

Co-producing Gender-responsive Climate Services for Enhanced Food and Nutrition Security and Health in Ethiopia and Tanzania (COGENT) – Consultative Workshop for Ethiopia

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Workshop Report



AICCRA
Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR
Climate Research for Africa



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Titles in this series aim to disseminate interim climate change, agriculture, and food security research and practices and stimulate feedback from the scientific community.

About AICCRA

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Acronyms

COGENT	Co-producing Gender-responsive Climate Services for Enhanced Food and Nutrition Security and Health in Ethiopia and Tanzania
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
DA	Development Agent
EMI	Ethiopian Meteorology Institute
HEW	Health Extension Worker
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
RTT	Research and Technology Transfer
WP	Work Package

Table of contents

Introduction	1
Ethiopian Meteorological Institute outreach.....	2
Climate Change Impacts on Agriculture and Health	2
Group Discussion	3
Presentations on climate service data	5
Reflections on the way forward.....	7
Concluding Remarks.....	8
Annex – Program Agenda.....	9

Introduction

The COGENT-Climate Services Consultative Workshop was conducted on May 27-28, 2022 in Yirba town, Boricha woreda. [Add some information on the aim and objectives, how many participants, from which institutions]. COGENT represents an inter-disciplinary approach to improving household food security and nutrition-related health outcomes among women and children in the face of climate change in selected areas of Ethiopia. Over the past decades, growing investments have been made in developing climate services that can help reduce societal vulnerabilities and enhance adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate variability and change.

The development of climate services rests on several assumptions. First, that providing more, and better climate information will enhance the uptake of this information into decision-making. Second, that the application of climate services will lead to improved development outcomes. COGENT aims to advance understanding of the key mechanisms that facilitate production of usable climate information, with the potential to improve the quality of climate services across other African contexts. It works to strengthen the long-term capacities of local institutions to undertake high-quality, policy-relevant research while simultaneously building new interdisciplinary networks and collaborative experience and expertise within the climate research community.

The overall program for the COGENT-Climate Services Consultative Workshop was introduced by Dr Asaminew Teshome, the Lead Researcher and Advisor at the Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI). The opening speech was made by the Deputy Director General of EMI, Mr Kinfe Hailemariam and Dr Tafese Mathewos, Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer at Hawassa University. Mr Hailemariam began by highlighting the components of climate services: climate data generation, translation, transfer and use. He also discussed the kinds of climate information that can be accessed from local meteorological stations.

Following the opening session, Dr Girma from Hawassa University's College of Agriculture, who is also working on the initiative, explained that the three-year project had not been launched as earlier planned due to the global Covid-19 outbreak. Later, the project timeline was reduced to two years. So far, it had been implemented for a year, and the team had an additional year to complete the remaining activities. COGENT was expected to accomplish three important milestones: conduct fieldwork, hold a workshop and prepare policy briefs. The project team had collected quantitative data on health, nutrition and agriculture. In addition, the current workshop was one of the milestones.

A message from Dr Tafese Mathewos, Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer at Hawassa University, was also read out. He mentioned that the university was committed to implementing the activities of the COGENT project. In addition, the institution appreciated the relevance of the project to solving the challenges faced by the local communities, as well as its contribution to capacity building by supporting Masters and PhD students.

Ethiopian Meteorological Institute outreach

The Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI) established as an autonomous government organization in 1980 under proclamation No 201/1980. The mission of EMI is to provide weather, climate and early warning services that contribute to socio-economic activities of the nation and protect lives and property. This will be achieved by collecting, analyzing, forecasting, and communicating meteorological and related information. The institute focuses on three strategic issues. The first strategic issue is to ensure meteorological data coverage, quality, and access. Whereas the second pillar is providing accurate and reliable meteorological forecast and early warning advisory service and the third focus is Meteorological Research. One of the core duties of Ethiopian Meteorological Institute is to deliver accurate and reliable weather and climate information for the communities as well as stakeholders. The Ethiopian economy depends on rain fed agriculture. Thus, timely and accurate weather and climate delivery is essential for agricultural activities as well as other sectors.

In order to identify the potential needs of the users' and assess the impact of improved climate information on beneficiaries and end-users, this survey was conducted.

Climate Change Impacts on Agriculture and Health

Later in the morning, there were a series of presentations on the effects of climate change on agriculture and health. Dr Girma Abera of Hawassa University made a presentation in which he gave a project overview, and discussed the impact that climate change has had on the world population. He also reviewed the contribution of climate change to the food crisis, various epidemics, insect infestations, malaria distribution and other issues in Africa. The impact of climate change on the Ethiopian economy was also described.

After this, Dr Taye Gari from the institution's College of Medicine and Health Sciences made a presentation on the concept of food and nutrition security, plus insecurity issues in relation to availability, physical and economic accessibility plus utilization elements. He noted that food security exists when, "all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". He also explained the link between climate change and health and nutrition

problems, and pointed out that climate services were very important to improve food, nutrition and health.

Mr Mihretu Belayneh, also from the College of Medicine and Health Sciences in Hawassa University presented his research findings on the status of malnutrition in Boricha woreda in southern Ethiopia. He indicated that a significant number of children and their mothers were suffering from malnutrition due to climate variability. According to him, malnutrition varies across three seasons of the year.

Group Discussion

Participants were divided into five groups, with each expected to comprise agricultural extension experts, kebele administrators and farmers. Each group had a minimum of 20 participants and a maximum of 25. They discussed eight broad issues within an hour. They were each requested to select a chair and secretary to guide and record the discussions. Following this, one member from each group presented their findings during the plenary session.

The issues and group findings are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Climate change impacts on agriculture and health

Issue	Group findings
Concept of healthy food, balanced diet, characteristics of those who are food-secure and food-insecure households	Lack of awareness on the importance of a balanced diet in communities Characteristics of food-insecure households: children suffering from physical and mental disorders; chronic and acute malnutrition in children; inability to attend school regularly; exposure to different kinds of diseases Characteristics of food-secure households: children look healthy and meet their growth milestones; are active in school
Who makes the decisions at household level in times of food security and food insecurity?	Men were the main decision makers during both seasons In some cases, women assumed the role of key decision makers during seasons of food insecurity Today, women play a more significant role in decision-

Issue	Group findings
	making at household level
The impact of climate change on household food/nutrition status and vice-versa, and the coping strategies that women use	<p>Growth disorders in children</p> <p>Diseases and illnesses</p> <p>Death of household members</p> <p>Deforestation, land degradation, soil erosion and global warming all contribute to food insecurity</p> <p>Possible solution: women engage in short-term income-generating activities such as horticulture, poultry production, and cultivation of early-maturing crops such as sweet potatoes and haricot beans</p>
The short- and long-term effects of climate variability on a household's food and nutrition status	<p>Frequent disease infections</p> <p>Poverty</p> <p>Displacement</p> <p>Hunger</p> <p>Economic problems</p>
The importance of gender roles to food shortage at household or community levels when they are exposed to climate variability?	<p>Men usually engage in a range of different activities</p> <p>Women look for jobs or engage in irrigation activities and trade</p> <p>Men shoulder the major responsibilities in such situations</p>
Common seasons when there are food shortages in the area	<p>January-July, June-July, March-June, April-June, February-July</p> <p>Climate change has prolonged the duration of food shortages</p>
Which social groups are most food-insecure during periods of drought, floods and other natural disasters?	<p>Children</p> <p>Pregnant and lactating women</p> <p>The aged</p> <p>Persons living with disabilities</p>
Main sources of information	<p>Agricultural Development Agents (DAs)</p> <p>Agricultural extension workers</p> <p>Media (radio, TV)</p>

Issue	Group findings
Who are the decision makers?	NGOs The Meteorological Institute Phone calls DAs and farmers
Reasons for implementing the decisions	For preparedness, to increase yields, they have more accurate predictions, to alleviate suffering following natural calamities

Presentations on climate service data

On the second day, presentations focused on assessment of the Belg rainfall and forecast for the rainy season in Sidama region. The first was on Belg_2022 Climate Performance & Kiremt-2022 Climate Outlook for Sidama Region. The second was on Belg Assessment 2022 & Kiremt 2022 Impact outlook for Sidama Region. In addition, the link between the season and health conditions, especially with regard to malaria outbreaks, was explained.

After this, the participants were divided into five groups and given eight issues related to climate services to discuss. The time allocated for the exercise was 30 minutes. The results were later presented in a plenary session (see table 2).

Table 1: Climate change impacts on agriculture and health

Issue	Responses
Do you use meteorological data every day, every month or every season? How do you use the information?	Yes, we receive the data. We use it for land preparation, sowing seeds and planning our daily movement
Have you been trained on how to use meteorological data in your localities?	Not yet

Issue	Responses
Is there any meteorological institution in your area?	There is none in our area
Is there any communication with other institutions working in this area?	There is hardly any communication or any form of relationship with the institutions
How can the services be improved?	We need to consistently receive daily, monthly and annual meteorological information
How do you access meteorological information?	Radio, plastic rain gauge, DA, HEWs, phone calls from the meteorological institute, TV and Facebook
Do you believe that the meteorological information is reliable?	In most cases it is reliable. In fact, this year, most of the predictions have come true
Do you think that meteorological information is accessible to all users? What are the challenges that limited information accessibility?	Accessibility is a challenge. This could be due to lack of electricity, few institutions, and lack of concerted efforts to work together

Reflections on the way forward

After the group presentations, the facilitators wrapped up the discussions and reflected on the way forward. The session was chaired by Mr Kinfe of EMI and the project staff. Six speakers were given an opportunity to reflect on the presentations and discussions.

It was proposed that to enhance dissemination, climate information should be made available in the local languages, institutions should promote the use of media that is easily accessible by farmers and training should be conducted right down to the grassroots/household levels. All these would benefit the community and accelerate information exchange.

It was also proposed that mobile phone apps could be designed for farmers to allow them to engage easily with the institutions and among themselves. In addition, rain gauges should be installed in farmers' fields to ensure that they receive accurate and area-specific information.

Another presenter stressed the importance of partnership among the institutions: research institutes, agricultural bureaus and extension services.

“I was assigned to support farmers at Dorie Bafano areas this year. While supervising farming activities in the area, I noticed that most farmers had planted their maize. However, I observed a few who were still storing their seed and fertilizers. I asked them why they had not planted, and they responded that they had heard about the late onset of the Belg rains on radio. Thus, these farmers saved their agricultural inputs; but those households who planted lost their seed due to the late onset of the rains”.

Agricultural Officer from Sidama

Concluding Remarks

Mr Kinfе made brief remarks on the overall condition of climate services. He noted that the workshop had served as a learning session and the institutions represented would work together and more closely in future. Highlighting the fact that providing services using the local languages that are easily understood by farmers was very important, he also mentioned that the design of software applications that could support dissemination of climate data was already underway. On the issue of partnerships, he said that the country had formulated a Ten-Year Development Plan and a national platform had been formed to work on the issue.

In his concluding remarks, he noted that all the participants had the responsibility to share the knowledge gained at the forum with the end users (farmers) and their peers to improve the use of climate data in decision-making.

The workshop was officially closed by Dr Teferi. He made a brief presentation on future project activities. He also outlined a few challenges such as households not providing the required information to data collectors on time, and sought the support of kebele chairpersons who were attending the meeting. He noted that Ethiopia and Malawi had been selected by the Norwegian government to provide climate services to improve people's living standards, and if the project had a positive impact, they would continue with the next phase in Boricha.

He thanked all the partners for their active participation and all other stakeholders who had worked so hard to organize the workshop.

Annex – Program Agenda

Date	Activity	Time	Responsible person	Moderator
27/05/22	Registration	08:30-09:00	Participants	Organizers
27/05/22	Introduction	09:00-09:15	Participants	Organizers
27/05/22	Opening speech	09:15-09:30	Invited Guest (Vice president for RTT, and Director of EMI	Organizers (Dr Taye, Dr Asaminew)
27/05/22	Briefing on aim of the meeting	09:30-09:45	Dr Girma / Dr Teferi	Dr Taye, Dr Asaminew
27/05/22	Highlights on climate services in Sidama region	09:45- 10:15	Dr Asaminew	Dr Girma
27/05/22	Tea break	10:15-10:30	COGENT	
27/05/22	Agro-advisories in Sidama region	10:30-10:45	EMI – Agro-meteorology Directorate	Dr Taye
27/05/22	Climate and agriculture	10:45-11:00	COGENT Agri-representative	Dr Taye
	Discussions	11:00-12:30		Dr Asaminew
27/05/22	Lunch	12:30-01:30	COGENT	
27/05/22	Climate, nutrition and health	01:30-02:00	COGENT Health, representative	
27/05/22	Sharing of practical experience on use of climate information	02:00-02:30		
27/05/22	Tea break	02:30-03:00	COGENT	
27/05/22	Discussions	03:00-04:45	Dr Taye	Dr Asaminew
27/05/22	Summary	04:45-05:00	Dr Girma	
Day Two				

	Recap	09:00-09:15		
28/05/22	Assessment of Belg rainfall and forecast for Kiremt season	09:15-10:15	EMI	Dr Teferi
	Question & Answer session	10:15-10:28	EMI	
28/05/22	Tea Break	10:28-10:40	COGENT	
28/05/22	Group discussion on access, translation, communication and useability of the forecast (local languages)	10:40-12:15	Participants	Dr Taye, Dr Girma, Dr Asaminew, Dr Teferi
28/05/22	Lunch	12:15-01:30		
28/05/22	Mock workshop	01:30:02:30	WP3 leaders	
28/05/22	Presentation from the group leaders	02:30-03:30	Group leaders	Dr Asaminew
30/05/22	Tea break	03:30-04:00		
30/05/22	Wrap-up discussion way forward and closing	04:00-04:45	All	



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About AICCRA

Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) is a project that helps deliver a climate-smart African future driven by science and innovation in agriculture.

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