

WISER: Driving change in climate information to spur Africa's development

Policy and Enabling Environment Component

In brief

Africa's exposure to climate change puts decades of progress in development and poverty reduction at risk while threatening the livelihoods of millions. Climate shocks and stresses are compromising bright growth prospects in the continent's core economic sectors – from agriculture to infrastructure, forestry to fishing. And as weather events become more frequent and severe, so the impacts on Africa's economy and its people will deepen. Since 1980, more than 420 000 Africans have died from climate-related events. Economic damages caused by extreme weather including floods, storms and droughts have reached at least US\$9bn.

High quality climate information services – the gathering, analysis, packaging-up and distribution of reliable weather, water and climate information – has huge potential to support Africa's goals to reduce poverty, build resilience and adapt to future climate change. With the right information, countries can harness new opportunities, for example in food production, brought about by climate variability and change.

But in most African countries, uptake of climate information is undermined by poor quality data. Further problems persist with accessing, interpreting and applying what information is available.

Why WISER?

The WISER programme aims to increase the use of reliable weather and climate services in decision making at regional, national, sectoral and community levels across sub-Saharan Africa. This will be demonstrated by:

- Tailored, reliable climate information services, available and accessible to users
- Growing awareness of the value of climate services, leading to rising demand
- Increased capacity of users to use climate information in decision making
- Growing strength and status of Met Offices and capabilities in African research communities.

WISER structure

The WISER programme has two components:

1. A pan-African programme focussing on improvement of the policy and enabling environment for weather and climate services (PEEC). This is implemented through support to the Africa Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of the UN Economic Commission of Africa (UNECA).
2. A regional programme primarily focussing on the East Africa region (WISER-EA: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) aimed at improving the quality and relevance of weather and climate information and supporting its uptake and use.

The role of ACPC

WISER was conceived by climate and weather experts; ACPC joins the programme with a clear remit to bridge

the science-policy gap. With its strong convening power, ACPC occupies a unique policy influencing space and is a recognised centre for enhancing the uptake of climate information services in development policy and planning.

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Policymakers need to be armed with strong, evidence-based information in order to make properly informed decisions for a climate-resilient economy. Within WISER, ACPC creates spaces for policy dialogue and brings the evidence from the programme into these spaces - demonstrating why climate information must be factored into future decisions relating to climate change and development. ACPC seeks to ensure WISER has lasting policy impact, well beyond the life cycle of the programme.

ACPC's ambition within WISER: what ACPC will do

- A disconnect between producers and users of climate information can lead to climate information that is often too technical, difficult to access and does not speak to users' needs.

Under WISER, ACPC will strengthen African regional strategies to generate and share reliable climate information. Bringing together policy makers, climate research centres, academic institutions, national meteorological services, and grassroots organisations, ACPC will bridge the gap between climate research and climate information needs.

- Early warning systems provide critical time to prepare for droughts, floods and storms, saving lives and minimising economic damage. Seasonal forecasts enable businesses and people to prepare for weather shocks - boosting productivity and safeguarding economic development. Meanwhile, longer-term climate predictions can be incorporated into planning and decision making, helping governments to climate-proof critical infrastructure while fostering longer-term sustainable development. Under WISER, ACPC will support the improved generation and use of weather and climate services through:
 - (i) improved science for African weather and climate, enhancing the reliability of forecasts (nowcasts to seasonal);
 - (ii) innovation in collecting data, and in bespoke services for different users;
 - (iii) evaluate what works in 'last-mile' delivery of services to users.
- Evidence shows that robust weather and climate information offers extremely good value for money in protecting and enhancing development. Under WISER, ACPC will analyse the economic value of climate information services and identify the most cost effective means for delivering them.

ACPC seeks to ensure WISER has lasting policy impact



Who's who

ACPC in collaboration with partners such as the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) implements the pan-African component of WISER.

ACPC also partners with institutions and experts including the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the African Institute of Economic Development and Planning (IDEP).

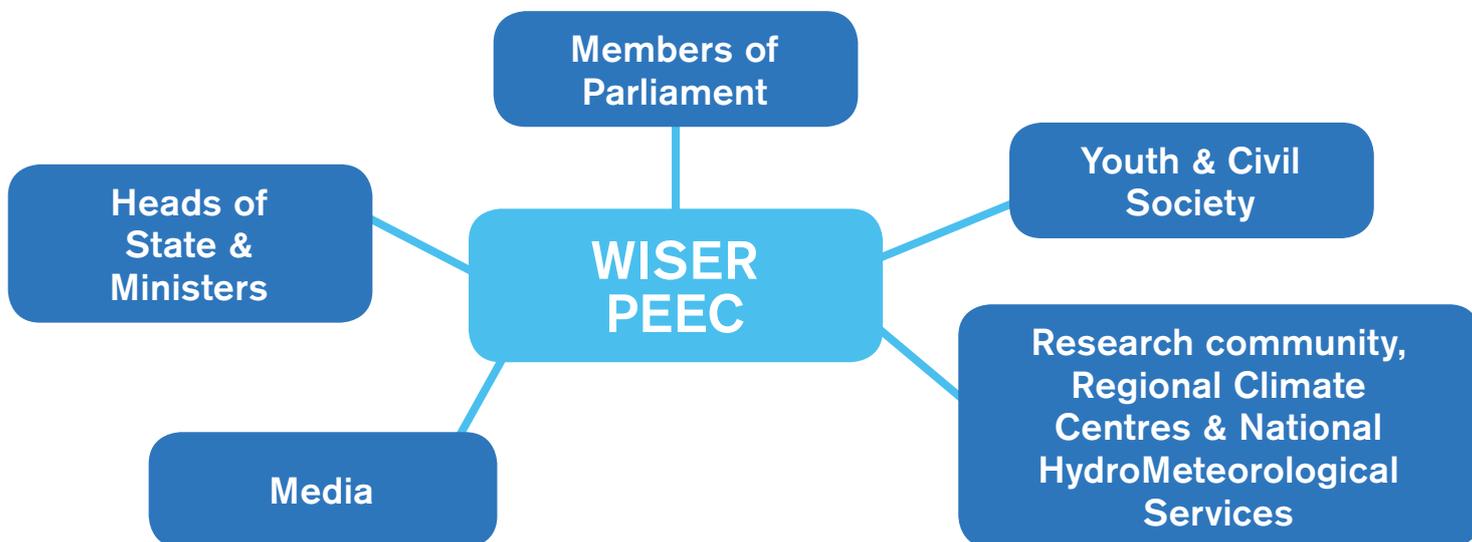
WISER timelines

The WISER pilot phase ran between April 2016 and June 2017, during which period quick-start projects were carried out. Outcomes of the pilot phase informed the design of the second phase, which will run from July 2017 to June 2019.

What success looks like

- Enabling the policy environment for uptake and use of climate information and services. ACPC has previously engaged with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET), to formulate climate information services related decisions at these policy forums. Subsequently, countries have domesticated these ministerial outcomes by aligning their development policies and plans accordingly.
- Technical support to countries and regional climate centers (RCCs). ACPC has made significant progress in strengthening and upgrading meteorological and hydrological observation networks, and catalyzing the uptake and use of climate information in selected African member countries.

Target groups



About ACPC

The African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) is a hub for demand-led knowledge on climate change in Africa. It addresses the need for greatly improved climate information for Africa and strengthening the use of such information for decision making, by improving analytical capacity, knowledge management and dissemination activities.

Contacts

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