

AMCOMET

4th African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology

Introduction

The 4th African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology took place in Cairo, Egypt from 18-23 February 2019. The WISER programme was represented by the Met Office and the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).



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Overview of the event

AMCOMET is co-sponsored by the African Union Commission and the World Meteorological Organization. The fourth session was hosted by the Egyptian Meteorological Authority and included a joint technical segment and Regional Technical Conference (RECO) held back-to-back alongside WMO's quadrennial Regional Association for Africa (RAI). They were preceded by a WMO-sponsored Women's Leadership Workshop.

AMCOMET exists to increase the political support and recognition of national meteorological services' contribution to socio-economic development and poverty reduction across Africa. It provides an intergovernmental body that is politically recognised as a ministerial body of the African Union and acts as the high-level mechanism where sustainable development programmes and AMCOMET partners collaborate.

It is upheld by the AMCOMET Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology and focuses on five interrelated strategic pillars:

- Increase political support and recognition of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and regional climate centres
- Improve access to meteorological services (especially marine and aviation sectors)
- Strengthen partnerships with institutions and funding mechanisms
- Enhance weather and climate services for sustainable development
- Support the provision of weather and climate services for climate change adaptation and mitigation

Participants at AMCOMET included:

- African Government Ministers
- African Permanent Representatives (PR's) to the WMO
- National meteorological and hydrological services (NMHSs)
- World Meteorological Organization
- African Union Commission
- Weather and climate experts and development partners across public sector, private sector and NGOs

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Joint WISER session

WISER was represented during the technical segment of AMCOMET by the Met Office (Adam Curtis), ACPC (Frank Rutabingwa) and WMO (Joseph Mukabana, Jay Wilson and Yvette Ramos). The team presented an update on WISER activities during a plenary session aiming to inform senior-level NMHS decision makers on how lessons learnt from the pilot phase informed the scope of WISER Phase 2, an update on programme progress, an overview of future plans and a focus on national strategic planning.

Specifically, the plenary was split into four segments followed by an open plenary for questions and discussion:

Segment one was led by Joseph Mukabana, who delivered a presentation highlighting the importance of national strategic planning and how WISER has worked with the WMO to facilitate planning within NMHSs. Key points included:

- Stating that national strategic plans sit above an operational plan (which is costed and timebound) and is updated through a medium-term review;
- Clarifying that strategic planning within an institution is a process of defining/formulating strategy/direction and making decisions on allocating resources to pursue the strategy. It's a roadmap for development and a crucial tool for planning and strategic management;
- Noting that a final strategy should set goals and determine actions to achieve the goals and mobilise resources to execute the actions. To that end, a strategy describes how the ends (goals) will be achieved by the means (resources) through defined actions;
- Highlighting strategic planning as one of the most important management tools as it enables leaders and managers to identify their priorities and to focus on what matters most for their institutions. Rapidly evolving societal needs requires leaders to have the capacity to design and execute long-term solutions to complex problems;
- Encouraging experts engaged to develop national strategic plans to be tasked to develop operating plans, which are costed with timelines, with the performance of an institution related to its capacity to implement strategy effectively; and

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- Recognising the requirement for sustainable funding by governments and delivery partners to implement strategic and operational plans through projects has been a key link performed through WISER.

Following on from the strategic planning introduction, segment two was led by Adam Curtis who delivered a high-level presentation to raise knowledge and understanding of the WISER programme and its projects across Africa. Key points included:

- Highlighting WISER programme's mission between 2016 and 2020 '*to deliver transformational change in the quality, accessibility and use of weather and climate information services at all levels of decision making for sustainable development in Africa*'
- Showcasing WISER aims to deliver value for money by working in partnership and collaboration, across 30 organisations, to enhance capacity building and leverage funds ensuring long term sustainable delivery and improvement of weather and climate services
- Explaining the WISER programme split, with Met Office acting as fund manager for the East Africa component of WISER, focusing on the Lake Victoria Basin and surrounding region to improve the quality and relevance of weather and climate information and support its uptake and use. While ACPC acts as fund manager for the pan-African component of the WISER programme focusing on improvements of the governance and enabling environment for weather and climate services
- Describing the learning from Phase 1 to Phase 2, including improvements in weather forecast reach, agricultural production increases and co-production benefits and an overview of current regional projects (HIGHWAY, AMDAR, TRANSFORM W2-SIP and WEATHERWISE) and national projects (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda)
- Expanding on the cross cutting WISER programme principles which include:
 - Focussing on service delivery that recognises the need for co-produced products and services;
 - Providing support to climate information providers, users, intermediaries and other collaborators;
 - Developing interventions based around suitable regional, national or sub national plans;
 - Demonstrating a contribution to delivering socio-economic benefits; and

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- Working in partnership. For example, promoting coordination and collaboration with other complementary projects, programmes and initiatives.

Following on from the WISER overview, Frank Rutabingwa led segment three with an overview of ACPC's pan-Africa WISER programme. Key points included:

- Highlighting the programme aims around creating an enabling environment and stimulating demand for CIS uptake and investments at the highest level of policy making; and
- Showcasing key achievements, including;
 - Development of a standardised methodology for needs assessment, strategic and business planning for NMHS's and development of plans in selected countries;
 - Production of consolidated baseline report on the needs and gaps in Regional Climate Centres (RCCs);
 - Study and models developed on social economic benefits (SEB) of CIS and value for money (VfM) using Vensim software;
 - Development of learning module and CIS awareness raising for Pan-African parliament, CSOs and CBOs in Kenya and the media in Cameroon;
 - Development of grant mechanism and other preliminary work and studies for the Climate Research for Development (CR4D) programme;
 - Socio-economic benefit (SEB) of CIS model customised for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) application and utility in Agriculture, energy and water nexus;
 - DRR focal points and stakeholders in agriculture, energy and water trained on SEB of CIS models and utility in planning;
 - Mapping of projects/initiatives/institutions in CIS value chain and interactive google map produced;;
 - A community of practice online platform for CIS innovations developed and activated for use by various stakeholders;
 - Application of WMO CIS data sharing standards and protocols reviewed and recommendations made for use in sharing data;
 - Selection of the Africa Academy of Sciences (AAS) to manager initial research grants of Climate Research for Development (CR4D);
 - Consultation with women groups and gender advocates and opinion leaders on importance of gender engagement in CIS value chain,; and

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- Highlighting progress on national strategic planning in collaboration with WMO and also assessing the uptake, usefulness and impact with a view to improve the effectiveness of the planning tools made available through WISER.

Finally, Yvette Ramos led segment four with an overview of WMO's case study on the usefulness of the national strategic planning template and guide developed under WISER. Key points included:

- Understanding the purpose of the case study to gain a clear understanding of the process that NMHSs went through in developing their national strategic plans;
- Analysing the usefulness of the national strategic plans for NMHSs and how it identifies key products and services required at the national level and the potential visibility NMHSs gain resulting from strategic planning;
- Identifying that NMHSs benefited from strategic planning by;
 - Better understanding the internal and external environment
 - Defining, or redesigning missions, visions and core values
 - Setting strategic objectives to help achieve NMHS visions
 - Raising the level of visibility, engagement of stakeholders
 - Helping mobilise financial resources for specific projects, or parts of projects
 - Motivating employees around planning units/teams
- Noting that challenges include;
 - Linkages with the GFCS
 - Linkages with the Quality Management System (and ISO9001 certification)
 - Enhancing soft skills of NMHSs
 - Assessing staff skills, performance, motivation and human resources management
 - Understanding/incorporating the total hydromet/climate services value chain and marketing/ business development
 - Getting closer to the stakeholder, including communication, product marketing, project management
 - Getting closer to the financiers/government bodies, including public relations, planning units, budgeting and finance

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Kenya Meteorological Department provided an individual case study on how their strategic planning through WISER, led to effective project development of the CRISPP (Coastal Resilience & Improving Services for Potato Production) project in Kenya. Key points included:

- Strengthening KMD strategic planning was achieved through consultation with multiple stakeholders;
- Noting that the aims of the plan were to reflect societal needs on protection of life and property; safety of transport; poverty eradication; sustainable livelihood and economic growth; sustainable use of natural resources; disaster risk management;
- Highlighting that projects directly deliver against specific indicators, goals and strategic objectives in a KMD performance measurement framework;
- Realising the strong focus on enhancing external relations alongside institutional development of KMD to foster closer collaboration between KMD and stakeholders; and
- Enhancing county level weather and climate services for improved service delivery, this key project aspiration to reduce adverse socio-economic impacts of weather and climate.

Benefits of the strategic planning approach included:

- Realising project benefits were likely to be sustained in the long-term by linking to strategic goals and objectives;
- Acknowledging approaches promoted by the project spread to other parts of KMD in particular in training, planning and budget units;
- Understanding future plans focussed on promoting the co-production approach through other parts of the organisation; and
- Noting that the approach helped to meet KMD's obligations under Kenya's Vision 2030 Medium Term Plan.

Feedback was requested from the plenary floor, with Uganda stating that strategic planning undertaken in UNMA was positive, however the short timescales imposed during the development of strategic planning was noted as a challenge. There was also a request from Uganda to include PR's in the strategic plan development process early in order to gain inclusion and trust across management, consultants and staff at an early stage. Feedback from the panel to Uganda was that change

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management was a key component of the strategic planning process that needed to be factored into the process going forward.

Cameroon requested further information on the links required between NMHSs and the GFCS, with the panel stating that NMHSs provide a component part towards the GFCS and therefore required appropriate alignment across the GFCS, NMHSs and their strategic plans.

Benin noted that national strategic planning required significant buy-in from stakeholders to be effective.

Conclusion

The joint WISER session at AMCOMET showcased the latest progress WISER is making across the programme and projects to senior level NMHS decision makers and how it aims to achieve value for money and socio-economic benefit from weather and climate information services uptake.

The value of partnerships is important to WISER. During AMCOMET, WISER principles were upheld by close working and collaboration across WISER fund management and delivery partners to highlight linkages between WISER projects and national strategic planning.

WISER aims to demonstrate how partnerships and collaborations can be harnessed to benefit weather and climate science, the development of weather and climate products and services, the communication of weather and climate information and ultimately the uptake and use of products by policy makers, planners and practitioners. These key steps are a vital component in delivering socio-economic benefit.

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