



ROLE OF SECTORAL EXPERTS IN TAITA TAVETA CLIMATE SERVICES

Co-production and user engagement have been key recurring words in climate services. This has been attributed to the fact that these two words lie at the core of sustainable climate services. For years, the meteorological departments, the sectors and current key stakeholders in climate services were working individual, duplicating effort while utilizing the little available resources to offer weather and climate related services and information for decision making and planning to their users. It has been on this basis that an increase in advocacy to create synergies has been registered across the world, in Kenya and now in Taita Taveta County.

A largely agricultural area, Taita Taveta County prides itself on crop and livestock production as their mainstay. As one of the Counties that have been affected by the harsh realities of climate variability and change, Taita Taveta County's risk profile has increased in relation to erratic rainfall patterns and high temperatures in addition to drought and flood occurrence frequencies. As a result several stakeholders including government, NGOs and CBOs, and specialized institutions have been joining efforts to improve the resilience of the County's population through climate services for adaptation. One such partnership has been experienced with the Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP) and the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) who have been contributing to co-produced climate services for decision making for the County.

During the March-April-May 2019 rainfall season, ASDSP and NDMA together with other stakeholders participated in the inaugural County Climate Forum for Taita Taveta. The Forum utilized and continues to utilize the Participatory Scenario Planning approach to generate advisories and in a bid to offer farmers the best possible chance to continuously adapt to the evolving weather and climate. ASDSP, working under the Ministry of Agriculture has been utilizing the forum to get a better understanding on weather and climate information in addition to utilizing the forum to increase agricultural productivity in Taita Taveta. This has been through providing expert input towards agricultural advisories including what to plant, suitable seed varieties based on the rainfall amounts, weeding and harvesting among other agricultural activities. In addition, ASDSP has been able to increase its interaction with organizations and initiatives working within the agricultural sector enhancing synergy as they work to

improve the farmers' adaptive capacity. Similarly, NDMA, utilizing its drought management structure has been able to support planning and decision making among farmers, County government among other stakeholders through continuous monitoring of drought conditions. This has been gradually supporting agricultural stakeholders' transition from reactive drought response to active management of drought conditions.

Both ASDSP and NDMA, through the forum, have also increased the reach of information they offer. This has been credited to increased interaction with a variety of stakeholders resulting to increased communication channels for information sharing. In addition, they are able to get community feedback on advisories given and current conditions from farmer, women and youth group representatives who attend the forum. Key to the increased interaction has been the Taita Taveta media meteorology and media partners' WhatsApp platform. As part of the sectoral expert team, ASDSP and NDMA have been interacting with the media providing technical input and clarification to weather and climate information discussions. Going forward, the increased synergy within the agricultural sector is hoped will grow the adaptive capacity and resilience among the Taita Taveta Farmers.

Written By: Jemimah Wakini

