

Strengthening the development of decision-relevant climate information: the impact of engaging in AMMA-2050 on partnering researchers

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IMPACT

Besides enhancing technical skills, established and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) have recognized that engagement in AMMA-2050 has strengthened their capacities in a broad range of additional areas including:

- **Engagement with climate science and scientists:** Some agricultural researchers had not worked with climate scientists before, had not used climate data in their research before, or had limited prior access to climate data.
- **Engagement with decision makers:** Most researchers had limited or no previous direct engagement with decision makers. For some researchers, engagement with decision makers was an important motivation, driven by altruism. For some researchers, the engagement also resulted in career promotion.
- **Working across institutions and disciplines:** Researchers recognized the value of 'being part of a network of experienced and skilled researchers.' Researchers welcomed the networks the project afforded amongst both climate scientists, as well as with researchers across water resources, water and sanitation and agriculture.
- **Different ways of undertaking and managing research projects.**
- **Different ways of communicating and evaluating scientific results:** Researchers appreciated the range of approaches employed including café scientifique and Theatre Forum.



THE CHANGE STORY

AMMA-2050 researchers have highlighted how engaging with the project has strengthened their ability to produce decision-relevant climate information not just in terms of technical capacities, but also in more effectively engaging with decision-makers to better appreciate their needs and develop more useful science. This engagement has also resulted in indirect benefits for some researchers, including career promotion.

From the outset, AMMA-2050 has been monitoring changes of partnering researchers' capacities for developing decision-relevant climate information. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), including a scorecard adapted from the Tracking Adaptation and Monitoring Development (TAMD) methodology, were employed to develop a project baseline in 2016 and repeated with adapted questions in 2018 and 2019. Findings from KIIs were triangulated with evaluations from stakeholder meetings and trainings, reports, personal testimonies and the CCKE-led annual survey of Early Career Researchers (ECRs).

Of the 12 AMMA-2050 researchers (half of whom are ECRs) with whom KIIs were undertaken over the course of the project, 11 felt that engaging in AMMA-2050 had partially or completely improved their capacities to deliver research that can advance responses to climate variability and change. Decision-makers engaged in AMMA-2050 have also recognised the utility of the project's outputs and appreciated the strengthened capacities afforded through project activities.

FCFA area of change 2:

Strengthening scientists' capacities to develop decision-relevant climate information.



FURTHER RESOURCES

[Innovative games and role-playing help West African farmers grapple with climate change](#)

[Theatre troupe helps gather climate knowledge in Senegal](#)

[WASCAL and AMMA-2050 set roadmap to activate science-policy links in West Africa](#)

FCFA area of change 4:

Approaches that support co-production of decision-relevant climate information and enable channels for on-going dialogue between the providers and users of climate information.

LEARNING

Within initiatives seeking to strengthen the integration of climate information within decision-making, it is important to measure changes amongst both researchers and decision-makers. It is important to recognize that changes are required in the governance of prioritizing climate research, as well as the process of co-producing climate services.

While requiring sufficient resourcing, the KII scorecard undertaken with a cohort of researchers and decision makers over the course of a project does provide a methodology for identifying both quantitative and qualitative data on changes in technical capacities and co-production approaches. KII findings can be triangulated with data from other forms of monitoring, including evaluations of stakeholder engagement meetings and trainings and personal testimonies.

Decision-makers and researchers participating in the joint 2018 WASCAL-AMMA-2050 workshop on operationalizing the links between researchers and policymakers in West Africa highlighted vital issues in enabling climate information to better support decision making, including:

- Strengthening researcher training on policy;
- The importance of including decision-makers from the inception of research, enabling the 'co- development of research topics with development actors' and including 'impact for decisionmakers within research';
- Putting science-policy interface closer to the centre of future science proposals.
- A need for further training on communication and tools that support science-policy dialogue.

Future Climate for Africa's Areas of Change are:

1. Enhancing scientific knowledge and prediction of African climate and new understanding of the resulting impact on the robustness of future climate change scenarios.
2. Strengthening scientists' capacities to develop decision-relevant climate information.
3. Increasing the capacities of users/decision making bodies/institutions to appropriately integrate climate information within medium-term decision-making.
4. Approaches that support co-production of decision-relevant climate information and enable channels for on-going dialogue between the providers and users of climate information.
5. Identifying social, political, behavioural and economic barriers to the use of climate information in long-term decision-making, working to elicit solutions which support effective integration of climate risks within decision making across scales, sectors and social groups.
6. Approaches to climate science research and climate-sensitive risks within medium-term decision making which enable active participation and address the specific concerns of women and marginalised groups.

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