

CONCEPT NOTE

for

WISER Pan-Africa Closing Workshop

09-10 Dec 2021

Nairobi, Kenya

Background

The increasing complexity of climate change challenges requires that policy analysis support be provided to Africa's decision makers in developing response strategies, aimed at keeping development and economic growth trajectories on track in the face of a changing climate. In particular, the challenge of mainstreaming climate change into development and the implementation of the NDCs under the Paris Agreement will be even more complex without a substantive uptake of CIS. Therefore, the integration of Weather and Climate Information Services (CIS) in development policy, planning and programmes is vital for Africa to achieve the development objectives as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sendai framework, Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2063. This, however, requires an enabling environment for substantive investments and uptake of CIS, supported by applied research and policy analyses, as well as coordinated approaches to service delivery, strengthened knowledge frameworks and partnerships between public institutions, the private sector, civil society and vulnerable communities.

The aim of climate information services (CIS) is to provide people and organizations with reliable, timely, user-friendly and tailored climate-related information to reduce climate-related losses and thereby enhance benefits. Hence, factoring CIS into policy, planning and practices are crucial for Africa to achieve its aspirational goals for enhanced competitiveness, reduced poverty and sustainable economic growth. Moreover, advanced knowledge of climate information coupled with appropriate advisory services enhance the capacity of the African society to adapt to climate variability and climate change and thereby improve their capacity to manage climate-related risks. However, the relevance of weather and climate information to the end-users are largely dependent on a number of factors including the ability

of scientists to provide fit-for-purpose information, packaged in formats that can be integrated easily into decision-making processes, and others .

The uptake and use of CIS in Africa is influenced by many factors including the lack of reliable historical observations, coarse scale of future climate projections, weak coordinated CIS delivery, and others. Moreover, from the users' side, the main obstacles for poor uptake and utility of CIS include limited awareness about the existence of specific climate information, poor data accessibility, and lack of capacity to use climate information into decision making process. Accelerated CIS uptake for development planning in Africa also requires an enabling environment for substantive investments and uptake of climate information services, supported by applied research and policy analyses, as well as coordinated approaches to service delivery, strengthened knowledge frameworks and partnerships between public institutions, the private sector, civil society and vulnerable communities.

Africa has greater intention to improve CIS, most recently with the adoption of the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology although climate information is not widely available and, even where available, it is not used effectively in decision-making process. Moreover, the existing donor-funded programmes are piecemeal, short-lived and not well targeted. Hence, an innovative CIS initiative that provides science-informed solutions to the prevailing climate science and policy challenges are vital for the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda in Africa. Countries in Africa should, therefore, invest on robust climate information and services delivery system for the effective implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and associated mechanisms established through the global climate governance processes.

There is increasing evidence that policy acumen, knowledge brokering, integration into policy processes, contextual demonstration of evidence (making the credible case), identification of opportunities, and an integrated multidisciplinary approach are some of the key prerequisites for policy influence at the highest levels¹. Therefore, to facilitate high level policy influence for a conducive policy and regulatory framework in support of accelerated CIS uptake for development planning it is, therefore, important to apply such an approach, focusing on (i) strategies to elevate the importance of CIS to the policy discourse of high level policy makers and change drivers, (ii) articulation and demonstration of persuasive evidence-based perspectives on the importance of CIS for development planning, recognising that climate change and development are two sides of the same coin, (iii) aligning with regional policy processes to capitalize on opportunities for policy influence, (iv) generating and brokering knowledge on CIS and

¹ See, for example, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eet.1752/full>

development planning, and (v) ensuring that knowledge products are commensurate with communication strategies for highest impact.

Context

Findings from the implementation of the pan-African component of the Weather and climate Information SERvices (WISER) Phase I (2015-2016) indicated that the uptake and use of CIS into development planning, policy and practice in Africa is largely dependent on the relevance of the information to the needs of the users. The study specifically noted that the policy and legislative environment does not provide sufficient incentives for the uptake and use of CIS. This could be attributed to weak institutional and human capacities to provide user-driven quality climate data and information. Furthermore, the existing numerous fragmented initiatives on the continent are unable to influence the policy and legislative agenda in the continent because of weak or complete absence of coordination mechanisms. Lack of appropriate strategies for brokering and managing the information and knowledge produced from the numerous initiatives and interventions do not yet exist to enhance the impact of CIS for end-users as well as to fully engage with CSOs, private sector, as well as NHMS and various government ministries. The collaborative research platform in the continent for co-designing, co-resourcing, co-producing and co-communicating user-driven climate information and services are also found to be not existing or weak, if existed.

Under the auspices of FCDO, the ACPC in collaboration with the UK Met Office have been continuing to implement the second phase of Weather and Climate Information Services for Africa (WISER) programme since 2017/18. The overarching objective of WISER was to contribute to addressing the climate information services (CIS) gap in Eastern Africa and the region, by catalyzing the accelerated uptake of CIS for development planning and practice. WISER includes two related components; (i) the East African (EA) component through the UK Meteorological Office (UKMET) to strengthen weather observation networks and forecasting, developing WCIS, ensuring that information is user-driven and reaches users in a timely and accessible way to inform decision making; and (ii) the Pan-African (PA) component implemented by the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to strengthen the enabling environment for CIS uptake and investment at the highest level of policy making and strengthening intellectual leadership in climate science in Africa through the African-led research through the Climate Research for Development (CR4D) initiative. Both outputs seek to contribute to the overall impact of WISER through ensuring the integration of CIS into development policy across key development sectors and ensure the long-term sustainability of CIS as a core input into development policy.

Through partnerships and collaborations ACPC was able to: (i) carry out studies to provide analytical evidence of the socio-economic benefit and value for money investments in CIS uptake in climate sensitive sectors such as water, energy, agriculture, health and DRR; (ii) out of several studies conducted numerous knowledge products have been produced during 6years, translated and packaged for use by all stakeholders and end users of CIS; (iii) made use of existing platforms to enhance the enabling environment for accelerated investments in CIS, and (iv) enhanced CIS knowledge and awareness of key policy makers and influence groups including - Pan African Parliament, national Parliaments, women and Youth as well as media.

Under the second sub-outputs of strengthening intellectual leadership in climate science in Africa, the ACPC started a postdoc climate researchers fellowship programme, implemented through a research grant mechanism and successfully carried out an African driven research priorities for 18-month despite the challenges of COVID-19. This grant management mechanism is a joint initiative between the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to support the African-led CR4D climate research priorities. This follows on the work undertaken for DFID and ACPC last summer by the consultancy firm Dalberg, which identified African Academy of Science (AAS) as one of three short-listed institutions that sufficiently met the general requirements for the above pilot initiative. The WISER-funded CR4D research grant awarded 21 post-doctoral fellows where they contributed much to the scientific knowledge where at least 87 publications in form of journal articles, blogs, policy briefs, book chapters, and others.

Objectives

The ACPC in conjunction with WISER Pan-Africa implementing partners will convene a hybrid workshop to review the key achievements and outcomes, challenges and lessons learned from the 6-years long of implementing the Pan African component of Weather and Climate Information Services programme.

Specifically, the workshop will seek to fulfil the following tasks:

- Outcome presentations of WISER Pan-Africa activities;
- Presentations of CR4D achievements;
- Discuss the outcomes, challenges and lessons learned during wiser implementation.
- Get feedback from participants on opportunities to ensure continuity and sustainability of support initiated during the WISER project;
- Agree on next steps in securing the sustainability of the regional climate research agenda (CR4D programme).

Expected Results

1. Succinct enumeration of lessons, key messages and outcomes of the WISER Pan-Africa component;
2. An understanding of enduring partner support and collaboration needs;
3. Ideas and next steps in elevating the production and uptake of climate research in development policy and plans.

Structure

The structure of the two day hybrid workshop will consist of an overview of the six-year WISER Pan-Africa WISER programme in improving the policy and enabling environment and addressing the paucity of the uptake of climate information for development planning. And day two focusing on outcomes of Climate Research for Development (CR4D) Fellowship programme work and outcomes. To this end, ACPC will step participants key achievement in both enabling environment for CIS uptake and Climate Research for Development(CR4D).

For each presentation, the participants will be invited to share views and reflect on the presentation made. There will be session to discuss lessons learned and recommendation for continuation of the initiatives by ACPC as follows on the topics:

- The social economic benefits of CIS;
- Knowledge and awareness of CIS by policy makers and influence groups;
- CIS Coordination;
- Regional climate research for development agenda.

Participants

All WISER Pan-Africa implementation partners that include WMO, Africa RCCs (ACMAD, ICPAC, SADC-CSC, ECCAS-CSC, AGRHYMET), focal persons from regional institutions that received CIS training, IIED, UNITAR, key consultants who supported various outputs, AAS, CR4D organs (Secretariat, OB, SAC and ICP) and selected research grantees.

FCDO and WISER East Africa will also be invited to the workshop to make an overview presentation of Wiser EA achievements.