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## Virtual user engagement methods for working with stakeholders in China

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Climate services provide information to help better manage climate-related risks and opportunities in different sectors around the world. This requires work at the interface between scientific research and decision-making. Studies have found that climate services are most effective when they are co-developed and co-produced with the intended users of the services. To achieve this, climate service developments often involve scientists engaging with users and potential users, which traditionally has been most productive face-to-face, at least in the early stages of engagement and co-development to build relationships.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically restricted face-to-face engagement, particularly for international activities. Climate service providers and users had to suddenly adapt and find methods to engage with each other virtually. Here we discuss the software and methods that are being used to ensure that provider-user engagement could continue, despite international travel restrictions, with a specific focus on working with users in China as part of the Climate Science for Services Partnership China project; a collaboration between the UK Met Office and other UK partners, the China Meteorological Administration, and the Institute of Atmospheric Physics. Using examples from work on food security with the agriculture sector in Northeast China, we will showcase different climate service prototype products, such as brochures, information packs, and comic book storylines which are helping us to engage with and understand the requirements of multiple audiences despite the lack of in-person engagement.

Through this work, we have discovered additional benefits to virtual engagement, such as more frequent interactions with users, the ability to involve participants who wouldn't usually be able to travel to attend events, and new metrics for evaluating climate services. These benefits will likely make virtual provider-user engagement a more common tool for developing and refining climate services with international partners in the future. We hope that the tools and methods presented here will help other climate service providers to conduct productive virtual provider-user engagement in the future, both in China and in other countries around the world.

