

Shout it out!

Bangladesh to boost farmer-friendly climate advisories

Bangladesh sets its sights on expanding climate services to benefit millions of farmers

Bangladesh is South Asia's most densely populated, poor, and environmentally vulnerable country. Home to over 160 million people, farmers in Bangladesh grapple with unreliable precipitation and temperature leading to floods, droughts and heat waves, all of which can reduce farm productivity. Bangladesh's Meteorological Department (BMD) has worked since 1978 to provide timely weather forecasts, and is now setting their sights on custom-designed advisories for farming communities across the country. Communicating these forecasts through simple to understand messages and advisories can better prepare smallholder farm families for adverse weather, ultimately reducing production risks.

The USAID supported Climate Services for Resilient Development (CSR) is a new partnership that connects climate, agricultural and data science, to generate new information to be transferred as decision support tools and training to agricultural decision-makers and farmers. CSR is led by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in the South Asian region, and is working to increase the agricultural relevance of BMD's forecasts and to develop new communications tools and systems with Bangladesh's Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) to spread climate advisories to farmers.

DAE has over 14,000 field extension agents poised to boost farmers' access to climate advisories. One of the methods used by DAE to spread awareness on weather forecast among in rural areas is the use of musical jingles using loudspeakers that are moved about on bicycle carts or trucks. Partnering with CSR, this and other media communication technologies will be tested so farmers can receive BMD's weather forecasts for farm management.

"It is essential to communicate weather related crop production threats efficiently to farmers in a timely manner to reduce risks," commented Dr. Aziz Mazharul, Deputy Director of Planning and Implementation & Information and Communication Technologies at DAE. "CSR activities which will integrate agriculturally relevant meteorological information into easy-to-use and demand-driven decision support platforms to improve climate advisory services and farmer crop management".



Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) uses mobile loudspeakers to spread awareness and weather forecasts among the farmers in rural areas. Photo:DAE

Climate Services for Resilient Development (CSR) is a global partnership whose core mission is to translate actionable climate information into easy to understand formats to spread awareness and use of climate services. The CSR consortium in South Asia is led by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in partnership with the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), Bangladesh Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), International Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), University de Passo Fundo (UPF), and the University of Rhode Island (URI).