

Key Messages to Guide Climate Services Development and Delivery

During the initial Climate Services Dialogs conducted across the Pacific Islands, a number of key messages and good practices were captured. These key messages were incorporated and refined as part of climate storytelling.

1. Engage with the community and other stakeholders early and often – building community ownership and participation from the beginning leads to more positive, sustainable outcomes.

- Robust relationships between stakeholders at the national level (e.g. meteorological services, disaster managers, and managers and planners in other sectors such as water resources, agriculture, fisheries, and tourism) and those at the community-level (e.g. village councils, fishers, farmers, small businesses) must be developed and nurtured. Underrepresented and vulnerable members in a community also need to be involved.
- Engagement must be carried out in a culturally appropriate manner, employing trusted messengers and using established pathways. Champions and other dedicated individuals should be cultivated as they are indispensable when it comes to inspiring governments, communities, and individuals to take action.
- Success depends on developing long term relationships that build trust and foster an enabling environment and can be easily mobilized in times of emergencies.

2. Know your physical/environmental setting – using locally-relevant indicators to understand and predict the impacts of a changing climate will help to ensure that products and services are appropriate to time and place.

- Consider the full range of climate parameters
- Be aware of the difference between climate change and climate variability, and recognize that climate variability (e.g., El Niño and La Niña) results in different effects being experienced in different places at the same time.

3. Know your social/cultural setting – understanding community values, aspirations, and perspectives, as well as the sensitivity of assets critical to and the adaptive capacity of the community will drive adaptation from a grassroots level.

- Recognize that social and ecological vulnerability are linked in resource dependent communities to avoid maladaptation.
- Recognize that there is considerable value in local/experiential knowledge, that it needs to be linked to and used along with of scientific/technical knowledge, and that local/experiential knowledge should be gathered and preserved as part of a robust climate services program.

4. Tailor information to the needs of the user – commitment to an iterative process involving the ‘co-production of knowledge’ at multiple levels will ensure that products and services are specific to sector and locale as well as the nature and timing of decision-making.

- Data and information must be transformed (and translated into local languages and dialects) by placing content in a form that is easily understood and readily accessible, aggregating and customizing it so that it is appropriately and successfully brought to bear on relevant problems and questions. Attention also needs to be given to the generation and transmission of data and information (along with transformation) with the ultimate goal of being useable, useful, and used.
- Products and services should form an “end to end” suite, from seasonal forecasts that support early warning to decadal projections that support climate adaptation, and should draw upon and integrate core capabilities including observations and modeling.

5. Commit to robust and sustained monitoring and assessment – the maintenance and expansion of existing monitoring networks will lead to an improved ability to understand and predict a changing climate and associated impacts over both the short and long term.

- Monitoring needs to be matched to the situation, measuring indicators and impacts relevant to key issues and interests. It is required to identify and establish baselines and thresholds, and verify models and predictions.
- Documenting regional and local impacts (as well climate parameters) will help inform both scientist and decision-makers.
- Resources must be provided, in the form of funding and expertise, to establish, maintain, and upgrade monitoring networks at multiple scales.

6. Be aware that impacts due to a changing climate exist along with (and often exacerbate) impacts from a myriad of other non-climate stressors –climate adaptation will be most effective when it is integrated with disaster risk reduction, sustainable development, ecosystem-based management and other such multi-sectoral approaches to planning and policy development.

- Understanding and addressing non-climate stressors is a foundation for adapting to a changing climate.
- Multi-sectoral approaches increase technical support and reduce financial cost by leveraging resources among multiple stakeholders. The potential for maladaptation is also reduced.

7. Direct attention to the alignment and coordination of activities – integrated program planning and product development will maximize efficiency and effectiveness (by minimizing gaps and overlaps and maximizing consistency of information and messaging), as well as enrich potential for local to regional capacity development.

- Donors, program managers, communities, NGOs, and other partners need to build and leverage existing partnerships, recognizing the disparity between funding cycles and the lack of continuity this creates.

- Capacity building of national meteorological services and the enhancement of their distribution networks is essential to ensuring that meaningful information reaches end-users.
- Encourage communities of practice among scientists, practitioners, and managers as a way to share lessons and improve outcomes.
- Cultivate educational and professional mentorships as a means to build local to regional capacity over the long term.