

CIRDA NEWS

A monthly newsletter brought to you by UNDP-GEF's CIRDA Team

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Stories in this Newsletter

Procurement Assistance to the CIRDA Project

Support in Data Digitalization

Call to Action: Taking Requests

Noted Entries from the CIRDA Blog and Webpage



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Procurement Assistance to the CIRDA Project

As part of the CIRDA Programme's objective to enhance the capacity to monitor and forecast extreme weather, hydrology and climate change, the Procurement Support Office (PSO) of UNDP and UNDP – GEF have established a collaboration framework to support in the procurement of weather, climate and hydrological monitoring infrastructure and new technologies geared at supporting Met Agencies in their efforts to collect, interpret and disseminate climate data. Support to countries will be financed through the Multi Country Support CIRDA Programme.

Procurement support includes: a) reviewing technical specifications and ToRs developed by requisitioning units & projects; b) feedback and recommendations pertaining the suitability of technical specifications/requirements to conduct procurement processes; c) market research and sourcing activities to ensure awareness and interest of relevant supplier base; d) review of procurement documents (EOIs, solicitation documents, ITBs, RFPs, etc.) submitted by requisitioning units/ projects; e) assistance to COs & projects with procurement related clarifications during tender processes; f) reviewing submissions to contract review committees and provide recommendations to COs and projects; g) assistance and backstopping support to ensure satisfactory completion of vendor's contractual obligations and; h) developing managing and maintaining, suitable procurement tools, systems, mechanisms, agreements and contracts to ensure reliable on-going supply chain mechanisms.

For more information regarding the assistance that is available feel free to email Alfonso Buxens, PSO Procurement Advisor (alfonso.buxens@undp.org) and/or Benjamin Larroquette (benjamin.larroquette@undp.org), UNDP – GEF CI/EWS Regional Technical Advisor.

CIRDA Support to Met Agencies in Data Digitalization

The lack of digitized climate data has been a recurrent challenge facing Met Agencies in their efforts to communicate and analyse climate information in an effective and timely manner. Through the Multi Country Support CIRDA Programme, support will be offered to national Met Agencies in digitizing the climate data incoming from their hydromet stations. Data digitalization will go a long way in developing climatologies, satellite-based products and potentially forecasts.

As needs will inevitably vary from country to country, the CIRDA team will shortly begin to circulate individual country surveys to gauge where each country stands, identify national priorities and best practices. For any questions or suggestions feel free to email Bonizella Biagini (bonizella.biagini@undp.org), CIRDA Programme Manager, and/or Mark Tadross (mark.tadross@undp.org), Technical Specialist on CI/ EWS.

Call to Action: Taking requests

The Multi-country Programme on Climate Information for Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa (CIRDA) is aimed at providing regional support to the 11 countries participating in the LDCF funded Climate Information Project. Its objective is to meet the country's and region's needs to generate, process and disseminate high quality and timely weather and climate data that is comprehensive, reliable, accessible in a form that end users can understand.

In views of providing the support that each country needs, the CIRDA Programme is looking to forge strategic partnerships with development agencies, regional information centers, experts, technology providers and potential end users.

As part of this year's CIRDA Annual Workplan, market studies on identifying private sector links and public sector needs will be commissioned. In addition, a training workshop on data interpretation will be held at the end of this year. A blog has also been set up to communicate the latest information relevant to the CIRDA Project and on the role of climate information.

However, to provide the assistance that each country needs we look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions. Please let us know what type of assistance you are hoping to receive or what are your major challenges. We look forward to working with you on your pressing needs so feel free to participate through the blog or by contacting Programme Manager, Bonizella Biagini and/or Benjamin Larroquette, UNDP – GEF CI/EWS Regional Technical Advisor.

CIRDA is the Multi Country Programme to Strengthen Climate Information for Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa. Funded by the GEF and implemented by the UNDP, CIRDA is working with 11 countries in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia) to support national climate services in their efforts to collect, analyse and disseminate climate information as a key tool in long term planning and adaptation.

Global warming's effect on extreme Indian Ocean Dipole: What it means for Africa



The CIRDA Team recently came across a paper in the weekly journal Nature discussing how global warming will likely impact an anomaly to the ocean/atmosphere circulation over the Indian Ocean (commonly known as the positive Indian Ocean Dipole or pIOD). By using various climate models that take into account an outlook with high GHG, the paper goes on to project that the frequency of high pIOD events will increase by almost three times.

What does this mean for Africa? For East Africa in particular the news is not good as major flooding events are likely to become much more common than in the past (increasing by a factor of 3 to 5 times). The potential for negative impacts on agriculture and infrastructure along rivers is very high.

Regarding the article, one of our CIRDA Experts commented "One of the things I took away from the paper is that seasonal/interannual forecasting for equatorial east Africa is very complicated. It is not just the ENSO (El Nino/South Oscillation) that influences the weather/seasonal climate there, but also the Indian Ocean Dipole circulation. This makes for a very challenging regional scale forecasting problem."

Prognostics like this increase the relevance of adaptation and access to climate information before these events occur in order to protect lives and assets and give end users such as farmers the necessary data they need to adapt. Programs like CIRDA are thus becoming more relevant and particularly urgent.

To access the paper and comment, visit our blog at www.undp-cirda.blogspot.com or email us at montserrat.xilotl@undp.org.

Further Coordination between Climate Information Projects in Africa



UN intergovernmental agencies, development banks, and Met services gathered in Nairobi to take part in the "Roundtable on strengthening development of weather, climate and hydrology related early warning systems in Africa." The discussions at the event centered on ensuring that the various activities centered on enhancing climate information systems in Africa are complimentary and that early warning systems (EWS) investments are coordinated and build on each other.

Programme Manager, Bonizella Biagini, presented the collaborative approach of the multi-country UNDP CIRDA Programme including its approach in helping countries to identify climate information end users and working with the private sector to facilitate data access.

UNESCO highlighted its use of crowdsourcing in Mathare slums (Nairobi) to collect data, underscoring that social media has become a trusted source of information for many people. Furthermore, WMO showcased its experience in implementing tools such as mobile weather alerts in Lake Victoria. The role of communications between information providers and users was underscored by the BBC, stressing that language needs to be adapted to the target audience. As a result of the roundtable, opportunities for engaging in cooperating with other agencies and met services such as Kenya Met through South-South cooperation will be forthcoming.

The Roundtable was hosted by UNDP-GEF, UNEP Department of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA), and the UK Meteorological Office. Chairs to the sessions included Elena Manaenkova, WMO Assistant Secretary General; Jacqueline McGlade, UNEP Chief Scientist; Xu Tang, WMO Director weather and Disasters Services, among other noted participants.

For more information on the developments of the roundtable, including presentations go to the [CIRDA Webpage www.undp-alm.org/projects/cirda](http://www.undp-alm.org/projects/cirda).

African Representatives Highlight CIRDA at Abu Dhabi Ascent

The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, and the Government of the United Arab Emirates invited government ministers, leaders from the private sector and civil society to participate in the Abu Dhabi Ascent. This event served as a key milestone in the preparations for the Secretary-General's Climate Summit in New York to be held on 23 September 2014. The Ascent explored the international and multi-stakeholder efforts with high potential for catalysing ambitious action on the ground to reduce emissions and strengthen resilience.



Hon. Ephraim Kamuntu Minister of Water and Environment of the Government of Uganda, and Hon. Haddijatou Jallow, Executive Chairperson of the Environment Protection Agency of Sierra Leone, spoke in favor of the CIRDA Programme stressing the need to access and communicate reliable and timely climate information data. Their participation during the roundtables served to highlight the importance of incorporating climate information in development planning. Their discussions, generated an increasing amount of interest in the CIRDA Programme leading up to the Climate Summit. The Programme's objective of engaging the private sector as a key partner in disseminating and generating climate information was hailed as innovative in its approach.

The CIRDA Programme will continue to promote its objectives during the Climate Summit. We will keep you updated!

Linking Climate Information to Index Insurance for African Farmers



Access to insurance is important to agriculture, not only does it protect farmers livelihoods in case of catastrophic losses of their crops as a result of unexpected seasonal changes, but also assures that farmers can quickly recover and replant in order to protect regions from suffering food shortages or long term rise in prices. Unfortunately access to agricultural insurance and disaster insurance is limited in many developing countries or if available, prohibitively expensive.. With that in mind, the World Bank- together with funding from the EU and the Netherlands- have developed the Global Index Insurance Facility (GIIF) for Africa. The GIIF seeks to create insurance products for small farmers based on specific defined weather events (known as index insurance) such as inadequate rainfall.

The advantage of index insurance is that insurance brokers do not need to visit the farm as specific climatological triggers make the policy effective. This results in low transaction costs and the fast disbursement of payments which are crucial to allow farmers to recover quickly and replant. The low transaction costs in turn allow for lower premiums which are necessary to attract small farmers. A key feature of GIIF supports local broker agents by funding implementing partners comprised of an intermediary "broker/agent" that develops index insurance products with local and regional insurance companies who then sell the products. The index insurance products are often bundled with loans or credit and distributed mostly through portfolio-level aggregators such as agribusinesses, banks and microfinance institutions, and cooperatives. The large Dutch agribusiness company Syngenta is an important partner to the GIIF and together launched Kilimo Salama, a social enterprise, to market weather, area yield, and livestock index insurance products covering a wide range of crops and dairy cattle. Kilimo Salama is now insuring 185,000 farmers in Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania, with plans to expand into East Africa

As index insurance is dependent on climatological triggers, its success is highly dependent on the availability of publicly available weather data with a high degree of local accuracy. To gain access to climate information it works with partners to provide the necessary data. The project team has so far focused on refining satellite data as a basis for the index working with the Dutch EARS program and recently IRI at Columbia University. Most of the GIIF implementing partners are using a mix of weather stations and satellites. Ground weather station data can be used for product design or verification of micro climates. Several companies have now been engaged to work on new methods/ tools for making better use of satellite data with cooperation from NOAA. Syngenta, a major partner of GIIF, reportedly started out more than 5 years ago installing local weather stations but found they did not provide the reliability and accuracy required.

The GIIF and the CIRDA program are both working in Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and Benin, with GIIF planning to expand to for Ethiopia. The CIRDA Team has reached out to the GIIF to envision cooperation possibilities between both initiatives.

Initiatives like the GIIF demonstrate how important climate information is to development, poverty prevention and food security. It also demonstrates the needs of the financial sector in accessing reliable climate information. By understanding the key needs of climate information to end users it becomes easier to envision ways of reaching them and creating innovative partnerships.

For more stories like this, visit us at the CIRDA Blog (www.undp-cirda.blogspot.com) and please feel free to comment from your own country experience.