WISER Africa

Theory of Change

October 2022 (abridged version)

WISER
Weather and Climate Information Services

Supported by:
UKaid
from the British people

WISER Africa programme Theory of Change

About this Note

This document presents the current version of the Theory of Change (ToC) for the WISER Africa programme. It has gone through several iterations and builds on lessons learned since WISER's launch in 2015 and experience and learning from other programmes.

This ToC has been tested with over 30 stakeholders in East, Southern and West Africa between July and September 2022. There is significant consensus that this ToC reflects the priorities of stakeholders in Africa and that this ToC is the ToC WISER needs to pursue. Feedback from FCDO and the WISER Programme Team at Met Office has also been included. The ToC shared in this document is therefore a near final version. Some further (small) changes might be anticipated in the finalisation process between selected WISER project partners, the WISER Programme Team, and FCDO.

The ToC will be tested periodically based on the results, evidence and learning starting from Year 1 of the programme. The intention is therefore that the ToC will evolve and be updated as necessary as all WISER stakeholders collectively test, debate and use it. It should therefore be considered as one hypothesis, which best fits with our current knowledge, expertise and assumptions, and pragmatically allows us to monitor, investigate and evaluate how lessons learned from WISER Africa can contribute to wider sustainable development and resilience-building processes.

WISER Context and Needs

People across Africa are significantly and increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather, seasonal events (such as lower than average rainfall) and longer-term climate change, contributing to growing pressures on food security, water stress and sustainable development. Using weather and climate information services (WCIS) like forecasts, to anticipate, prepare for and act ahead of such impacts is a positive response that people, governments, businesses and NGOs can take. Yet WCIS must meet the specific needs of users if better informed decisions are to be made, which ultimately improve people's resilience. Co-production between the producers and users of information, often using intermediaries to help connect these actors, is a central process within weather and climate services designed to meet this objective.

The needs the WISER Africa programme attempts to address is the improving yet still inconsistent availability, access and use of WCIS that meets the decision needs of different

users, from a farmer or fisherwoman to a policy maker. Substantial progress has been made by WISER since 2015, using co-production to enhance the quality and encourage better use of WCIS in a range of decisions across sectors and actors, predominantly in East Africa. Yet the capacity of the population in Africa to effectively anticipate, prepare for and act ahead of impacts from changes in weather and climate, and stay safe and thrive, still poses challenges in practice with more to be done. Levels of co-production and interaction and trust between WCIS providers, intermediaries and users across Africa differs. Too often recognising and acting on enhancing WCIS by governments in Africa and lack of resources and knowledge can also inhibit the effective use and application of WCIS. Driving further improvements to better tailor WCIS to different needs and help inform the decisions users make around livelihoods, protecting lives and property, policy, plans or development investments is needed.

ToC Overview

WISER's activities are designed to address the above needs. The WISER Africa ToC shows how the programme expects to contribute to the changes it aims to influence to do so.

The ToC for WISER Africa demonstrates how WISER expects to drive better decisions that integrate co-produced WCIS, to ultimately strengthen people's resilience to the impacts of changing weather and climate across East, West and Southern Africa. In summary, WISER maintains that delivering the following five outputs:

1. Strengthened co-production between producers, intermediaries and users to improve the uptake and use of WCIS across weather to climate timescales
2. Strengthened global, regional and national networks, partnerships and coordination mechanisms to support the improved generation, uptake and use of WCIS
3. Strengthened designated producers' capacity to deliver WCIS
4. Strengthened enabling and policy environment for better delivery, use and sustainability of WCIS
5. Better evidence and learning, continually strengthening WCIS and programme decision-making

will contribute to two intermediate outcomes:

1. Greater and better access to WCIS by regional, national and community users
2. Improved awareness of the value of using WCIS in the decisions users make

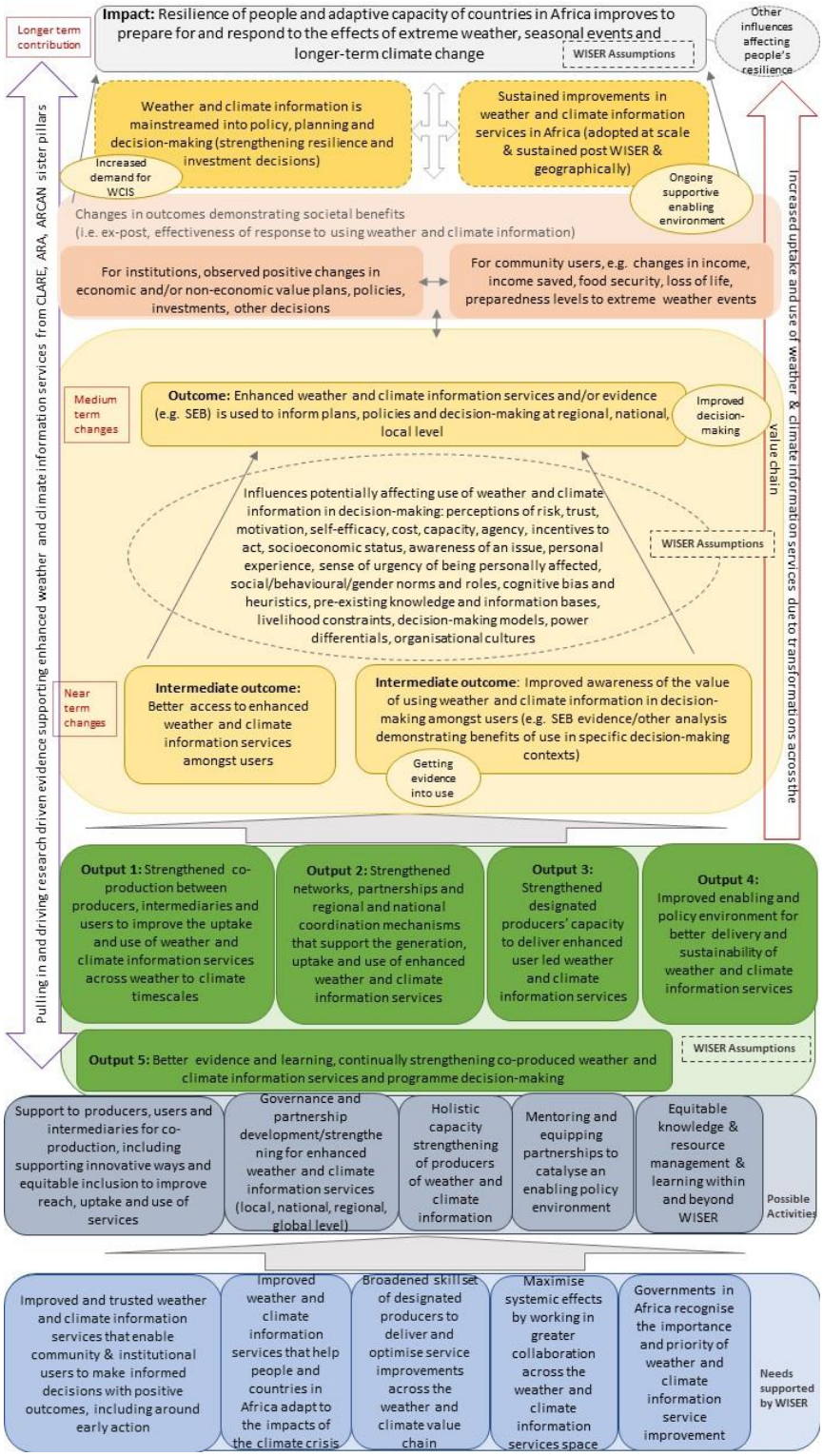
The two intermediary outcomes above will together contribute to better and more use of WCIS and related evidence or analysis, which will strengthen policy, planning, resource allocation and other resilience or livelihood decisions by users from regional and national to community level (WISER's outcome). Alongside these anticipated changes, WISER's outputs

and outcomes will also contribute to WCIS being scaled, replicated and sustained, through innovation where possible, contributing to the potential for transformation under WISER through the ways in which the uptake and use of WCIS can be further enhanced and evidence of effectiveness shared.

The initiatives or interventions which WISER supports will contribute to change at the outcome and impact level by supporting activities within one or more outputs. WISER by design aims to achieve a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impact by working in partnership with a range of stakeholders and organisations across the weather and climate value chain.

WISER's ToC also acknowledges that the programme is not the only initiative working on enhancing WCIS to strengthen people's resilience to weather and climate impacts. WISER Africa is located within a wider set of international, regional and national development and research actions on climate change, disaster risk management, governance and other issues. The programme therefore aims to strengthen evidence on how to keep improving the generation, use and uptake of WCIS, and feed in and pull through this learning into and from other initiatives. The aim is to foster greater collaboration and maximise impact across the WCIS space, and support understanding of what needs to be known to adapt, iterate and continually improve.

WISER Africa ToC Map



Assumptions

The WISER Africa ToC is influenced by a set of assumptions. Assumptions are normally defined as 'the necessary and positive conditions that allow for a successful cause-and-effect relationship between different levels of results.'[1] This means that when we think about the positive changes we would like to see emerging from WISER, we are assuming that once those conditions are in place the results will be achieved.

Assumptions: WISER outputs

We assume that:

- Investment leads to expected outputs, which are gender and social-inclusion sensitive and informed.
- Co-production is adopted: there is buy-in and willingness for stakeholders across the value chain (including institutions, particularly NMHSs and RCCs) to collaborate and the 'right' actors are involved, with mutual trust being developed between stakeholders.
- WCI produced is robust and decision-relevant – this means the information is locally relevant, fit-for-purpose and is available in a timely and accessible manner to different users to inform their decisions.
- The political and enabling institutional (including bureaucratic) environment is stable enough to allow for WCIS and NMHSs and RCCs to operate unhindered.
- Partnerships have an appropriate mix of stakeholders to achieve full value chain effects through to community users.
- Supporting innovation enables more effective and efficient means for different users to access and use WCIS.
- Institutions (e.g. RCCs, NMHSs) have the necessary skill and competency to deliver WCIS for the benefit of users.

Assumptions: WISER outcomes

We assume that:

- WCIS are accessed by the appropriate stakeholders, who have the capacity, agency, incentives and trust to use the information in their decision making.
- Behavioural attitudes will support people and organisations to demand and use WCIS.

[1] UNDP (2014) Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results. See: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guidance.shtml#handbook (cited in BRACED Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance Notes. March 2015 (copy-edited December 2015)

- Political will exists for national and local governments and regional entities to commit to mainstreaming WCIS in plans and policies.
- SEB evidence on the value of weather and climate information has a demonstrable influence on decision-making and supports the uptake and use of WCIS by institutions.
- The political environment is stable enough to allow for WCIS and NMHSs to operate unhindered (and effectively).
- The successful implementation of WISER projects can attract additional funding from public (and possibly private) sources, helping investments in WCIS to be realised and implemented on a large scale and sustained.
- Opportunities for engagement exist to influence policy makers in Africa, supported by evidence and learning from WISER projects.

Assumptions: Contribution to WISER's impact

The ToC identifies that WISER Africa's long-term impact is to ultimately improve the resilience of community users in light of exposure to extreme weather, seasonal events and longer term climate change, and enhance the adaptive capacity of countries in Africa to prepare for and respond to these changes.

We assume that:

- The decisions community users, institutions and policy-makers make based on WISER's enhanced WCIS, including EWS, improve people's lives and positively strengthens their resilience (via an increased ability to anticipate weather and climate changes and take proactive action to prepare for them).
- To support longer-term impact, WISER supported enhanced WCIS and/or plans and policies informed by WISER services will be disseminated, adopted at (large) scale and sustained – resulting in the improved resilience of people.

Assumptions: WISER 'Fund' (linked to ARCAN)

We assume that:

- The political favour of the UK government towards co-produced WCIS and ARCAN continues.
- There is sufficient interest and supply of proposals for projects by organisations who have capacity to implement funded projects that support WISER to achieve its results.
- WISER represents value for money in obtaining results around strengthening co-production and the influence of enhanced WCIS on the decision-making of users in Africa.

Stakeholder Groups

Some of the key stakeholder groups involved in WISER Africa's ToC are as follows:

WCIS Providers, e.g. National Meteorological & Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and Regional Climate Centres (RCCs), are interested in WISER as they are responsible for generating the weather and climate information based on their institutional mandate that will be used as part of co-production.

Intermediaries have an interest in WISER as they will also inform co-production by supporting engagement between producers and users of WCIS, e.g. journalists and/or other communicators.

Users intend to benefit from the WCIS WISER supports and are also important stakeholders that span a range of user types from community to policy-makers, e.g. government ministers, community-based organisations, sector-based service officers, farmers, urban residents and humanitarian agencies.

Governments indicate their receptiveness to be influenced by WCIS and base decisions on evidence and analysis through their interest in engaging with WISER.

Other donors might have resources to further support WISER's objectives by indicating their interest in identifying activities and initiatives to enhance and influence WISER's achievements.