

**Management response to Assessment of Climate Services work by the CGIAR  
Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)**

**June 2015**

**CCAFS Program Management Committee**

## **Overview of the Process**

The Theme 2 Leader commissioned Osvaldo Néstor Feinstein (with the support of Ignacio Llovet) to conduct an evaluation of CCAFS work on climate services for farmers. Osvaldo was identified through the recommendation of IRI's Walter Baethgen, based on their experience serving together on the CGIAR Science Council Standing Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation. His extensive experience includes the WB evaluation department, IFAD, and many consultancies since he retired from the WB. The assessment, conducted September-November 2014, covered the first phase (2011-2014) of CCAFS. The aim was to better understand the degree to which of the initiatives, partnership strategy, and effectiveness of implementation are advancing the objectives of CCAFS. The evaluation covered: (a) progress towards Theme 2 Milestones (primarily 2.3.2); (b) the degree to which the partnership strategy is changing the attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors; (c) appropriateness of the scope of work relative to objectives; (d) how well results are captured and documented; and (e) potential areas for improvement. The qualitative evaluation was based on a review of available documents, an email questionnaire, and a set of interviews.

## **Recommendations and Management Responses:**

The Evaluator made recommendations on six topics (in summary form below):

### ***1. Proactively disseminate CCAFS materials on climate services***

To increase visibility among partners, sharing publications via the web should be complemented with dissemination to targeted audiences (e.g., external actual and potential partners, NMS) through a brief newsletter to a dedicated mailing list, with hyperlinks to access publications.

***TL Response:*** *This is a good point. For in-reach to relevant CGIAR scientists, I plan to do this through a newsletter and through proposed annual Flagship 2 science meetings. Increasing visibility and more systematic outreach with external partners is needed. At this point I believe that this communication should remain more targeted and nuanced relative to the maturity and needs of each partnership.*

### ***2. Improve the use of the Climate Predictability Tool (CPT)***

There is significant scope for improvement in the way in which CPT is used by NMS. Furthermore, CPT itself could be further developed for example complementing it with the R software.

***TL Response:*** *The recommendation apparently comes from a single respondent, who also discussed the ideas with me at length. I brokered ongoing discussion between*

*this individual and the developer of CPT at the IRI. (It is the IRI that developed, maintains, and supports the use of CPT with national meteorological services, and regional organizations and processes, throughout the developing world.)*

**3. Embed services in agricultural extension, and into national agencies (meteorological and agriculture) that can provide sustainability.**

This combines three strongly overlapping recommendations in the evaluation report:

- a) Increase involvement of national government bodies and particularly agricultural extension; noting that NGOs have played a more prominent role in some CCAFS pilot activities.
- b) Strengthen partnerships at the national level to ensure that there are both operational agencies and research institutes that can carry on the work beyond CCAFS project involvement.
- c) Strengthen coordination between national meteorological and agricultural services – noting several obstacles particularly in E Africa to effective partnership between these agencies.

**TL Response:** *I agree that effective engagement of national agencies is crucial. Most past pilot activities have aimed to involve agricultural extension, ministries of agriculture and/or national meteorological services, but with mixed success. We are increasingly moving toward larger bilateral projects that aim to embed climate services into national meteorological and agricultural agencies in a sustainable manner.*

**4. Foster integration of climate services with other types of information and services, considering Climate-Smart Villages as a promising approach to bundling**

CCAFS experience in Bangladesh and Nepal was the basis for noting relatively low priority to climate information in isolation, and for recommending the CSVs as a promising approach to bundle climate services with other services and raising demand.

**TL Response:** *This recommendation highlights the importance of mainstreaming climate services in agricultural development, rather than treating it as solely an extension of national meteorological services. The Evaluator noted success in bundling climate services with other relevant interventions at CSV sites, particularly in S Asia. Scaling up climate services nationally seems to require also addressing integration at a higher level: with Ministries of Agriculture and other key actors in the sector.*

**5. Cost-benefit estimates of climate information services**

Cost-benefit analysis of climate services for small farmers could be useful to assess results and to persuade partners and national authorities of the effects of climate services thus helping to mobilize resources for scaling-up these services. It would be

convenient to avoid a narrow estimation of economic costs and benefits, trying to identify and quantify externalities and social effects.

**TL Response:** *This recommendation highlights an important gap in CCAFS work and expertise. We are responding to this through a planned new hire, to be hosted at the African Climate Policy Center. I am also reaching out to other known experts on the topic (who are in the process of publishing a manual for the WMO-GFCS on the economics of climate services) to help shape new work on this topic.*

### **6. The scaling-up challenge**

While respondents were aware of the importance CCAFS places on scaling up rural climate services, several respondents noted that they did not understand what the CCAFS approach was to this challenge. The core problem is that there is an apparent tradeoff between tailoring services to the diverse needs of heterogeneous populations, and scaling up those services. The evaluator suggested a few approaches that could be considered:

- a) Start with core products and services that are generally relevant, and hence readily scaled up.
- b) Involve major development financial institutions (e.g., IFAD, WB, regional development banks) in scaling-up climate services for smallholder farmers, in a way that integrates with other agricultural support services and connects to relevant government and value chain actors.
- c) Generate evidence of the benefits of climate services, and use this to nurture interest of relevant policy-makers.
- d) Identify “leapfrogging” opportunities to reduce time needed to develop national capacity.

**TL Response:** *This recommendation highlights one of the most important strategic challenges at this stage of development: How to provide services at scale that are sufficiently tailored to the diversity of context-specific needs, particularly for the most vulnerable? I’m targeting this as a priority for research and writing within the core Flagship 2 team, and will present this as a challenge to Flagship 2 Project Leaders and collaborators for their contribution.*

### **Limitations**

The process produced very useful feedback, but also had some limitations. First, to expedite the process, the Evaluator sent interview questions as an email questionnaire to all identified resource people who had not participated in initial interviews. The email responses generally provided little information (e.g., location, project, role) about respondents’ interactions with CCAFS to identify the contexts in which the feedback applies. Second, because response rates were rather low, some feedback captured the views of only a few individuals – sometimes only one – who have interacted with CCAFS in limited contexts. This made it difficult to distinguish

useful generalizations about the Theme 2 strategy, from highly context-specific perspectives. Understanding the context of feedback is important, given the diversity of the evolving portfolio of climate services activities – led by the TL, RPLs and several CGIAR Centers. At agreed points in the process, interaction between the Evaluator and TL refined the process, and clarified ambiguities and a few misunderstandings. Yet feedback from the Theme Leader was kept to a minimum to protect the independence of the evaluation.

This is a relatively good ex post Impact Assessment (ep-IA) that uses survey results to conduct a statistical analysis of the determinants of adoption of drought tolerant maize in three districts of Ghana. The study could be published in a peer-reviewed journal. The analysis of factors determining uptake is good and could include results on gender as these data appear to have been collected. However a standard ep-IA needs to examine the impacts of adoption (for example food security, adaptation and mitigation), not just the factors determining adoption. It may be useful for future ep-IAs to use these type of multi-district randomized samples to estimate net impacts at the national scale (i.e. a higher level of impact), preferably with a small analysis of the policy and market mechanisms that enable scaling up and out. CGIAR ep-IAs are expected to include a monetary calculation of the ratio of benefits (of the impacts) to project costs.

**Notes on the study:**

- Relatively good
- Confined to impacts at the site level (which SPIA defines as outcomes)
- Substantial data on farmers' perceptions of climate change
- Large number of explanatory indicators including age, education, household size, distance from input markets, membership of farmers' associations, access to extension services

**Interesting findings:**

- About 17% of farmers have adopted early maturing drought tolerant varieties as an adaptation measure
- In two of three regions, membership of farmers' associations has a strong positive impact on adoption