Meeting notes from monitoring, evaluation and learning workshop
6-7 December 2016, Nairobi, Kenya

In attendance:

14 participants including representatives of the Met Office, the Africa Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), the World Meteorolgical Organization (WMO), and focal point contacts from WISER quick-start projects in Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda.

The workshop was facilitated by LTS International (LTSI).

Introduction:

As part of the WISER programme, WISER and LTS International (LTSI) conducted a two-day workshop to discuss WISER's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes. The MEL workshop provided an opportunity for key stakeholders within WISER to come together and discuss the role of MEL in project and programme design and implementation.

Objective:

The objective of the workshop was to review and revise the WISER logframe and Theory of Change to ensure that all stakeholders are conversant with the expected results and can identify where their inputs and activities fit within the WISER result chain.

During the workshop the facilitators used a mixture of presentations and discussions to ensure that participants understood the result frameworks, engaged in practical exercises in the review of the frameworks and the development of specific project result frameworks for phase two using draft MEL guidelines, and provided concrete recommendations.

Meeting introduction:

The workshop began with opening remarks from Bill Leathes, Met Office WISER Programme Fund Manager and Technical Lead. He gave an overview of WISER and the status of the quick start projects. Bill also highlighted the role of MEL in the overall project implementation.

Irene Karani of LTSI took the participants through the workshop agenda and highlighted the objectives of the workshop, after which she led a session to introduce MEL. Irene mentioned that MEL is core to project management as it provides a framework for assessing a logical train of thought from hypothesis on how the project will bring change to the specific objectives and activities needed to achieve these changes. The MEL framework also outlines methods for measuring the projects achievements and lessons.

Irene then took the participants through key terms in MEL including; monitoring, evaluation, reporting, learning, assumptions, indicators and levels of results. She also presented frameworks that will be used under the WISER programme including the logframe and Theory of Change (TOC). Irene described a logframe as a detailed linear description of the programme showing how activities will lead to the immediate outputs, and how these will lead to the outcomes and goals, while a TOC is a visual diagram that shows a pathway linking project activities and intended results. TOCs offer a clear roadmap to achieving your results and help the project to plot the journey from where it is now to where it wants to be. Key elements of both frameworks include; project activities/interventions, outputs, outcomes, impact statement, indicators and assumptions.

WISER results framework:

The introduction session was followed by a session on WISER result frameworks. The WISER TOC and logframe were presented to the participants and discussed in detail. The discussions were followed by group work where participants were divided into three groups; one group was expected to review the TOC while the other two reviewed the result statements and indicators in the logframe.

The group that reviewed the TOC was required to review its logic and make adjustments where necessary, and identify assumptions between outputs and outcomes, outcomes and impacts. Two other groups reviewed the logframe by reviewing the indicators, rephrasing the result statements and indicators where necessary, ensuring that the indicators were SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, time-bound), deleting indicators that were not appropriate and assessing whether data collection against indicators would be difficult for the projects and the fund manager.

Upon completion of the group work, the groups presented their work to the plenary where further suggestions for improvements to the TOC and logframe indicators were made.

Lessons learned:

The second day began with a recap of day one's activities. The recap session was followed by a session on lesson learning from the quick start projects that are on-going. Participants were required to use the knowledge acquired on day one of the workshop to come up with lessons learned. Some of the key lessons that came out were:

- It is important to conduct a stakeholder analysis during the design stage of the projects.
- Partnerships are key at all levels of project design and implementation.
- It is important to understand other similar initiatives that are already in place and establish networks and partnerships with them so as to avoid duplication.
- It is important to understand the baseline situation to inform the development of project results and targets.
- Information management, documentation and communication should also be considered when designing projects.
- It is important to develop MEL frameworks during the project/programme design phase as they assist in establishing a logical project idea.
- MEL frameworks can be used by various disciplines.
- The emphasis in the TOC is the logical flow. It can have linear and non-linear aspects.

Draft MEL guidelines:

The lessons learned session was followed with the participants being taken through draft MEL guidelines that LTSI had developed to guide projects on design, ensuring logic and aligning their results to the wider WISER programme results. This was followed by group work where participants were divided into three groups to work on prospective projects including Highway led by WMO, the Uganda WISER project and an ACPC project on fellowships. The groups were required to use the draft MEL guidelines to assess the logic in the project design, draw a theory of change and indicate whether the proposed project is contributing to WISER's results areas and indicators, and re-adjust where necessary.

All three groups successfully used the guidelines and were able to refine their project design and indicators and ensure there was logic in the project design.

Conclusion:

Overall the workshop was successful. At the end of the workshop, all the participants indicated that the WISER logframe and TOC were very clear to them and that they understood where their projects fitted into the overall WISER results framework.