

Personal development and regional impact

The Strengthening Climate Information Partnerships – East Africa (SCIPEA) project has piloted new climate services in the Greater Horn of Africa that are contributing to improved response to droughts. It has also made a real difference at an individual level – as Maureen Anyango’s story demonstrates.

Climate services and forecasting are nothing without partnership. Countries need to come together to share information, and meteorological organisations have to share data, forecasts and information with end users. The vision of mobilising global resources for climate information through global modelling centres, Regional Climate Centres (RCCs), National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and users of climate information, is being spearheaded by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) through the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) initiative. The GFCS has a focus on less developed countries, and SCIPEA has been working to help realise the vision in East Africa. A major vehicle for forging these links was a data-sharing portal developed by SCIPEA partner the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), and hosted by the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), the WMO RCC for the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) countries.

SCIPEA brought together meteorological organisations and end users from nations across the region. The initial aims were to understand what types of climate information people might need, and how to deliver to those requirements. But there was a third element to the project too, as Dr Richard Graham, Manager of the Met

Supported by:



Fund Manager:



Office Forecast Verification and Outreach Team, explains: “One crucial element of SC�PEA was to foster a cohort of regional climate scientists to sustain and grow the work within the region.”

Growing regional capabilities

By developing people’s skills and encouraging new collaborations, the partners involved in SC�PEA aimed to nurture talent on the ground so meteorologists across the region could continue this work in the future. One of the scientists involved was Maureen Anyango, whose career has been directly affected by the activities and methodologies of SC�PEA.

Maureen Anyango graduated from the University of Nairobi, Kenya, with a Bachelors and Masters in Meteorology with both a physical and applied focus. During her studies, she became particularly interested in tracking the causes behind complex weather events and in the wide range of forecasting usage, especially in sectors like agriculture, food security and health.

When SC�PEA launched in May 2016, Maureen was working for ICPAC who led the region-wide consortia of partners in SC�PEA. They also led coordination of activities across the four national consortia (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia), and Maureen played a key role in carrying out ICPAC’s coordination activities.

Maureen was tasked with enhancing links and data exchanges between the regional and national meteorological centres, as well as training centres such as the University of Nairobi and the Institute of Meteorological Training and Research. Using the data portal Maureen initiated the monthly process of analysing climate prospects for the whole Greater Horn of Africa region and sharing and discussing results with those generated at country scale by the four national SC�PEA consortia.

Food security impacts

Representing ICPAC, Maureen shared the SC�PEA analysis of climate prospects and other forecast information with the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG). The results had very beneficial impacts explains Maureen, with FSNWG reporting: “Our Oct/Nov 2016 drought alerts used information from working sessions with SC�PEA. It helped make our messaging more credible and contributed to governments, humanitarian and other partners responding in a timely manner and

Supported by:



Fund Manager:



preventing the worsening food security conditions from reaching famine levels as during the 2010/11 drought in this region.”

Maureen also became involved in the production of a forecast tailored to user needs. Her team produced detailed seasonal climate maps, as well as a Standard Precipitation Index that calculated predicted long-term deficits in rainfall by using the cumulative rainfall recorded in previous seasons added to the predicted rainfall for the next season ahead.

Broadening skills, building relationships

The programme enabled Maureen to advance her technical skills, especially in the interpretation and use of climate model-based seasonal forecasts, and learn more about the Climate Predictability Tool (CPT), a multi-functional tool that SCIPEA used to aid interpretation of model outputs. CPT is developed and maintained by the IRI – partners in the SCIPEA project. “SCIPEA has been fundamental in my career progression through the training and workshops,” she explains. Maureen has also extended her peer network and forged new working relationships with scientists across the community. During the project, she worked with regional climate users, national meteorological centres in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia, and training centres such as the University of Nairobi. “I am still in touch with other scientists,” she explains, “And at ICPAC we are still in collaboration with scientists and working on papers we intend to publish on the outcomes and impacts of SCIPEA.”

Through the development of training manuals for those needing to use the data portal, Maureen has also gained invaluable experience in how to develop course content vital for Dynamical Seasonal Forecasting. When the Met Office visited Kenya to discuss the March-April-May seasonal forecast, Richard Graham met her again. “Maureen was playing an active role in the training of other national meteorological service staff that always congregate before these meetings,” he says.

Maureen’s individual experience shows how SCIPEA is leaving a legacy for scientists and experts across the region to take up the reins and introduce new initiatives and collaborations into the future.

April 2018

Supported by:



Fund Manager:

