



Empowering scientists in CMORization

**Pavan Siligam**, January 23, 2026

 Download PDF

# What is CMORization?

The process of converting climate model output data into a standardized format, in accordance with rules set by the Climate Model Intercomparison Projects (CMIP) and CF Conventions, ensuring consistency in variable-names, units, metadata, and file structure for easier analysis and comparison across different models.

For `pycmor` it means to provide compliance for the following

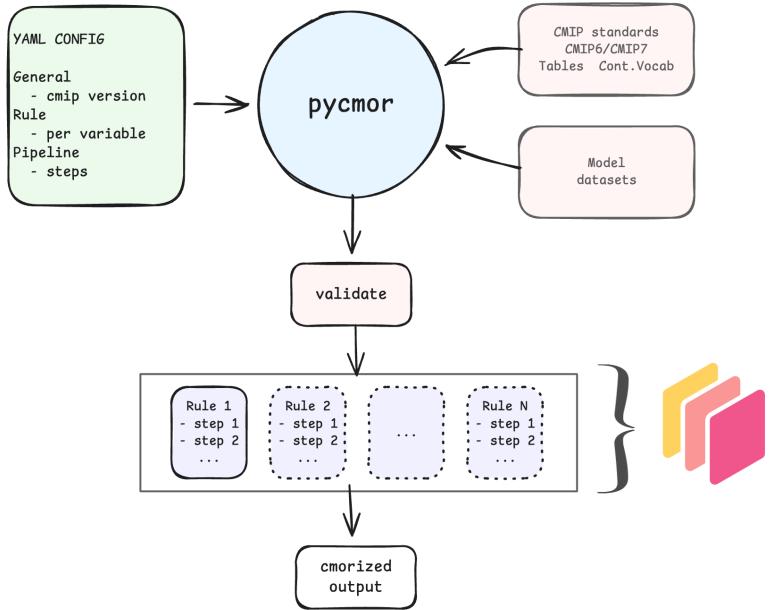
## CF Conventions

- Ensure metadata is set
  - coordinate attributes
  - variable attributes
  - global attributes

## CMIP6/CMIP7 specification + Controlled Vocabulary

- Ensure file structure
  - file(s) naming
  - directory structure
- match variable units
- match temporal resolution
- match dimensions
- bounds (time\_bnds, lat\_bnds, ...)

## pycmor workflow



# yaml configuration

Entry point

```
1 general:
2   name: "AWI-ESM-1-1-lr PI Control"
3   description: "CMOR configuration for AWIESM 1.1 LR"
4   maintainer: "pgierz"
5   email: "pgierz@awi.de"
6   cmor_version: "CMIP7"
7 pycmor:
8   # parallel: True
9   warn_on_no_rule: False
10  use_flox: True
11  dask_cluster: "slurm"
12  dask_cluster_scaling_mode: fixed
13  fixed_jobs: 1
14  # minimum_jobs: 8
15  # maximum_jobs: 30
16  # You can add your own path to the dimensionless mapping t
17  # If nothing is specified here, it will use the built-in o
18 inherit:
19   # Common attributes shared by all rules
20   activity_id: CMIP
21   institution_id: AWI
22   source_id: AWI-CM-1-1-HR
```

section	used for
general	cmor_version, CV_Dir, CMIP_Table_Dir, ...
pycmor	application settings
inherit	common attributes shared by all rules
rules	<b>per variable settings:</b> cmor_variable, compound_name, model_variable, data_path, ...
pipelines	steps to be executed for each variable (uses <b>Default pipeline</b> if not provided)
jobqueue	SLURM specific settings for launching workers

# Pipeline Steps

## Default Steps in Pipeline

PyCMOR provides these standard processing steps.

```
1 STEPS = (
2     "pycmor.core.gather_inputs.load_mfdataset",
3     "pycmor.std_lib.generic.get_variable",
4     "pycmor.std_lib.add_vertical_bounds",
5     "pycmor.std_lib.timeaverage.timeavg",
6     "pycmor.std_lib.units.handle_unit_conversion",
7     "pycmor.std_lib.attributes.set_global",
8     "pycmor.std_lib.attributes.set_variable",
9     "pycmor.std_lib.attributes.set_coordinates",
10    "pycmor.std_lib.dimensions.map_dimensions",
11    "pycmor.core.caching.manual_checkpoint",
12    "pycmor.std_lib.generic.trigger_compute",
13    "pycmor.std_lib.generic.show_data",
14    "pycmor.std_lib.files.save_dataset",
15 )
```

## Adding Custom Steps

### 1. Create Custom Function

```
1 # custom_step.py
2 def custom_step(data, rule):
3     # Your custom processing logic
4     return data
```

### 2. Define Complete Pipeline

**Important:** When adding custom steps, you must specify the **entire pipeline** including both default and custom steps:

```
1 pipelines:
2   - name: my_custom_pipeline
3     steps:
4       - "pycmor.core.gather_inputs.load_mfdataset"
5       - "pycmor.std_lib.generic.get_variable"
6       # ... other default steps ...
7       - "script://path/to/custom_step.py:custom_step"
8       - "pycmor.std_lib.files.save_dataset"
```

### 3. Key Points

- Custom steps require full pipeline specification
- Mix default steps with your custom functions
- Use `script://path/to/file:function_name` syntax

# Coordinate Attributes

Make your coordinates CF-compliant automatically

Example: no attribute information

```
1 import xarray as xr
2 import numpy as np
3
4 # Dataset with coordinates
5 ds = xr.Dataset(
6     {'tas': ([{'time': '1980-01-01', 'lat': -89.5, 'lon': 0.5}, {'time': '1980-01-01', 'lat': -89.5, 'lon': 180}],),
7      },
8      coords={
9          'time': np.arange(10),
10         'lat': np.linspace(-89.5, 89.5, 90),
11         'lon': np.linspace(0.5, 359.5, 180),
12     })
13
14
15 print(ds.lat.attrs)
16 {}
```

pycmor provides `set_coordinate_attributes`

In a processing pipeline (`yaml` config):

```
1 pipelines:
2   steps:
3     - "load_mfdataset"
4     # ... other steps
5     - "set_coordinate_attributes" # Add this step
6     # ... other steps
```

In scripts:

```
1 from pycmor.std_lib.coordinate_attributes import set_
2
3 # Now coordinates have CF-compliant metadata
4 ds = set_coordinate_attributes(ds, rule)
5 ds['lat'].attrs
6 {
7     'standard_name': 'latitude',
8     'units': 'degrees_north',
9     'axis': 'Y',
10 }
```

# Units Handling in PyCMOR

## Chemical units (element-aware)

Automatic conversion for complex chemical units

Example: mmolC → kg

Previously (manual):

```
1 mmolC → molC → gC → kgC
2   ÷1e3    ×12.0107  ÷1e3
```

Now (automatic):

```
1 # Live conversion log
2 2025-03-13 09:06:37 | INFO  | Converting: mmolC/m2/d → kg m-2 s-1
3 2025-03-13 09:06:37 | DEBUG | Chemical element detected: Carbon
4 2025-03-13 09:06:37 | DEBUG | Registering: molC = 12.0107 * g
```

✓ No manual molecular-weight handling

✓ CMIP-compliant physical units

## Unit configuration

Wrong units in source data?

→ Define correct units in `model_unit` field in `yaml` file

Dimensionless units?

→ Map them explicitly

```
1 # Conversion-only mappings
2 # Output always uses cmor_units
3 so:
4   "0.001": g/kg
5
6 intpp:          # Primary production by phytoplankton
7   "mol m-2 s-1": "molC m-2 s-1"
```

# Frequency Analysis & Processing

PyCMOR analyzes **source data frequency** and processes it to meet **CMIP table requirements**.

## Time averaging (CMIP-aware):

- Driven by CMIP table frequency string
- **Methods**
  - Instantaneous → `resample(...).first()`
  - Mean → `resample(...).mean()`
  - Climatology → `groupby(...).mean("time")`

## Key principles:

- **Downsampling supported** (no artificial data creation)
  - Daily → Monthly , 6-hourly → Daily , 3-hourly → 6-hourly

```
>>> # Month start dates with day offsets
>>> month_start_day_offset = np.array([
...     "2020-01-01",
...     "2020-02-01",
...     "2020-03-04", # ← 3-day offset
...     "2020-04-01",
...     "2020-05-01",
... ]).astype("datetime64[s]")
...
>>> xarray.infer_freq(month_start_day_offset)
None
>>> infer_frequency(month_start_day_offset, return_metadata=True)
Inferred Frequency : M
Median Δ (days)   : 30.50
Regular Spacing    : ✓
Status             : valid # ← below threshold limit
>>>
>>> infer_frequency(month_start_day_offset, return_metadata=True, strict=True)
Inferred Frequency : M
Regular Spacing    : ✗
Strict Mode        : ✓
```