



Participatory Scenario Planning for co-producing user based climate services

The Challenge

Successful adaptation and resilience to climate variability and change requires building people's capacity to continuously make adaptive decisions that review, anticipate and have the flexibility to respond to climate risks, uncertainties and opportunities. In order to make good decisions, government at different levels, organisations and communities need context specific information on the climate and its uncertainties, potential climate impacts and response options. However access to such information is limited, and if available, is often not specific enough, not easily understood, or not framed as actionable decision points. Further, climate information from meteorological services is often viewed as overly scientific and uncertain, whereas information from local knowledge is not widely appreciated in formal spaces.

What is PSP?

Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) using seasonal climate forecasts was developed in 2011 by CARE International's Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) for Africa, based on learning from facilitating communities together with their local governments to develop community based adaptation (CBA) approaches and plans. PSP is a multi-stakeholder approach to user based climate services, which enables regular access to, understanding and use of seasonal climate information, including inherent uncertainty, for adaptation decision making and planning at sub-national level.

The PSP process follows 5 major steps (see Figure 1) that are grounded in: a) engagement of all stakeholders, recognizing their various roles; b) collective interpretation of climate information through combining local, scientific and technical knowledge; c) feedback and iterative learning to co-develop climate services that respond to dynamic decision making contexts. That is, PSP is a seasonal climate service at subnational level that is responsive to changes in seasonal climate information needs, influenced by changes in vulnerability and capacity of people and eco-systems, climate impacts, risks and opportunities, livelihood and development priorities and growing demand for climate information.

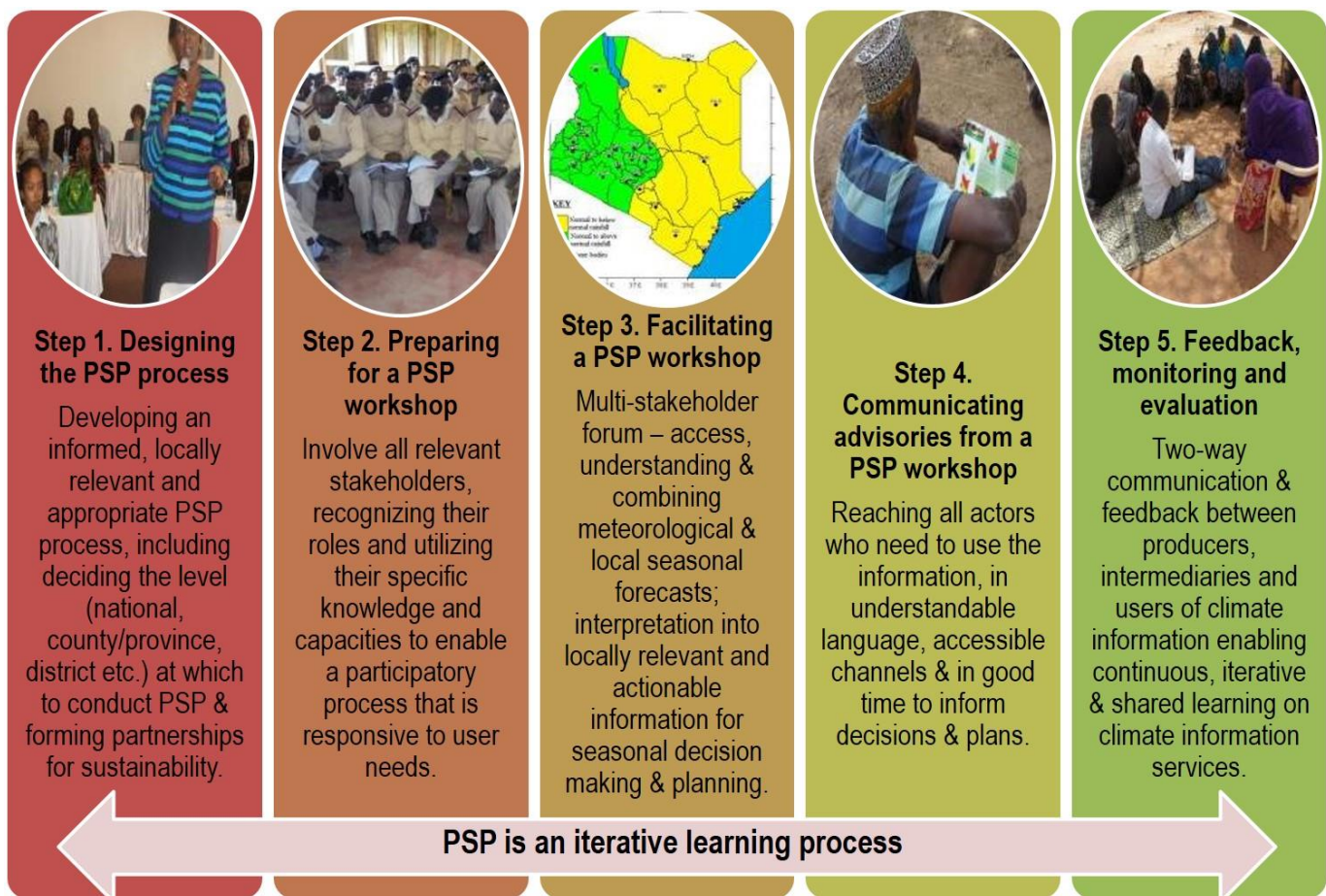


Figure 1: Five major steps of the PSP process.

Value of PSP

A major strength of PSP is the multi-stakeholder forum that provides space for regular interaction and linkage between actors who would not normally sit together to plan. This results in higher confidence in using climate information and new connectivity between actors, institutions and organizations to co-develop responsive climate services. Examples are:

- Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD) and Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMET) staff at national and especially sub-national level are now perceived to be more relevant as PSP has enabled active engagement between them and local level users to generate locally specific climate information, communication plans and collective reflection on the information. This has built trust and helped to positively shape local actors' understanding of the dynamics involved in generating and communicating climate information.
- Government officers in different sectors have a better understanding of climate forecasts from meteorological services. They are relating the information to decision making needs of local users and using it to provide targeted service delivery. A District Agricultural Officer in Northern Ghana said, *"PSP is making agricultural extension demand driven and business oriented. Farmers are adopting and asking for new seed varieties to manage different climate risks."*
- Local communities are becoming more willing and confident in making anticipatory decisions for the coming rain season. For example, in preparation for March-May 2014 'long rain' season in Trans Nzoia County, Kenya, a dry spell of two to three weeks was forecasted following the onset of the rains. As a result, farmers in Salama shifted their planting date from the rain onset (forecasted to start second week of March) to approximately six weeks later and used early-maturing seeds. In Sabena community, Garissa County, Kenya, a forecast of prolonged dry spells or depressed rains, prompted community members to harvest and store their fodder. Furthermore, they sold off their weak animals and invested the profits in buying more resilient and adaptive animals such as camels. Communities' ability to use seasonal forecasts and advisories to make forward-looking decisions is resulting in increased demand for relevant climate information at daily, weekly, monthly and even annual timescales ahead.

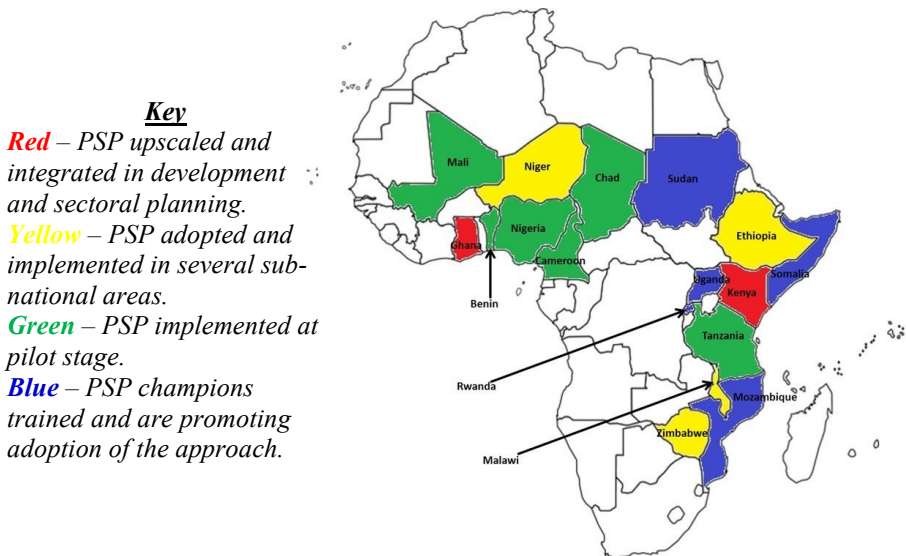
Scaling PSP

Since its inception during the October-December 2011 rainfall season in Garissa County, Kenya, the PSP approach has been scaled to all 47 counties in Kenya and is implemented at various scales in 11 other countries in East, West and Southern Africa in particular Ghana, Ethiopia, Niger, Malawi and Zimbabwe (see Figure 2).

Factors that have enabled such wide spread scaling of the approach include:

- Capacity building of meteorological services, government sectors, local and international organisations and other actors on the approach and its contribution to adaptation and climate resilient decision making has played a critical part.
- Kenya's devolution of Government brought meteorological services (KMD) to county (sub-national) level at the time PSP started. The approach enhanced the visibility, role and capacity of County Directors of Meteorology and enabled them to have a better focus on provision of timely and relevant services to meet the needs of users.
- KMD joined with the Agriculture Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries who adopted PSP as a county level approach for strengthening of the environmental resilience of agricultural value chains and financed the scale up to the 47 counties in collaboration with ALP.
- A broad range of development actors are adopting PSP as part of their adaptation, DRR and resilience programmes.

Co-development and delivery of climate services for the purpose of contributing to adaptation and climate resilience requires collaborative engagement between meteorological services and various actors, including users. Such engagement capitalises on actors' particular capacities and roles to sustain a decision responsive and user based service.



Further work

- Develop systems for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the PSP process to generate feedback and learning on the use of seasonal forecasts and advisories. This will inform innovative design of user based climate services.
- Link PSP and other climate services approaches, such as ENACTS maprooms and Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA), towards a seamless suite of decision making tools and approaches across timescales.
- Institutionalise the approach in sectoral decision making processes, to ensure climate services are an integral part of adaptation, climate resilient development, early warning early action and climate smart agriculture.
- Develop a scenario planning approach for longer term adaptation and resilient development decision making.

More Information

- ALP (2012) PSP brief: http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ALP_PSP_EN.pdf
- ALP (2014). Facing Uncertainty: The value of climate information for adaptation, risk reduction and resilience in Africa http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/C_Comms_Brief.pdf
- ENACTS <https://iri.columbia.edu/resources/enacts/> PICSA <http://hdl.handle.net/10568/68687>
ALP <http://careclimatechange.org/our-work/alp> Email alp@careclimatechange.org