

Project summary

Decentralised Climate Information Services for decision-making in Western Kenya (WISER Western)

Introduction

The purpose of the WISER Western project was to develop and deliver demand-led and decentralised services of the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD) in the counties of Kakamega, Siaya, Kisumu and Trans Nzoia. The aim of the project was to streamline KMD's forecasting to improve existing products and services and facilitate the delivery of new ones in response to demand from users in the counties.

Production of County Climate Information Service (CIS) plans

County CIS plans were a requirement of this project in order to define the requirements and strategy for the delivery of weather and climate services in the area. In order to facilitate this work, training was provided for County Directors of Meteorology (CDMs) in partnership between the Kenyan Institute of Meteorology and Research (IMTR), the Met Office College and CARE Kenya. In addition, consultation

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took place with relevant stakeholder groups in order to ensure that local needs were being met by the plans. This included engagement with representatives from county ministries of planning, livestock, environment and agriculture.

The original project scope intended for county CIS plans to be produced for the four counties of Kakamega, Siaya, Kisumu and Trans Nzoia. An expansion of this geographical area (as detailed in the [Western Kenya project expansion briefing note](#)) resulted in the production of CIS plans for nine counties.

A [guide on developing a CIS plan](#) has been produced with further detail. During an extension of this project, validation was secured for the CIS plans with county governments to help define the requirements and strategy for delivery of climate and weather information services.

Improved communication, understanding and use of weather and climate information

Participatory scenario planning (PSP) workshops allow for the discussion of seasonal forecasts amongst relevant organisations, and the project aimed to increase the number of stakeholder groups engaged in the seasonal County Climate Outlook Forums (CCOFs) in the region. The first CCOF held during the period of the project (MAM – March, April, May) provided a benchmark for participation, which was improved upon during the second CCOF (OND – October, November, December). In addition, the timing of the second CCOF was brought forward at the request of stakeholders in order to give sufficient time to act on advice.

The communication of forecasts is critical, and the project conducted studies to establish the preferred formats that users would wish to receive forecasts, their frequency, and the most effective forms of dissemination in terms of reach and cost to KMD to ensure their ongoing delivery beyond the life of this project.

As part of this, climate intermediaries were selected and trained to receive climate information across a range of timescales and disseminate this further to their organisations and communities. These intermediaries received training and reference guides in order to aid the dissemination of weather and climate information via SMS.

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During the project extension, a review indicated that improved weekly, monthly and seasonal forecasts and severe weather warnings produced by KMD County Meteorological Directors in the project counties were reaching approximately 120,000 people.

Improved provision of downscaled climate information

Part of the CDM training course consisted of training in the use of the GEOCLIM tool. This climate gridding tool builds climate data records through gridding data points using satellite data to establish missing climate data. This was complemented by training in the use of FACTFIT, a tool allowing users to visualise a downscaled statistical seasonal forecast. These tools are now being used operationally by the CDMs to inform the production of a new suite of seasonal forecasting products and to improve the timeliness and accuracy of the seasonal forecasts delivered at the CCOFs.

Weather forecast prototypes were also developed for the region including a general daily weather forecast as well as specialist forecasts for farmers and fishermen. A [guide](#) to these forecasts is available with more information.

Lesson learning, and monitoring and evaluation to inform the development of climate services in the region

Developing decentralised Climate Information Services (CIS) is a process entailing a wide range of actors and forms of collaboration. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) frameworks which can effectively track this process are essential to demonstrate the benefits and build support for the increased investment which the development of these services requires. A [policy brief](#) is available providing detail on this aspect of the WISER Western project.

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Conclusion

Overall, the project has proven successful in supporting KMD's provision of decentralised climate information services to a greater range and number of end-users. Through the development of new products and services and the means to disseminate these, the project has improved what KMD is able to provide at the county level and gathered a number of important lessons for the broader application of these services across the country. The project has also enhanced KMD's ability to demonstrate the worth of its services and influence on national and county government institutions.

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