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## WMO Regional Training Centre in Italy supports competency development for climate services in Africa

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29 Published 29 June 2020

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The WMO Regional Training Centre in Italy, founded in 1987 and officially recognized by WMO in 1997, is operated by the Institute of BioEconomy of the National Research Council.

The global COVID19 pandemic has demonstrated the need to accelerate collaborative efforts through online training and increasing attention to cataloguing Open Educational Resources (OER). These approaches will help WMO Members face the challenges posed by growing learning needs and changing roles of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs).

For these reasons, WMO RTC in Italy contributes to the database of Open Educational Resources in support of education and training activities through the WMO E-Library Global Campus component, and its newly developed training package, TOPaCS, is now released for public use.

TOPaCS is the acronym for Training Operational Package for Climate Services, a new distance learning initiative developed by RTC Italy. TOPaCS is a permanent eLearning platform offering training courses on different topics related to Climate and Risk analysis and management. It originated from the recommendation of main stakeholders in West Africa, the Directors of Meteorological Services of 17 CILSS/ECOWAS Countries at the International Conference on Climate Services for West Africa in Rome, Italy, in early 2019. TOPaCS has been funded by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The TOPaCS follows the TOP Seasonal Forecast (Training Operational Package for Seasonal Forecast) project, a set of online resources whose goal is to enhance knowledge of the theory of seasonal forecasting and operational use of seasonal climate forecasts.

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The packages were developed using training materials produced during a series of blended distance and face-to-face courses offered by the RTC Italy during the past years. These training materials, created by acknowledged researchers and scholars, have been reorganised in a new conceptual structure, partially re-edited, and enriched with videos and other documentation.

The goal of TOPaCS was to establish a permanent training tool that is open and easily accessible worldwide. Its methodological approach is competency-based: competencies are composed of elements of Knowledge and Skill, according to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, and each of its 11 courses is related to the WMO Competencies Framework for Climate Services Providers.

The training packages TOP and TOPaCS are parts of the activities that RTC Italy is contributing to the WMO Global Campus initiative in support of education needs and needs for ongoing continuous professional development in Meteorological and Climate Services of WMO Member Countries. TOP and TOPaCS are open access and created under a Creative Commons licence, therefore the resources can be used by other trainers to develop their own courses, facilitating knowledge sharing and dissemination.

The packages are now available to the large community of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and National Climate Services through the [CNR-IBE](#) Climate Services platform (<https://training.climateservices.it/>), and disseminated through the OUTREACH platform of the [Italian National Research Council](#).

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24 June 2020

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