

## Scientists set new regional climate services agenda

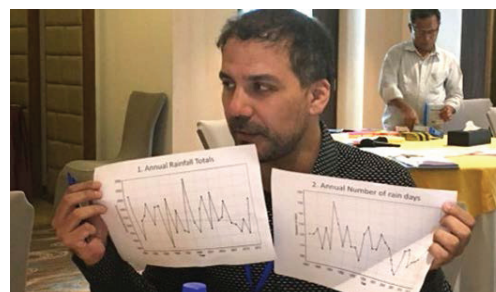
Scientists from across South and Southeast Asia launched a new agenda to boost farmer involvement in developing climate information and services

Over 45 climate researchers gathered in Dhaka, Bangladesh for a three-day workshop from September 17-19, 2017. They evaluated how climate and agricultural extension advisories are currently produced and conveyed, and identified opportunities on how to improve these services for farming communities in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

“Key to climate services is emphasis on the service,” said Dr. Timothy J. Krupnik, Systems Agronomist at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and Project Leader for Climate Services for Resilient Development (CSR) activities in South Asia. “We must be able to rapidly extend information to farmers and others who require climate data and tools to inform their decision making, and to assure that research outputs are translated in an easy to understand way that communicates to farmers, extension workers and policy makers,” said Krupnik. “Equally important is feedback from farmers on the quality of climate services, so they can be adapted and improved over time.”

During the workshop, which was supported by USAID and implemented with the assistance of the USAID funded SERVIR and Climate Services Support Activity, delegates assessed different ways to incorporate seasonal climate forecasts into farmer decision making, using several African countries as examples. Participants learned how to simply but effectively depict probabilistic forecasts in graphs understandable by farmers. Participants also identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for climate services in each country. Subsequent discussions examined how participants can collaborate in south-south exchanges to support ongoing work in agricultural climate services. Weather index based agricultural insurance was also discussed, after which participants proposed new institutional arrangements to improve climate information generation and flow to farmers in each of their countries.

“CSR’s activities are relevant to the U.S. government’s commitment to building resilience of smallholder farmers and to ensure increased production, as well bolster country resilience,” said David Westering, the Acting Economic Growth Office Director and Feed the Future Team Leader for the United States Agency for International Development’s mission in Bangladesh. “That is why we are behind this effort.”



(Top) Participants’ gathering in front of the workshop venue. (Below) Dr. Carlo Montes, CIMMYT Ag. Climatologist, discusses the interpretation of historical climate data. Photos: CIMMYT

**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. In South Asia, CSR supported by USAID and 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).