



Current need for climate services in West Africa: Results from the ISIPedia and CLIMAP stakeholder surveys

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The need for climate services in West Africa can be strongly argued for by the strong climate impacts that the region will be confronted with in the future, which add to its already existing specific biophysical and social vulnerability to climate variations. In order to be of best use, the development of climate services in West Africa should pay dedicated attention to the particular profiles, needs and skills of their future users in this region.

Both the ISIPedia and CLIMAP projects, funded by the European Joint Programming Initiative “Connecting Climate Knowledge for Europe”, respectively the French Ministry for an Ecological and Solidary Transition, have recently tried to achieve this through defined stakeholder engagement processes in West Africa, with the final objective of developing a portal delivering climate and climate-impact information. Within each project, a user survey targeted at the potential future users of these portals was conducted independently between the end of 2017 and April 2018. The ISIPedia survey collected 131 usable answers worldwide, including 23 from West Africa which mainly come from government members or scientists working on climate-related science in this region. 58 persons responded to the CLIMAP survey in total, and these are currently working for companies, universities, government agencies or development banks in Senegal.

About 30% of the respondents to the CLIMAP survey declared using climate projections at least once a month, while the integrality of the West African respondents to the ISIPedia survey use climate-impact information at this frequency. The collected responses are therefore useful to reveal some key insights on how to tailor climate services to the needs of West African users. They point at barriers to making use of available climate or climate-impact information that are shared globally, such as large uncertainties or a spatial scale mismatch between delivered information and the respondents' requirements. However, they also consistently emphasise issues that are more acute in the West African region, such as the lack of skills to understand or use the available information, infrastructure problems (e.g., poor Internet access), or the lacking information in another language than English. Both the ISIPedia and CLIMAP projects have already and will further make use of these survey results in order to design and develop content for portals delivering climate-related information in West Africa (eventually targeting a global coverage in the case of ISIPedia), as well as accompanying capacity-building activities.