

Boosting forecasting skills in service of agriculture

By partnering with United States based advanced research institutes, the CSRD partnership supports agricultural climate services for resilient development in South Asia

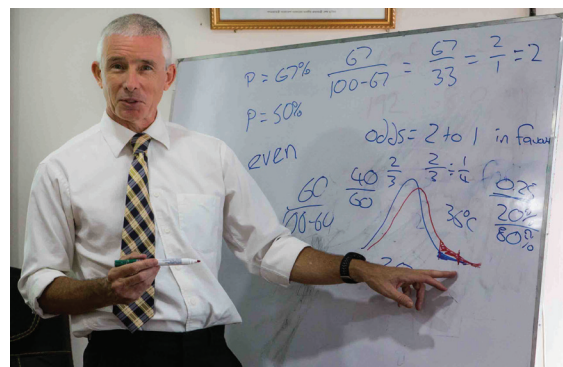
Half of Bangladesh's population in some way works in agriculture. A new effort from the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) and International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) under the Climate Services for Resilient Development (CSRD) partnership in South Asia aims to give the Bangladesh's agricultural sector better access to climate information to farm production risks including drought and extreme temperatures that can lower farm productivity.

Providing technical support to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) in developing new climate information products tailored to agricultural needs is the core to CSRD. Recently, IRI's Senior Research Scientist, Dr. Simon Mason, visited BMD to help increase forecasting skills and capacity to develop new climate information products.

"The BMD has a core of very competent and highly qualified meteorologists, but these scientists have not had sufficient opportunity to engage in sustained interaction with BMD's clients," said Mason. BMD could therefore benefit from collaborations aimed at making climate information more relevant and understandable. "This can be done without compromising on the technical standards," commented Mason.

Mason and the CSRD team therefore worked with BMD throughout 2017 to identify actions required to improve climate data collection, processing and analysis, all of which underpin the development of quality climate services products. The team also identified specific crop management decisions and activities implemented by farmers that could be improved with climate information and services. Weather events that affect farm productivity, such as heat waves, cold and dry spells were also prioritized for improved forecasting, in addition to efforts to the supply of extended-range forecasts to farmers and extension agents.

"CSRD's engagement with IRI is highly strategic. As a US-based and global leader in climate services, linking IRI with BMD will strengthen forecasting skills and capacities to deliver relevant climate information. We are mobilizing the best minds in climate science in service of smallholder farmers through CSRD", commented Timothy J. Krupnik, CSRD Project Leader and CIMMYT scientist.



International Research Institute for Climate and Society's Senior Research Scientist for International Outreach, Simon Mason, spent several weeks in 2017 assisting BMD through the CSRD project Photo: E. Gawthrop (IRI)

Climate Services for Resilient Development (CSRD) 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, CSRD 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).