



**Technical Workshop Report
On Enhancing Climate Information Systems for
Resilient Development in Liberia
(GCF Funding Proposal Development)
January 15 – 17, 2020**

Environmental Protection Agency

January 18, 2020



**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE
INFORMATION SERVICES
(GCF FUNDING PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT)
15-17 JANUARY 2020
BOULEVARD PALACE, MONROVIA LIBERIA**

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Acronyms

CARI	Central Agriculture Research Institute
CIS	Climate Information System
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
GCF	Green Climate Fund
LHS	Liberia Hydrological Service
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MGCSPP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MME	Ministry of Mines and Energy
MoT	Ministry of Transport
NAFAA	National Fishery and Aquaculture Authority
NCCS	National Climate Change Secretariat
NDMA	National Disaster Management Agency
NPHIL	National Public Health Institute of Liberia
RIA	Roberts International Airport
RREA	Rural Renewable Energy Authority
UL	University of Liberia

Introduction

Combating the impacts of climate change and promoting resilience of vulnerable populations, across Liberia continues on a collaborative scale. A key collaborative effort among others include investing in science-based adaptation and mitigation planning such as climate services information system (CSIS). These translate into meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement and Global Climate Action.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – the principal institution of Government responsible to regulate the environment collaborated with the African Development Bank and Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to develop a funding proposal on Enhancing Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Liberia. The proposed project is expected to serve as a hub for an integrated climate information system that will bring under one roof, meteorological, hydrological, aeronautical activities. It will bridge the gap and build on achievements of the just ended Early Warning System (EWS) project.

The approach adopted in the development of the funding proposal emphasized stakeholder engagements and technical working sessions to elicit specialized information and engender country ownership. As such a three-day technical working session was held at the Boulevard Palace Hotel in Monrovia from January 15 – 17, 2020. Preceding the working session, a survey was designed and administered to gauge experts' understanding and perspectives on climate information system. This report contains proceedings of the working session.

Objectives

The goal of the technical session was to build consensus among technical sector specialists on content and structure of the funding proposal. Specifically the session sought to a) elicit critical input into the various components, outputs and activities of the funding proposal, b) gauge expert understanding and perspectives on climate information system and the need for such activity.

Attendance and Facilitation

The meeting was attended by 38 senior technicians and sector specialists drawn from LHS, MoT/Meteorology Department, NDMA, EPA, MFDP, MGCSP, RREA, UL, RIA, NCCS, and Civil Society.

A technical team from the EPA including Mr. Jeremiah G. Soka, Sr., Njeri Mwathi, Usman Khan and John A. Ninwillay supported the Local consultant, Mr. Tinatua Calvin Kollie in facilitating the working sessions.

Proceeding

The workshop was held for three days and commenced at 10:00 am each day. Breakfast, lunch and coffee/tea each day of the working session. Highlights of the workshop include the following:

Opening formalities

Opening formalities were characterized by welcome and introduction and remarks

Remarks of Randall Dobayou (DED), Environmental Protection Agency

The Deputy Executive Director of the EPA welcomed all the participants and noted that the workshop's objectives were crucial to Liberia's climate change response. He underscored the importance of generating scientific data in Liberia. The Deputy Executive cautioned using the War as excuse for the country's lack of proper data. According to him, the war has been over for more than 15 years. It is about time that the country began gathering its scientific data.

He noted that the EPA cannot achieve its goal of developing an integrated national climate information system on its own. The EPA needs the input of experts from various government institutions who can offer quality and professional input that is needed for the multi-stakeholder balance of the project. He urged the workshop participants to focus on achieving the deliverables by the end of the workshop.

He also reflected on an international meeting in Abidjan where delegates emphasized on the need to have projects that are financing the particular environmental needs of West African countries. In Liberia, for example, communities in West Point and Grand Cape Mount need strategic attention due to the grave climate-related hazards they face. He noted that there are many activities that Liberia can commence in order to reduce the impact of climate-related hazards, but needed the right data. And these necessary activities are contingent on the speed and the way in which information-gathering workshops like this proceed. He therefore called for proactive results-oriented and focused deliberations.

He thanked the persons representing the Ministry of Finance and the African Development Bank, with whom the EPA has been working closely to adopt a national climate information service.

He officially declared the EPA Technical Workshop on Climate Information Services open.

Remarks by Jeremiah Soka, National Climate Change Secretariat/ Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Jeremiah G. Soka, Sr. provided an overview of the working session including expectations. The main reason for this workshop is to solicit critical input of technical and sector experts into the proposal development. He specifically referenced the initial survey that sought to assess the experiences and understanding of key institutional stakeholders

whose decisions affect and/or are affected by climate-related activities in Liberia. According to him, the survey will inform the process of developing a sound climate information system that will provide relevant accurate and timely water, weather and climate services to guide the public and private sectors when making decisions to address hydrometeorological hazards.

Remarks by Mr. Benjamin Karmorh (UNFCCC Focal Point), Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Karmorh, in a brief remark pointed out there is needs to develop an accurate and efficient climate information system in Liberia. According to him, wrong weather information can be disastrous to the country, for example, accurate and reliable climate data is crucial in the aviation industry. He noted that there is also a need to train human resource and to deploy all the technology for climate data gathering to all the counties in Liberia.

Technical Sessions

Session One: Gauging participants' perspectives on climate information system

Review of Survey Questions

Mr Sokan proposed that the participants review the survey questions in order to determine any issues with the phrasing of the question and to provide any further information. He expressed optimism that the session, would determine the following:

- Clarity in the survey questions?
- The questions would reflect the context in Liberia?
- The questions would adequately ensure qualitative data are captured?

It was noted that some participants had not filled out the survey. The team of consultants, including Mr. Tinatua Calvin Kollie, revised the questionnaires accordingly and resent the survey and allowed some time for the said participants to fill out the information. Issues raised on the questionnaires as well as responses were as follows:

Issue	Response and suggestions
Question 7	
What is the intent of the question?	Mr. T. Calvin Kollie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NCCS/EPA team considered the sectors that are most vulnerable to climate change. By identifying the respondents' connection to any of these sectors, the team can track data on the experts working in any of these sectors. • The data will ultimately inform the output in terms of products that are designed to cater to the specific sector's needs.

Mr. Kawusu Toure The questionnaire does not distinguish between a regulator and an actor in the private-actor. For example, EPA may be looking for information on whether the respondent is from a specific sector, but it does not distinguish between a regulator and an actor in the private-actor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a suggestion to distinguish between private and public actors. • Suggestions were raised to include new options like: “other (specify)”, disaster management, environment, academia and research, health. There should also be an option to tick multiple options.
Question 8	
The participants considered the intent of the question, noting that people will usually overestimate their abilities. This could affect the value of the data input	T. Calvin Kollie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The question helps to determine the information level from a technical perspective. The question is, nonetheless, very subjective. The essence, however, is to assess whether the respondent is knowledgeable on climate issues. In the analysis, the EPA team can always isolate the responses that have expert-level responses.
Question 9	
This does not allow for multiple responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be a distinction between where you live and where you work. If these must be included, then the multiple choice is necessary.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would it improve if we determined the location of the respondent and have them choose the climate-related hazard that affects them <i>most</i>? • Redraft the question to: “Which of these climate-related hazards affect Liberia the most?” and allow for multiple choices based on level of importance. However, some people noted that “the most” may be restrictive so the question should read: “Which of these climate-related hazards affect Liberia?”
One participant inquired about some options like air pollution that are not so closely related to Liberia’s particular environment and climate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participants agreed that such issues affect Liberia nonetheless • The participants agreed to include: “thunderstorm”, “fog”, “insects, pest and diseases” as options and an option to select more than one answer.
Question 10	
The responses in this question reflect the responses in question 7 and question 9	Jeremiah G. Soka, Sr. Responses to question 10 may show how the respondent will consider how a climate-related hazard affects their sector.

	Edit the question to: "Rank the climate hazards from the most to the least important in terms of how they affect Liberia."
Participants were unsure about the match between question 10 and the purpose of the survey.	We need to define the purpose of the survey. We have to know what the responses will contribute to so that the responses are not biased only to the specific sector or the national institution rather than the geographical hazards. The survey should thus be focused on Liberia, particularly because the GCF project is to be implemented nationally. Point to indicate the highest and lowest numbers of rank.
Question 11	
Question is not clear in terms of specific time period	Revise question to use ranges of time rather than specific time periods
Question 13	
There is no clear question eliciting information on climate how information is accessed	Include a question to ask how the respondent access information on the climate (through which media? Email? Newspaper? Television).
Question 17	
Question not clear	Redraft question to: "What climate-information services will be most useful to your sector?"
Question 18	
Question is restrictive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise question to include additional options as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include mobile app - instead of internet, indicate website - multiple choice and a ranking based on the institution and the sector. • Also there is need to consider the majority of Liberians who do not have access to electronic products or are illiterate.
Is question 21 about whether the climate-related hazards affect vulnerable groups or how?	The question needs to provide more information on the project.
Question 24	
Participants were interested in knowing what was the essence of this question.	T. Calvin Kollie The question will help the EPA determine the kind of equipment needed to gather climate information in Liberia.

Review of Survey Findings

The responses received were 16 out of the 38 persons to whom the survey was sent. The participants reviewed this data and made the following notes:

- a. on question 12, based on the data, it is clear that the question was not clear. Proposal to redraft: “Do you receive weather and climate information services?”
- b. on question 18, the responses seem to be geared towards answering the question which media you would prefer to receive climate information rather than which media through which you receive climate information.

Session Two: Assessing CIS In Liberia

Discussing the Baseline

Review of the responses from the revised survey – 22 out of 38 respondents. We need to have at least 30 respondents.

A few concerns:

1. There are few women respondents. In this case, the pool of respondents is drawn from a highly-technical group. This is a problem across the country because the level of skills is distorted in the country. The project thus needs to put in place some measures to counter this imbalance. For example, the department of meteorology at the Ministry of Transport has a total of 12 technical staff out of which only one is a female. At the hydrological service only 5 out of 35 staff are women.
2. Response in relation to question 11. Particularly on the frequency for environmental fires. There is a big gap between responses “rarely occur” and “seasonal”. Do the workshop participants agree on the actual data on the frequency of environmental fires? A distinction needs to be made in relation to *probability* of fires versus *frequency* of fires.
3. The response on receiving climate information from Early Warning System and the Liberia Hydrological Services

Session Three: Review of the GCF Sap Funding Proposal

Components and Outputs

This was a brainstorming session on the requirements for the GCF proposal. The participants noted that capacity-needs assessment for the personnel and staff needs to be conducted and that the concept of a hub would involve construction; security; electricity, reliable internet etc. The proposal needs to be beefed up to reflect this.

- The focus of the project is a new approach to build a green structure. It will generate electricity sufficient for its own use and surrounding buildings with solar panel roofs. On internet, Libtelco has an option for dedicated fiber optic service that the hub could employ. There is also an option to explore satellite internet through Ghana.

Implementation Framework

Experiences were shared by technicians particularly representatives of the aviation, Ministry of Transport – Met Department and Liberia Hydrological Services.

Aviation (Roberts International Airport Meteorology Department)

- The airport needs an automatic weather observation station which integrates the rain, wind forecasts. Currently, there is a synoptic system that needs to be updated.

Ministry of Transport (Meteorology Department)

- There is an E-station and PUMA Synergy given to Liberia. These are stationed at CARL, NAFAA and at the airport.

Liberia Hydrological Services

- Information sharing would entail training the technicians in the hydrological and meteorological departments. The departments work often with the Norwegian Aid program for training technicians in the collection of data. We need monitoring systems in the various rivers in Liberia in order to measure water balance. The data collection needs cut across all the projects in this country. In order for the system to offer prediction services, we need gauge stations.
- The team needs to consider the sustainability of the project after its completion in 5 years.

Other suggestions emerging from the discussions include the following:

- There is gender disparity due to lack of awareness, lack of interest and involvement of women in hydromet activities. The project should endeavor to building capacity of women in technical areas such as meteorology, hydrology, disaster management.
- Staff needs assessment should be considered under component one.
- Liberia has a metrological department that needs upgrade to a hydro metrological service and must be WMO compliant.
- Include outputs in the proposal for advocacy with hydro and metrological services in upstream countries.
- Quality survey is required
- Need to determine that there is lobbying for the project

Closing

The technical working session concluded with closing Remarks from Mr. Benjamin Karmorh. Mr. Karmorh thanked the participants for taking the time out of their busy schedule to participate in the project development. He noted that fighting climate change is crucial and necessary. According to him, once the CIS proposal is approved, there will be national ownership because of the contribution made at the technical workshop.

Annex I: Photo Gallery



The Coordinator of the National Climate Change Secretariat giving an overview of the working session



Cross section of technicians in discussion on CIS



Review of issues emerging from the survey













Sector specialists sharing experiences and perspectives on CIS structure

Annex II: Attendance Log

Day One

Wednesday, January 15, 2020
Boulevard Palace Hotel, 13th Street Sinkor, Monrovia-Liberia







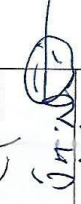



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Thursday, January 16, 2020
Boulevard Palace Hotel, 13th Street Sinkor, Monrovia-Liberia

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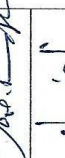




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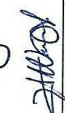




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Friday, January 17, 2020
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Annex III: Agenda

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE INFORMATION SERVICES
GCF FUNDING PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT
BOULEVARD PALACE HOTEL
13TH STREET, SINKOR, MONROVIA, LIBERIA
JANUARY 15 – 17, 2020**

AGENDA

Day One

Time	Activities	Responsible Parties
08:00-09:00	Registration & Breakfast	All
09:01-09:5	Welcome Remarks	Jeremiah G. Soka, Sr.
	Self Introduction	All
09:06-09:15	Special remarks:	African Development Bank Hon. Nathaniel T. Blama, Sr, Executive Director, EPA
09:15-09:30	Overview of the Technical Session	Mr. Jeremiah G. Soka, Sr. National Coordinator, NCCS/EPA
09:31-09:40	Group photos	All
09:41-11:00	Technical Session: Gauging participants' perspectives on climate information system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey questionnaire 	Facilitator/Participants
11:01-1:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plenary discussions Group Exercise 	Facilitator/Participants
1:01-2:00	Lunch	All
2:01:-2:30	Technical Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Information System Overview 	Jeremiah G. Soka, Sr.
2:31-4:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plenary discussions Group Exercise 	Facilitator/Participants
4:51 – 5:00	Closing Remarks & Announcement	Mr. Jeremiah G. Soka, Sr. National Coordinator/NCCS-EPA
End of Day One		

Day Two

Time	Activities	Responsible Parties
08:00-09:00	Registration & Breakfast	All

09:01-09:05	Technical Session (Assessing CIS in Liberia – Baseline Where are We?)	Mr. Elijah Z. Whapoe & Mr. Benjamin Karmorh
09:06-11:15	What Exist within the context of CIS? What approach can we adopt?	Mr. Benjamin Karmorh & Mr. Benjamin Karmorh
11:16-1:00	Plenary Discussion	Facilitator/Participants
1:01-2:00	Lunch	All
2:01-2:30	Technical Session: SAP Funding Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background	Facilitator
2:31-4:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcomes/components• Outputs	Facilitator/Participants
4:51-5:00	Closing Remarks & Announcement	Mr. Jeremiah G. Sokan, Sr. National Coordinator/NCCS-EPA
End of Day Two		

Day Three

Time	Activities	Responsible Parties
08:00-09:00	Registration & Breakfast	All
09:01-09:05	Technical Session SAP Funding Proposal	Facilitator
09:06-11:00	Outputs and Baseline	Facilitator/Participants
11:01-12:15	Activities	Facilitator/Participants
12:16-1:00	Lunch	All
1:01-4:00	Technical Session: SAP Funding Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation Framework	Facilitator/Participants
4:01- 4:20	Closing Remarks	Participant African Development Bank Mr. Jeremiah G. Sokan, Sr. National Coordinator/NCCS-EPA
End of Day Three		