



# ALP: Participatory Scenario Planning for Local Seasonal Climate Forecasts and Advisories



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## Aim of the project

The **Adaptation Learning Programme** (ALP) for Africa, implemented by **CARE International**, enhanced the capacity of vulnerable households in sub-Saharan Africa to adapt to climate change and climate variability. ALP pioneered community-based adaptation (CBA) approaches and actions with people affected, government institutions and civil society and documented learning and successful practices from experiences among practitioners, researchers and policy actors, Africa-wide and globally. Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) was one of these approaches.



## Dates

2010–2017



## Countries

This case study covers PSP adoption in Kenya and Ethiopia. PSP was also implemented in Ghana, Niger and Malawi.



An agro-pastoralist in Garissa, Kenya, reading climate advisories  
(Source: CARE ALP/E. Aduma, 2014)

## Aim of co-production:

The purpose of PSP is to enable decision-making and planning to be informed by locally tailored, co-produced forecasts and advisories. The PSP approach aims to facilitate a multi-stakeholder forum for:

- access to, and collective interpretation of, seasonal climate forecasts, in order to co-produce information that is locally relevant and trusted;
- communication and interpretation that combines knowledge from local actors, sectoral service providers and climate science;
- developing scenarios, advisories and climate-informed plans for decision-making that are more responsive to local needs, and which strengthen climate resilience in livelihoods, sectors, development and risk management processes;
- better informed and coordinated action between sectors to support local priorities and adaptation strategies and to deliver user-centered climate services; and
- iterative learning and dialogue to continuously co-develop climate information and services that are responsive to users' changing contexts and needs.

## Context:

The Adaptation Learning Programme recognised that improved interpretation and communication of climate information to vulnerable rural people and local governments is key to supporting

communities' ability to adapt. Farmers and pastoralists identified the seasonal timescale as the most important for their decisions and planning. ALP developed the Participatory Scenario Planning seasonal climate forecast approach as an inclusive, multi-stakeholder and user-centered service at local government level.

## Who was involved and what were their roles?

The PSP process brings together meteorologists, traditional forecasters, researchers, community members, local government from all sectors available to attend, private sector actors, local NGOs and media, with a strong emphasis on ensuring women's participation. The PSP two-day workshop places all actors and their knowledge on the same level, providing an open space to discuss local priorities, climate information, their contribution to adaptation efforts and to collectively develop forecasts, scenarios and advisories. Meteorological departments present scientific forecasts and learn what information is needed by different users. Traditional forecasters present forecasts based on local observations and knowledge. Community members review the past season and shape the climate information into scenarios for the coming season to ensure it is contextualised, timely and packaged in locally usable formats. NGOs and researchers share experiences linking climate information and adaptation and resilience initiatives. Government sectors inform sector analyses and develop sector advisories integrating the climate scenarios. The private sector shares the types of forecasts and details needed to inform business and investment decisions. Media help guide the process of packaging and communicating climate information to various users.

## How was co-production done?

### Identify key actors and build partnerships; build common ground; co-explore need

The local government started by selecting a local task force to plan the PSP workshop with CARE. The task force involves sub-national government officers, from the meteorological agency, planners, agriculture, disaster risk management and other relevant sectors, plus NGO and civil society participants, particularly those leading adaptation and resilience programmes. The task force comprises

## What was co-produced?



- **Collectively agreed seasonal forecasts:** These combined local, scientific and technical knowledge from users' perspectives.
- **Actionable advisories and sectoral plans:** A range of recommended actions and plans were developed for different sectors and stakeholders based on the forecast information collectively agreed.
- **Agreed methods and messages for communication through a range of channels:** Determining the information that needs to be communicated to whom and when, to help with decision-making and planning. The methods and media for communication and messages will differ for different users.



## Benefits of the co-production approach

- Combining knowledge sources and collective interpretation ensures the forecast is tailored for the local context, increases trust and ownership by the community and increases understanding and respect by meteorological agencies. This approach also builds relationships among participants, encouraging them to cooperate in decision-making and planning.
- Government sectors have a better understanding of climate forecasts from meteorological services. They can use the information to make decisions based on the needs of local users; for sectoral planning and to provide targeted service delivery.
- Meteorological services in Kenya and Ethiopia are now perceived to be more relevant as PSP has enabled active engagement with local and regional users.
- People affected are able to make more informed decisions by understanding seasonal forecast information, climate change and variability, flexible planning and risk management.
- The dialogue process facilitated by PSP ensures actors shift from 'accessing' climate information to 'interpreting and using' it for decisions and planning in managing climate risks and opportunities.

actors embedded in the planning cycles of different sectors with the capacity needed to follow up on the actions from the PSP workshop. Climate knowledge brokers, or intermediaries, play an essential role in designing and facilitating the process so as to ensure identification and participation of the relevant stakeholders representing all local and community interests at the PSP workshop, and to create the space for equitable collaboration.

### Co-develop solutions

The PSP process is grounded in: (i) engagement of all stakeholders, recognising their various roles, responsibilities, knowledge, capacities and limitations; (ii) collective interpretation of climate information through combining local, scientific and technical knowledge from users' perspectives; (iii) communication of outcomes through a range of channels; and (iv) feedback and interactive learning to co-develop climate services that respond to dynamic decision contexts. Every stakeholder has a role to play in the design, production, analysis, packaging and communication of information and advisories. The PSP workshops are conducted as soon as a seasonal climate forecast is made available from the national meteorological services. The workshop provides a multi-stakeholder forum to access, understand and combine meteorological and local seasonal forecasts; to interpret the forecasts, transforming them into locally relevant and actionable information in order to develop advisories and for use in seasonal decision-making and planning. Participants consider climatic probabilities, assess their likely hazards, risks, opportunities and impacts based on a review of the past season and current livelihood and environmental resources, and develop scenarios based on the assessment. Discussing the potential implications of these scenarios on various sectors and livelihood sources leads to agreement on plans and contingencies that respond adequately to the levels of risk and uncertainty. Workshop participants collectively determine the communication of advisories and information – the timing, the audiences, the channels, the format and the languages – in order to reach all actors who need to use the information in good time to inform decisions and plans.

### Co-deliver solutions

PSP forms part of the adaptation planning process, linking community plans and local government response, support and higher level plans. Actors at all levels and across sectors are involved in using the information agreed during the workshop in their planning, decision-making and communications. Stakeholders are responsible for supporting the implementation and facilitation of actions identified within the advisories and seasonal plans.

The scenario-based advisories are packaged and communicated to broader groups of people affected and users through a variety of different means decided by PSP workshop participants, including SMSs, community radio broadcasts, PSP advisory brochures,

existing social communication channels and informal meetings. Media and other actors are responsible for communicating these advisories to the audiences and decision-makers they reach.

## Lessons to learn from:

- **Highlighting uncertainties:** While forecast information is important, its value for decision-making is only realised when uncertainties are explicit and the range of possibilities are considered. Rather than planning around the most likely forecast outcome, scenario-based planning considers a series of outcomes given the uncertainty in the climate, and broader, context. From the scenarios, participants generate a range of options and strategies to manage risks.
- **Involvement of stakeholders:** Design and delivery of a relevant climate service requires the involvement of all stakeholders at all stages of the process. Platforms for equitable dialogue are also necessary in order to fully understand and interpret climate information, levels of uncertainty and the need, use and usefulness of the climate service.
- **Matching local knowledge with climate data:** Linking local knowledge of previous climate and livelihood impacts with past climate data, and linking climatic information with crop data such as rainfall requirements can reinforce collaboration and better tailoring, thus allowing for improved interpretation and application of future forecasts.
- **Integration into sectoral planning processes:** For continued effectiveness, the PSP process should be institutionalised in sectoral planning processes, to ensure climate services are integral to adaptation planning, disaster risk management and climate-resilient development.
- **The value of M&E systems:** Systems for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the PSP process so as to generate feedback and learning on the use of seasonal forecasts and advisories is important to continually improve the process and ensure it is meeting the needs of users.
- **Role of climate knowledge brokers:** The role of climate knowledge brokers is essential in providing neutral intermediaries to facilitate communication, dialogue and feedback to service providers, and in enabling equitable co-production processes.

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