

Article 2: Open Climate Webinar – Advancing Data Sharing for Climate Action 28 August 2025

On 28 August 2025, the Science20 (S20) and Ocean20 (O20) engagement groups, in partnership with ASSAf and NRF-SAEON, co-hosted a high-level webinar on “*Open Climate: Advancing Data Sharing for Climate Action through Academia and Research Communities.*” The event brought together climate scientists, policymakers, Indigenous knowledge holders, and civil society networks to explore how open, reliable, and interoperable climate data can accelerate resilience and justice.

The session opened with remarks from **Ms. Nicole du Plessis (NRF-SAEON, Ocean20)** and **Mrs. Susan Veldsman (ASSAf, Science20)**, who stressed the urgent role of both social and natural sciences in bridging climate knowledge and action.

Key presentations highlighted both opportunities and challenges. **Ms. Delani Mathevula (DFFE)** showcased South Africa’s National Climate Change Information System (NCCIS), designed to track climate adaptation efforts. While it represents a step forward in monitoring and evaluation, she noted that capacity and accessibility remain hurdles. Similarly, **Prof. Coleen Vogel (Wits University)** stressed governance and adaptation gaps, emphasising that “climate change is not just an environmental problem, it’s a human one.”

The session also lifted up voices from community-level engagement. **Ms. Yanga Malotana (University of Pretoria)** spoke about the intersection of Indigenous knowledge, community participation, and climate resilience, reminding participants that local communities already hold solutions, they just need recognition and inclusion. **Mr. Leo Chiloane (NRF-SAEON)** followed with a call for equitable and trustworthy data governance models, warning against data practices that exclude or disempower stakeholders.

Finally, **Dr. Gustav Rautenbach (NRF-SAEON)** presented practical pathways for improving environmental data infrastructure and interoperability, ensuring that open data directly supports science, policy, and action.

The discussions reinforced that open climate data is not just a technical issue but a matter of climate justice. Reliable, shared, and context-sensitive data can bridge the gap between communities, researchers, and policymakers, particularly in the Global South.

As one reflection from the dialogue made clear: we cannot afford to work in silos, nor can we privilege certain knowledge systems over others. Open climate data is about weaving together all perspectives — scientific, Indigenous, local, and global — to build resilience and inform fairer, stronger climate action.

Closing remarks by **Dr. Melusi Thwala (ASSAf)** tied these threads together, emphasising the importance of cross-border and cross-sector partnerships. The webinar positioned South Africa, through its leadership in Ocean20 and Science20, as a critical voice in shaping how open science and open data can advance global climate solutions.

[Watch full webinar here](#)