

Concept note

Media training as part of SCIPEA project

Introduction

The Strengthening Climate Information Partnerships in East Africa (SCIPEA) project is designed to develop links between global climate centres, African regional centres and national meteorological and hydrological services (NMHSs) for better climate services' delivery. The key elements of the project include unlocking international resource for seasonal prediction, research and prediction tool development. The project also involves capacity training in seasonal prediction methodology to strengthen the climate curricula in regional and national training centres and universities.

SCIPEA project partners include IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) Climate Prediction Applications Centre (ICPAC), the meteorological services of Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, educational institutions and end users of seasonal forecasting information in the region and from the four countries.

In the bid to strengthen climate science communication, the SCIPEA project is partnering with the Network of Climate Journalists in the Greater Horn of Africa (NECJOGHA) to build the capacity of climate journalists and communicators for effective communication of usually jargon-laden and highly scientific climate information to end users. The science journalists' capacity building training took place

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at Common Wealth Resort Munyonyo from 27th – 28th August 2016. This was a training of trainers (TOTs) who will train other journalists for effective climate information dissemination within the four SC�PEA project countries of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia. It is widely agreed that effective science media is critical in delivering reliable, co-produced and accessible seasonal and other climate services to the end users.

The training of climate journalists is geared towards widening and strengthening the scope of communication that will efficiently enable transfer of information, knowledge and tools to benefit regional, national, sub-national and community level policy, planning and decision-making in East Africa.

It was agreed that the SC�PEA trained TOTs should train more science communicators within the countries to widen the scope and enable coverage of hard to reach areas in the SC�PEA Project countries of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It was also resolved by the communicators to hold Communication Cafes and trainings that will bring together more journalists to catalyze and stimulate informed debate on the topic of climate science communication.

Rationale

Climate information and services are being produced by NMHSs of countries in East Africa for the benefit of the people in this region. The major obstacle at hand is that the climate products produced by scientists are packed with scientific terminologies that can hardly be communicated by ordinary practicing journalists and communicators. In addition to this, there is a lack of coordinated efforts to transfer the climate information to the end users. This impairs and jeopardizes the positive effects that would be derived out of climate information. This also reverses the advantages of climate information that would re-enforce activities that can inspire change and ultimately contribute to a better agriculture productivity, enhanced livelihoods and improved household nutrition. The trainings are intended to create partnerships and build a critical number of media teams that will communicate climate services and information in a way that is comprehensible to end users of these services. To effectively achieve this geographical balance, country regions will be taken into account while selecting media teams to be trained under this project. The long

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standing challenge of climate information and services not reaching the end users can only be solved by having effective media reporting and this is what the trainings and climate cafes under this arrangement is set out to do.

The process will involve national face-to-face media team training of 30 media personnel in each country, starting in Uganda, on climate predictions and applications of climate products, information and services. The media team trained will be on the country's NMHS emailing list where they will be receiving regular climate information and updates on early warning on extreme weather events so as to facilitate faster and coordinated transfer of climate information to even the hard to reach up country areas. Furthermore, the team will be given tips on how they can effectively use social media to increase coverage and reach more people that might not be covered through the mainstream media.

Participating media personnel will be chosen to reflect the demographic diversity of countrywide coverage with regards to gender and geographical zone of residency. At least 30 media personnel will participate in the process, initially from Uganda, under the SC�PEA project. The training will be based on innovative ways to communicate climate information by engaging stakeholders to make climate services' guided decisions. In addition, participants will be able to sign up for a series of practical, interactive skills-building mentorship sessions that will be facilitated by media specialist and climate experts under the supervision of NECJOGHA, NHMSs and other strategic partners.

Methodology

The trainings are going to be comprised of a select number of strategically identified media personnel who will be training twice a month from September 2016 to January 2017. The media training will be concluded by a climate café bringing in other stakeholders to stimulate interactions and giving monthly forecast and weather updates for that particular month. Climate cafes are freestyle interactions guided by intervals of communication from climate, media and stakeholders highlighting different efforts in place to help decision making guided by climate information. Climate cafes are also arranged in a way that they slowly but surely close the gap that usually exists between climate scientists and communicators.

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In addition to media personnel training, there will be media embedding in a process that will involve physical interactions of media personnel with meteorologists and other experts in each other's working environment to help each stakeholder understand the working ethic of the work they do. In this process the partnerships between the media and climate scientists will be cemented and the impending barriers of having climate information remain at the producing stations will be dealt with effectively.

1. Training objective

The major objective of the media training and climate cafes is to strengthen partnerships between media and major stakeholders to communicate effectively climate services to the end users so as to enable them to make well informed decisions guided by scientifically proven climate information. Once proof of concept is achieved in Uganda, it is hoped that the Climate Cafes can be rolled out across the region.

2. Specific objectives of the training and Climate Cafes

- Strengthen partnerships between media and stakeholders for effective climate science communication to the end users of climate services while addressing the gap that usually exist between climate scientists and journalists.
- Stimulate debate and discussion on the predicted performance of the September to December 2016 rainfall season in East Africa.
- Learn and highlight the best practices being done by different stakeholders for the benefit of the general public
- Highlighting to the general public through media the measures being put in place by major stakeholders in relation to the expected performance of SOND 2016 rainfall season as predicted by GHACOF44 and downscaled by NHMSs.
- Build the capacity of media personnel to do pro-active and pre-emptive climate reporting in a bid to effectively manage climate disasters.

To achieve this, the training will seek to raise awareness and stimulate debate on climate services provided by the NMHSs of Uganda and in due course, Kenya,

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Ethiopia and Tanzania, through Climate Cafes. The TOTs will also train more science communicators and journalists at national level to enable communication of downscaled climate and weather forecasts to the end users of climate services while reflecting the strategic goal of strengthening partnerships between media, science communicators and climate scientists.

SCIPEA, in partnership with NECJOGHA and the Ugandan meteorological service, will do the following:

- Train journalists to widen the coverage and transfer of climate information delivery to end users through effective media partnerships with climate scientists.
- Enhance awareness and visibility of SCIPEA. The media has been targeted to provide the much needed publicity of the SCIPEA Project and the role it plays in delivering information to the needed destination.
- Identify journalists to hold communication cafes to create and catalyze debate on climate information partnerships and climate services communication.

3. Activities Work Plan

- Identify and list media team to be trained
- Hold the five climate cafes in Uganda in the run-up to January
- Hold national training of media team
- Hold embedding journalists with scientists at the workstations staggered over the period September-January
- Monitoring and evaluations
- Report of the project produced

4. Expected Outcomes

- Unified country climate information communication teams positioned to deliver climate services to the end users
- Improved delivery of climate services for end users achieved
- Training prototype developed in accordance with SCIPEA objectives/outcomes
- The conspicuous gap between climate scientists and media bridged

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- Better understanding of the status of climate science gained by communicators to meet the development needs of climate information communication and services
- Shared experiences and interactions between NHMS and media within SC�PEA participating countries
- Strong linkage and partnership between NHMS and trained media team gained for effective climate information delivery
- Ground for the project continuity gained with partnerships created between climate services providers and climate information communication teams
- Preparedness for roll out of the concept to other countries in the region

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