
Advisory Board Meeting #7 Summary Online (29th April 2026) of results

Board members: Christopher Frans (US Bureau of reclamation), Saied Vaghefi (WMO), Andrea Manrique Sunen (EDP Renewables)

Additional invitations: Yuki Honda (WMO), Véronique Bouchet (WMO)

Board members who provided comments by email ahead of the meeting: Gabriela Aznar Siguan (Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology MeteoSwiss), Sebastian Lerch (KIT)

Please note: these comments have been included in the present summary of results.

ECMWF staff: Frederic Vitart (Team Lead Extended-range Forecasts Team), Olga Loegel (User Engagement and Outreach Associate), Joshua Talib (Scientist on Extended-Range Forecasts)

Board meeting #6 Agenda:

1. Participation and results status (only commented on by email, not discussed in meeting)
2. Second forecasting year and longer-term framework
3. Engagement and dissemination activities
4. Regular renewal of the Advisory Board

Discussion points

Board Members commented on different aspects of the proposed approach and suggested amendments.

Item #1: Participation and results status (only commented on by email, not discussed in meeting)

Board members provided the following pre-meeting written comments:

- Student participation appears to have decreased over time. Dedicated tracks or similar formats could be considered to strengthen academic and student engagement.

Item #2: Second forecasting year and longer-term framework

Board members provided the following pre-meeting written comments:

- Participation by NMHSs may be challenging, as S2S forecasting is global in nature, while many national services primarily operate regional systems. ECMWF noted that the second forecasting year may allow teams to submit continental-level forecasts only, which could lower the participation barrier for NMHSs and regional institutions.
- Further diagnostic analyses could help participants better understand model performance, namely: regime-conditioned evaluation, predictability-conditioned evaluation, and regional applications of both approaches. ECMWF acknowledged their scientific value, while noting that they may be difficult to implement as live public leaderboards because of limited sample sizes. These analyses could instead be explored through research outputs, webinars, blogs or publications.
- Impact-based diagnostics, such as analyses for heat extremes, storm tracks or precipitation corridors, were suggested as a possible future development. ECMWF noted that this would require forecast fields not currently submitted through the Quest and could be more suitable for a broader AI S2S comparison activity.
- It was noted that model updates between competition periods are difficult to link to performance changes. ECMWF is considering adding a question to the model summaries on whether a model has changed since the previous period, and may explore options to track changes in submitted summaries.
- A clearer definition of model types, such as data-driven, post-processing and hybrid models, was suggested.

Board members provided the following comments in meeting:

- Board members expressed their satisfaction with the continuation of the Quest and welcomed its development as a longer-term initiative.
- Board members also welcomed the planned refinement of regional skill scores through continental-level divisions. It was noted that this provides a more detailed view than the broader Northern Hemisphere / Southern Hemisphere split and is particularly relevant for downstream applications.

Item #3: Engagement and dissemination activities

Board members provided the following pre-meeting written comments:

- The webinar format used so far was considered useful and should be continued.
- For the final JJA and yearly awards webinar, Board members suggested acknowledging long-standing and consistently active participants, and potentially inviting selected teams to share their experience. The webinar could also better explain the broader value of participant contributions for benchmarking, model development and identifying promising directions for S2S forecasting.
- Optional model deep-dive webinars were suggested to allow more detailed exchanges between participants.
- ICAIN was mentioned as a possible initiative to explore for African engagement, particularly in relation to HPC providers. ECMWF noted that this reference will be considered and shared with relevant partners where appropriate.

Board members provided the following comments in meeting:

- Andrea Manrique Suñén mentioned a group within the International Energy Agency working on AI models and offered to share a relevant contact.
- WMO confirmed its willingness to support outreach to African institutions, including by disseminating information about the Quest during meetings with African stakeholders.
- The Global AI Summit was mentioned as a potential opportunity to raise the visibility of the AI Weather Quest.
- The Advisory Board supported the idea of exploring ways to highlight student initiatives during future webinars.

Item #4: Regular renewal of the Advisory Board

Board members provided the following pre-meeting written comments:

- The Advisory Board format was considered to have worked well overall.
- Scheduling was noted as a challenge for some members, particularly due to teaching and other professional obligations.
- The possibility to provide written feedback ahead of meetings was appreciated.
- For the next Advisory Board, ECMWF could consider including representatives from NMHSs and operational S2S forecast users, such as humanitarian agencies or energy companies.

Board members provided the following comments in meeting:

- The Advisory Board members have appreciated the opportunity to seat on the board.

Next steps

- Highlight student engagement during the final JJA and yearly awards webinar, including by considering whether a student team could be specifically acknowledged.
OL – consider how to reflect this in the webinar concept.
- Consider adding a question to the model summaries asking whether the model has changed since the previous competitive period.
OL / JT – investigate how to add this in the model summary process for the next forecasting year.
- Explore whether changes in submitted model summaries can be tracked once the second forecasting year developments are complete.
JT – investigate the technical feasibility of tracking changes in model summaries.
- Follow up on suggested outreach and engagement opportunities, including WMO support for African outreach, the Global AI Summit, the ICAIN reference, and the International Energy Agency AI-models working group.
OL – follow up with WMO and Andrea, and share relevant references with potential partners where appropriate.