

WISER Africa

Stories of Change Guidance

December 2022

Version 1



Supported by:



Intended audience and purpose

This guidance on stories of change is for Implementing Partners of WISER Africa, who will deliver projects in East, West and Southern Africa. Its purpose is to support a coherent approach to qualitative change stories across WISER, supporting partners to apply a consistent approach to collecting and reporting on stories of change in their projects. WISER Africa is funded by the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and there is a need to ensure WISER as a programme overall, and its individual projects, are delivering change for its stakeholders.

This guidance focuses on the methodology agreed upon between the WISER Programme Team and FCDO, to capture, record and report stories of change across projects. This guidance has been developed by the WISER Programme Team as part of its technical support to projects on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) activities. The WISER Programme Team are responsible for developing robust systems for project monitoring, results reporting and evaluation to support efficient programme management and accountability against your grant agreements. They also support the generation of robust evidence for lesson learning and enable communication across projects and with other stakeholders interested in WISER, to share experiences and knowledge, and learn together.

This guidance will be updated during the WISER programme as needed, to take account of learning from implementing stories of change in practice. We invite Implementing Partners to provide feedback on what could be improved based on your experience of using the guidance. Feedback should be sent to:
wiser@metoffice.gov.uk.

“Stories of change are often used as alternatives or supplements to quantitative reporting. They may be generated for many different purposes. When used for monitoring and evaluation it is important to ensure that they are generated and used properly. Stories of change can be used on their own, but can also be used as part of a wider methodology”

- Intrac.org

1. Introduction and Background

The Met Office has been commissioned by the UK Government’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to manage the Weather and Climate Information Services (WISER) programme, leading on its design, management and coordination, and a range of technical assistance. The Met Office is a global centre of excellence in weather and climate science, and the United Kingdom's national weather service. The Met Office is a trusted and long-term partner of the UK Government, development agencies, developing country governments, research institutions, UN bodies, academia, non-governmental organisations, and national meteorological and hydrological services (NMHS) worldwide. The Met Office works closely with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) spanning several areas from governance and technical commissions to membership and representation on the Scientific Advisory Panel to WMO and the WMO Research Board. Our UK membership to WMO means we are a trusted partner to NMHSs globally.

Since 2015, WISER has enhanced the quality, accessibility and use of weather and climate information services (WCIS) in East Africa and the Sahel through 17 projects over two phases of implementation. Working regionally, nationally and with communities, WISER has had a significant impact. It has met the needs of a variety of users of WCIS from farmers and fisherfolk to journalists, government officials, the disaster risk sector, non-governmental organisations, and vital businesses such as energy providers and aviation services. In doing so, WISER has supported 3.3 million households to access enhanced WCIS, helping them to make decisions that strengthen their resilience, delivering at least £200 million in socio-economic benefit.

To advance existing achievements, and further innovate and expand geographically into new areas and partnerships which can continue to strengthen the development, delivery, and use of WCIS across the continent, a new phase of WISER in Africa has been launched. From 2022 to 2026, funded with UK aid from the British people under FCDO, WISER Africa will provide up to £15.7 million to continue its work in East and West Africa and expand into Southern Africa.

WISER aims to continue strengthening the uptake and use of co-produced WCIS in decision-making from the local to the regional level, building resilience to the impacts of extreme weather, seasonal events, and longer-term climate change. WISER aims to enhance WCIS by also putting greater focus on gender equality and inclusion, transformational change, and lesson learning both within the programme and across other ARCAN pillars, and globally, seeking to maximise systemic effects through greater collaboration and learning.

WISER Africa is part of the [FCDO Africa Regional Climate and Nature \(ARCAN\) programme](#). Other pillars of ARCAN focus on transboundary water management, nature, energy transitions, and climate finance and policy. ARCAN's overarching aim is to increase the resilience of African economies and communities to climate change, tackle nature and biodiversity loss and catalyse energy transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Stories of Change in WISER

WISER will use stories of change to demonstrate change that has occurred within each project, and when combined, as a result of WISER overall. They will be used to show if and how the programme is moving towards its anticipated outcomes and impact. Stories of change are useful, as they communicate changes in knowledge, behaviours, attitudes, and practice that cannot easily be captured by quantitative indicators in the WISER programme Logframe alone. They typically focus on a particular result or element of success, which can lead to a wider understanding of a project or programme's results or potential future results.

Stories of change can generate useful learning opportunities for different stakeholders involved in WISER. The process of developing the story of change requires reflection and investigation into the factors that have enabled and constrained a particular change to occur. The knowledge gained through this process is then captured and stored in the story. Although stories of change typically focus on positive results, they can also be used to investigate circumstances when results were not achieved. By identifying the constraining factors at play, important lessons can be learnt about the assumptions underlying WISER and its Theory of Change.

There are different approaches to implementing stories of change. To track and measure progress against Impact Indicator 1 (KPI 4), four outcome level indicators (Outcome Indicators 1, 2, 3 and 4) and one intermediate outcome (Intermediate Outcome 1) in the WISER programme Logframe, WISER will apply stories of change systematically across its (relevant) projects. This is to dig deeper into people's use of enhanced WCIS and the positive improvements experienced as a result of taking decisions based on their use, and links to end users' resilience. To do this, WISER will use stories of change that follow the Outcome Harvesting approach. Outcome harvesting is a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodology used to identify, describe, verify and analyse outcomes. In the context of Outcome Harvesting, an outcome is defined as *"a change in the behaviour, relationships, actions, activities, policies, or practices of an individual, group, community, organisation, or institution"* (Wilson-Grau and Britt 2013).

3. Outcome Harvesting

What is Outcome Harvesting?

Outcome Harvesting enables us to drill down into the detail behind very specific examples of change that happened as part of WISER Africa.

Outcome Harvesting is a method that enables Implementing Partners to identify, formulate, verify and make sense of outcomes. Outcome Harvesting is a forensic approach and does not measure progress towards predetermined outcomes or objectives, but rather collects evidence of what has been achieved, and works backwards to determine whether and how the project or intervention contributed to the change. Outcome Harvesting is useful in complex programming environments, where cause and effect may not be fully understood.

How Outcome Harvesting will be used in WISER Africa?

We have standardised the approach to using stories of change so that the WISER Programme Team can look for commonalities and trends across all WISER projects, contributing to a wider understanding of the impact that WISER is having across Africa.

Outcome Harvesting consists of six steps that we have customised for WISER Africa. The first four steps in the Outcome Harvesting process are essential for Implementing Partners to carry out when collecting their stories of change. These are:

1. Design the questions you want to ask about the outcomes you want to investigate
2. Collect the information and write up the draft story of change
3. Go back to your informants and review the story of change
4. Substantiate or validate the story of change

The final two steps can be done in conjunction with the WISER Programme Team:

5. Analysing and interpreting the outcomes across the WISER programme
6. Using the stories of change to communicate the success of the WISER programme

What are you being asked to do?

In Appendix A is a short questionnaire that asks people participating in or benefiting from your project to think about one change they know has happened because of your WISER project. They should think about how your WISER project has contributed to the change that they are reporting.

The change that they report on can be anything that they know about personally or have experienced. It is not something that they have read about or someone else has told them about.

They should provide as much detail as possible for each answer, as well as references to additional documents (where appropriate) that support what they say.

ASK NO MORE THAN FIVE questions and the total time taken to respond should be approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

You can ask the questions as part of a conversation, as a series of questions over email, or even as a form online that you direct people to complete (as long as you know who the person is and how to get hold of them).

Afterwards

- Write up a short story of change (also called an outcome statement) from their response and send it to the story-teller for checking (see Appendix B).
- Once the story-teller has approved the statement, it is sent to someone else to validate (someone who knows about the change they have reported).
- Send the story to the WISER Programme Team.

We will analyse your story of change alongside others from your WISER project and other projects also funded. We will also use your story of change to promote the work being delivered as part of WISER Africa.

Appendix A

WISER AFRICA OUTCOME HARVESTING FORM

What is Outcome Harvesting?

Outcome Harvesting enables us to focus on the detail behind specific examples of change that happened as part of [insert Implementing Partner's name]'s WISER Africa project, called [insert name of project].

Outcome Harvesting is a method that enables project managers, workers and evaluators to identify, formulate, verify, and make sense of outcomes. Outcome Harvesting is a forensic approach and does not measure progress towards predetermined outcomes or objectives, but rather collects evidence of what has been achieved, and works backwards to determine whether and how the project or intervention contributed to the change. Outcome Harvesting is useful in complex programming environments, where cause and effect may not be fully understood.

What are you being asked to do?

Below is a short questionnaire that asks you to think about one change that you know has happened because of [insert Implementing Partner's name]'s WISER Africa project, called [insert name of project]. [insert Implementing Partner's name]'s project has contributed to the change that you are reporting.

The change that you report on can be anything that you know about personally or have experienced. It is not something that you have read about or someone else has told you.

You should provide as much detail as possible, as well as references to additional documents that support what you say.

There are five questions and the total time taken to respond should be approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Afterwards

- The data collector will write up a short outcome statement from your response and send it to you for checking.
- Once you have approved the statement, it is sent to someone else to validate (someone who knows about the change you have reported on).
- It will be used in the evaluation of WISER Africa as qualitative evidence.

YOUR NAME	
WHAT IS THE ORGANISATION YOU WORK FOR?	
WHAT IS YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS (SO WE CAN SEND YOU THE OUTCOME STATEMENT TO CHECK)	

OUTCOME DESCRIPTION

In one or two sentences, summarise a change in behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions that you know about, that relates to the work of the WISER project and/or its partners in your country. That is: who changed what, when and where?

WHO CHANGED?

Be as specific as possible about the individual, group, community, organisation or institution that changed. Please give as much information as possible.

WHEN DID THE CHANGE TAKE PLACE?

Be as specific as possible about the date that the change took place. If it happened over a period of time, be as accurate as you can about the start and end dates.

[Redacted area]

WHERE DID THE CHANGE TAKE PLACE?

Specifically: did the change take place at a community or local level, or more widely across a region, or even more widely across the whole nation?

[Redacted area]

WHAT WAS THE WISER PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION?

What was the WISER project's role in influencing the change that you have told us about? Where any other notable organisations or individuals involved? Please be as specific as possible if the change also came about because of particular activities, processes, services, etc.

[Redacted area]

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TEMPLATE FOR WRITING UP THE STORY OF CHANGE
Use this template to structure your short story of change

SUMMARY

Write this section last. Summarise the key points into a short statement. Word Count: 75

DESCRIPTION

Provide a detailed description of who changed what, when and where. Word count: 200

SIGNIFICANCE

What is the significance of this outcome for your WISER project, its partners or other stakeholders?
Word Count: 75

CONTRIBUTION

What was the implementing partner's contribution to this outcome? Word Count:75

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DATA COLLECTOR	
STORY-TELLER	
VALIDATOR	
ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE	

Supported by:

