

Workshop On Enhancing Climate Information Services In Africa



Africa
Adaptation
Initiative

Summary and conclusions

—

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Maun Lodge
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www.africaadaptationinitiative.org

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The AAI is an African-led initiative that will draw on expertise and experience on the continent to help African countries enhance action on both adaptation and implementing approaches to address loss and damage.

Introduction

The Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) was established with the objective of enhancing adaptation action and implementing approaches to address loss and damage in Africa. The AAI was formally launched at COP 21 in Paris in December 2015. To achieve its objective, the AAI has four key areas of work or pillars: (1) enhancing climate information services to support decision-making; (2) strengthening policies and institutions; (3) enhancing on-the-ground action; and (4) mobilizing climate investment. The AAI's framework document outlining the targets and activities in each of the four pillars was launched in November 2016 at COP 22 in Marrakech. A workplan outlining the planned activities for 2017-2018 was approved at a Technical Working Group (TWG) held in May 2017. The function of the TWG is to guide the operationalization of the AAI. While all four pillars will be implemented in tandem with one another, the AAI has recognized the importance of enhancing climate information services as a foundation to supporting decision-making on adaptation and addressing loss and damage. Given this, the AAI has focused some of its initial activities on its first pillar, enhancing climate information services.

As part of the collaboration with the World Bank Group to identify and enhance synergies with selected components of the bank's Africa Climate Business Plan (ACBP), such as the Africa Hydromet Programme, the AAI held a stakeholder workshop in Maun, Botswana from 22 to 23 June, 2017 hosted by the Government of Botswana. The aim of the workshop was two-fold:

- To develop a better understanding of the gaps on climate information services on the continent, building on recent work of the GFCS, WISER and other partners; and
- To develop a plan for how the AAI can add value to the landscape of initiatives working on climate information services in Africa, including by supporting the Africa Hydromet Programme.



Pillar 1: Enhancing Climate Information Services



Pillar 2: Strengthening policies and institutions



Pillar 3: Enhancing on-the ground action



Pillar 4: Increasing access to and mobilising climate finance and investment

A total of 27 representatives of institutions and organizations undertaking work to enhance climate information services across the African continent as well as several representatives of the Government of Botswana attended the workshop. The conclusions of the workshop, as well as the next steps for continued collaboration amongst the institutions represented at the workshop, are summarized below.

¹ The Framework document and other information about planned activities of AAI can be found at: africaadaptationinitiative.org

Conclusions

1. What are the gaps and needs on climate information services in Africa?

- **Increasing the observational network:** The provision of climate information services is a development issue and climate information services is important to ensure that robust development decisions can be made that integrate climate change. The coverage of observational networks in most African countries is not sufficient to provide adequate data for decision-making. The African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) is the body responsible for overseeing the continental strategy on enhancing climate information services in Africa. There is an opportunity for more engagement between AMCOMET and other institutions to strengthen the observational network in African countries.
- **Coordination and coherence:** There is the need for enhanced coordination and coherence at the continental, regional and national levels including:
 - Between and among the producers and users of climate information services to ensure that the users are engaged in the co-production of climate information services to optimize its relevance for decision-making. The value of climate information is in the outcome in terms of the decisions that are made and the actions implemented;
 - Between African countries and Regional Climate Centres and other regional institutions to ensure that regional institutions meet the needs of African countries;
 - Between African countries and institutions supporting work to enhance climate information services in Africa, including how climate information services can be better incorporated into national adaptation plans (NAPs). In many African countries local information is not available to inform NAPs. In addition, there is often no overarching framework to guide climate information services in African countries. It was suggested that African countries need support to develop policy frameworks on climate information services which could support both NAPs and nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and that AAI could play a role in facilitating this; and
 - Among institutions undertaking relevant work on the continent, including potentially through the establishment of a repository of information or a permanent institution, to map the on-going work to enhance climate information services in Africa. There is also a need to improve the way in which organizations communicate and share information with one another. The need to enhance coordination between AMCOMET, regional and national institutions and African countries was also highlighted.
- **Enhancing capacity on several fronts to enhance climate information services including through:**
 - Providing training and capacity building opportunities for African modelers and scientists to increase research outputs that are relevant for Africa. Some of this work is already being done but it can be scaled-up through partnerships and collaboration;
 - Supporting African countries to develop the capacity to collect and manage data and develop and use climate information services to support decision-making on adaptation and addressing loss and damage. It is also important to ensure that African countries have the capacity to maintain equipment; and
 - Ensuring that Regional Climate Centres have the capacity they need to provide much needed support to African countries.
- **More focus on research and development.** Research and development is often fragmented and inadequate within African countries. There is a lack of downscaled, locally relevant information across the continent. Much of the information comes from the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). There is a need to develop climate models for seasonal and sub-seasonal applications to provide relevant climate information services to decision makers, including farmers. WISER's work in East Africa is a model which could be scaled up to other parts of the continent. Other initiatives like Climate Research for Development (CR4D) have been developed but more work is needed to fill the research gap.
- **Additional resource to address the finance gap.** National Hydromet Services (NHMSs) are severely underfunded. Additional funding is needed, including for research and development, but it is critical to ensure that the funding that is available is channeled to the needs. There could be a role for the private sector and private-public partnerships but a better understanding is needed of the potential entry points for support from the private sector.

2. How can the gaps and needs be addressed to enhance climate information services in Africa? What is the role of other institutions and what is the potential role of AAI?

What are the gaps?	Who can address the gaps?	What is the potential role for AAI?
Infrastructure	AMCOMET Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology, GFCS, Africa Hydromet Programme, ClimDev-Africa and WISER	Partnering with these institutions, particularly AMCOMET to support the implementation of other initiatives such as the Africa Hydromet Programme
Research and development	CR4D and WISER	Partnering with ACPC to support CR4D and with WISER to scale up on-going work
Coordination and Coherence	AMCOMET, AMCEN, GFCS, Africa Hydromet Programme, WFP, ClimDev-Africa, UNDP, UNEP and WISER	Partnering with these institutions including by participating in mapping of on-going work
Capacity building	WMO regional centres, national and regional research institutions and universities and WISER	Partnering with these institutions to scale up on-going initiatives and supporting African countries to develop policy frameworks for climate information services
Resource mobilization	GCF, AfDB, ClimDev-Africa, Africa Hydromet Programme, World Bank, AMCEN and AMCOMET	Strengthening partnerships with the GCF, the AfDB and the Africa Hydromet Programme and raising the political profile of climate information services



Long-term and sustainable financing to support climate information services in Africa is critical.

3. What are the lessons learned from implementing projects and programs?

- Despite increased investment, particularly in observational infrastructure, the provision of climate information services is declining. One opportunity to addressing this need is to develop new models for citizen observation.
- Country assessments are important and should be carried out where funding is available but it is also important to coordinate and collaborate and to build on assessments that have already been undertaken including through the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) to avoid duplicating work.
- Coherence and coordination are critical. It is important that institutions working in countries have an understanding of the on-going work in each country as well as entry points for how they can add value. Information should be shared between the regional and national levels as well.
- Long-term and sustainable financing to support climate information services in Africa is critical.
- The dialogue between the producers and users of climate information services must be strengthened. There is a role for traditional knowledge but there is also a need to determine how to understand and incorporate/ integrate this information into scientific knowledge systems. Ultimately, information must be reliable, easy to understand and provided in a format that is useful for decision-makers. A user interface platform is one of the pillars of the GFCS and has a role to play here.
- National and regional research institutions should be strengthened to ensure they can provide support for research that is relevant for Africa. Much of the information in the reports of the IPCC are not locally relevant for Africa. There is also a potential role for the African diaspora in supporting research on the continent.
- The link between development and climate information services is important. Governments need to understand the policy entry points for supporting development.
- It is important to have realistic expectations. Projects can often take longer than anticipated. In particular, bureaucracy and governance can be challenging when dealing with multiple institutions.
- There has been a lot of work on the continent to enhance climate information services. It is time to move beyond pilots and to be bold to develop new ways of thinking and doing to meet the needs.
- It is important to minimize the use of project coordination units which do not contribute to sustainability and rather to build the capacity of staff within institutions.
- Monitoring and evaluation should be adapted to meet the needs of institutions and projects. There is no one-size-fits-all model that meets all needs.
- There is a role for the private sector in enhancing climate information services but more information is needed to develop appropriate models and understand the possible entry points for private sector engagement.
- The political importance of enhancing climate information services needs to be elevated. This could support resource mobilization for the range of institutions already undertaking relevant work on the continent. Further engagement is needed with AMCOMET's Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology.

Next steps

In developing the next steps it was decided that the outcome of the stakeholder mapping hosted by the GFCS in Saly, Senegal from 1 – 3 May, 2017, should be built upon. The next steps discussed include:

- **Integrating AAI into the community of practice on climate information services:** A community of practice was built upon during the course of the workshop. Representatives of the GFCS, the WMO and AMCOMET committed to engage the AAI and in future discussions, including steering committee meetings. All participants agreed to keep each other up to date on future work.
- **Strengthened engagement between AMCOMET and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN):** There was a commitment by the AAI to ensure that AMCEN was provided with the conclusions of the workshop and to foster collaboration between the two institutions.
- **Preliminary mapping of on-going work to enhance climate information services:** An initial and preliminary mapping of on-going work to enhance climate information services in Africa building on the outcome of the Saly meeting was undertaken to begin to outline how the gaps and needs could be addressed and what institutions could address them. The outcome of this discussion is included in the table above. A comprehensive mapping will be done at a later stage.
- **Commitment to enhance collaboration and coherence:** The participants were all committed to enhance coordination and coherence by collaborating and partnering with other institutions.
 - The AAI and ACPC committed to engaging in discussions of how AAI could play a role in supporting CR4D;
 - The AAI and Weather and Climate Services for Africa (WISER) committed to engaging in discussions on the potential role of AAI in supporting WISER in expanding its work;
 - There was an interest in WFP to engage in discussions on how AAI can play a role in scaling up the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative;
 - The AAI and the Africa Hydromet Programme committed to engage in discussions to further develop synergies and to keep one another apprised in plans for future work; and
 - The AAI and AMCOMET determined to engage in further discussions to develop areas of collaboration and coherences, including potentially at high levels through AMCEN.
- **Planned meeting to undertake a more comprehensive mapping of climate information services in Africa:** The WFP volunteered to host a two or three-day meeting in Rome to allow the group to undertake a comprehensive mapping of the state of work on climate information services and food security in Africa. Further discussions on the mapping process will continue.
- Commitment by participants to continue to engage with one another to build on the outcome of the Saly meeting, the outcome of Maun meeting, and to increase coherence and coordination amongst the landscape of initiatives working to enhance climate information services in Africa.

The link between development and climate information services is important. Governments need to understand the policy entry points for supporting development.

Photos

Participants during AAI Workshop on Enhancing climate information services in Africa



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AAI

Enhancing action on adaptation and addressing
loss and damage in Africa

Africa Adaptation Initiative



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