and a brief description of the objectives of a workshop about the development of national drought policies and plans in countries of southern South America. The workshop, that will be held during the week of May 18-22, 2020 in Montevideo, Uruguay, is being organized by the Drought Information System for southern South America (or SISSA, for its Spanish acronym), a component of WMO's Regional Climate Center for southern South America. Some workshop participants will be directly invited by the SISSA. In other cases, the institutions receiving this note will be asked to nominate one potential participant; the desired characteristics and qualifications for workshop participants are described below. *Responses and institutional nominations must be submitted by 31 December 2019.*

Motivation. Drought has important social, economic and environmental impacts throughout South America, a region that relies mostly on rainfall to sustain a large agricultural production, generate hydropower, transport goods along its waterways, and satisfy household, industrial and environmental water needs. In a context of enhanced climate variability and change, drought impacts are likely to become more severe due to an increased frequency and intensity of extreme climate events. In South America – as in many other regions – the usual response to drought is reactive, i.e., acting after impacts are being experienced; reactive responses, however, often are ineffective, poorly coordinated and unnecessarily expensive. An alternative approach is the development of proactive, risk-based national policies and preparedness plans aimed at reducing societal vulnerability and increase resilience to drought. The workshop aims to launch the process to implement coordinated national drought policies in South America; without such policies, nations probably will continue to respond to drought in a reactive, crisis management mode.

What is a Drought Policy? A national drought policy includes a clear set of principles or operating guidelines to govern the management of drought and increase resilience to its impacts. A drought policy should emphasize risk management through the application of preparedness, adaptation and mitigation measures. The policy should aim to reduce risk by developing a better awareness and understanding of the drought hazard, as well as the underlying causes of societal vulnerability to this phenomenon. Coordination, collaboration and partnerships among multiple levels of government, local communities, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders are crucial components of a drought policy.

Workshop Objectives. The overarching goal of the planned workshop is to help launch and support the design and implementation of national drought policies and preparedness plans in the SISSA members (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay) and other countries of South and Central America. The guiding framework to achieve this goal will be the 10-step process originally developed by the U.S. National Drought Mitigation Center and now widely adopted by multiple international organizations and programs. A specific objective of the workshop will be to gather and critically assess information about the current capabilities and perceived gaps/needs of SISSA countries and other participating nations regarding the three pillars of a drought policy: (a) monitoring and early warning; (b) vulnerability and impact assessment; and (c) mitigation and response. Another objective will be to co-design a plan to move forward in the design and implementation of national drought policies. Possible actions for countries to better prepare and respond to drought will be discussed during the workshop. Specific actions, however, will be identified and prioritized subsequently by each country as a function of its own context. Progress in the implementation of the action plan will be facilitated by SISSA and national partners during the year following the workshop.

Who should participate? SISSA will support 2-3 workshop participants from each of its six member nations. Other countries in South and Central America will be invited to the workshop, but funding cannot be provided

by SISSA at present. SISSA will invite participants from relevant ministries (e.g., agriculture, environment, water and energy, etc.), other governmental agencies and civil society in each country. Workshop participants should be in a position to champion and influence the development of drought management policies at the national level. The complex nature of drought and its impacts requires that participants be able to work well in multi-disciplinary teams. Moreover, the crucial need for coordination among several national institutions and stakeholder groups necessitates participants willing to collaborate and help build effective partnerships in a multi-institutional environment. Prior to the workshop, participants from each country will be asked to jointly gather and summarize information on the current status of the three pillars of a drought policy (see above) and on existing drought-related institutional networks and legislation or protocols in their respective countries. Guidance will be provided on the information to be collected by participants.

Participant Nomination. Some workshop participants will be directly invited by the SISSA. In other cases, each institution receiving this note will be asked to nominate one potential participant. Individual applications will not be considered. The desired characteristics and qualifications for workshop participants are described in the previous section. *Responses and institutional nominations must be submitted via email to proyecto.sissa@gmail.com before 31 December 2019.* Final workshop invitations will be issued around 15 February 2020.

Steering and Supporting Institutions. Major funding for the first SISSA workshop on national drought policies will be provided by the Regional Public Goods program of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The institutions shown below (in alphabetical order) will partner with CRC-SAS-/SISSA to coordinate the workshop.

Workshop organizers and major funder



Centro Regional del Clima para el sur de América del Sur

Steering and supporting institutions



Euroclima+ Program, funded by European Union through AECID



Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research



United Nations
Convention to Combat Desertification



US National Drought Mitigation Center



US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



World Meteorological Organization

*The **Sistema de Información sobre Sequías para el Sur de Sudamérica (SISSA)** provides data, information and knowledge about drought to allow people, communities, and governments from South America to reduce the impacts of this phenomenon through improved monitoring, early warning, planning and preparation. SISSA is a component of the Regional Climate Center for southern South America, a six-nation collaboration to produce and disseminate timely and actionable climate information and services to support decision-making in societal sectors sensitive to climate variability and change. Main support for SISSA activities is provided by the Inter-American Development Bank and by the Euroclima+ program funded by the European Union through the Spanish Agency for International Development.*