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AMMA: An international research project and field campaign

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African Monsoon Multidisciplinary Analysis (AMMA) is an international project to improve our knowledge and understanding of the West African monsoon (WAM) and its variability with an emphasis on daily-to-interannual timescales. AMMA is motivated by an interest in fundamental scientific issues and by the societal need for improved prediction of the WAM and its impacts on West African nations. Recognising the societal need to develop strategies that reduce the socioeconomic impacts of the variability of the WAM, AMMA will facilitate the multidisciplinary research required to provide improved predictions of the WAM and its impacts. This will be achieved and coordinated through five international working groups: (i) West African monsoon and global climate, (ii) Water cycle, (iii) Surface-atmosphere feedbacks, (iii) Prediction of climate impacts and (iv) High impact weather prediction and predictability. In addition, two cross-cutting working groups concern Climate Modelling and Long term observations.

AMMA promotes international coordination of ongoing activities, basic research and a multi-year field campaign over West Africa and the tropical Atlantic. Field programme is the largest and most extensive ever attempted in Africa. Its first component is a long-term monitoring based on operational networks and specific research projects, covering the period 2001-2010 (LOP). In 2005, AMMA entered the Enhanced Observing Period which will last three years and is characterized by a widespread intensification and coordination of these networks; the peak of activity occurred in 2006 with four Special Observing Periods (SOPs) based on the deployment of heavy observation platforms such as research aircraft and vessels, and an array of ground instruments.

AMMA is also developing close partnerships between those involved in basic research of the WAM, operational forecasting and decision making, and is establishing blended training and education activities for Africans.