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Assessing Socioeconomic Benefits of Weather and Climate Services

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Many if not all national meteorological and hydrological services (NMS) are under constant pressure to demonstrate that their investments and operational budgets pay off well for society. At the same time these agencies are demanded to provide an ever increasing amount and variety of information concerning historic, current and future climate at different resolutions and in a wide variety of combinations with other (impact related) observations. Furthermore, ever more NMSs have to get used to the emergence of alternative suppliers of (at least some of) the meteorological services in their country, either being foreign providers or local commercial providers.
In order to provide adequate evidence of the societal net benefits of weather and climate service systems, NMSs need to develop a practice of recurrent socioeconomic evaluation of their service portfolio and of their investment and development needs. Since NMSs rarely have in-house expertise on socioeconomic evaluation, external guidance in combination with an intra-sectoral learning and twinning process is called for. In support of such guidance the World Meteorological Organisation in cooperation with the World Bank, and with additional support from USAID, engaged in the production of a guidebook for socio-economic benefit analysis of meteorological and hydrological services (Anderson et al 2015).
In the meantime in Europe a growing number of SEB studies is held and more are coming (Perrels et al 2013a). In the FP7 project ToPDAd is also demonstrated that weather service innovations can also be beneficial for climate services and SEB studies are a means to make the point (Pilli-Sihvola et al 2015). This introduction to the SEB session will give an overview of progress in appraisal of weather services, with special reference to Europe and role of innovations.

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