



1st

CENTRAL AFRICA HYDROMET FORUM

*A time bound action plan for modernization for hydrometeorology services
in the ECCAS Region and Members' States*

16 - 19 Juillet 2018

Hotel Boulevard, Libreville, Gabon

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Central Africa as other Africa building blocks accounts for only 4% of global greenhouse gas emission (GHG), whereas it remains among the most vulnerable regions to the adverse impacts of climate change, owing to its limited adaptive capacity. More than 70% of natural disasters in the sub region are of meteorological origin. This leads to the fact that frameworks for consensual forecasting and information systems deserve to be privileged and consolidated in this way to enable policy makers to make arrangements that will minimize disaster risk.

Unfortunately, the low capacity to adapt to climate change is further exacerbated by the fact that many economies are low-income. In front of this situation, governments are often struggling with competing priorities for investment, and the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) are rarely prioritized. Inadequate funding inhibits the NMHSs in providing the much-needed services to contribute to climate-resilient development and adaptation planning.

If left unaddressed, increased climate variability and extreme weather, water and climate events will jeopardize Central Africa's hard-won development gains and aspirations for industrialization and growth. Improving hydrological, meteorological and climate (hydromet) services is critical to strengthening cross-cutting climate and disaster resilience across all the sub region. Specifically, hydromet information is a critical requirement to create an enabling environment for private and public sector to invest for growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction. The weather, water and climate services provided by NMHSs, which include early warnings, alerts and advisories for climate change adaptation, are critical for sectors that drive Central African economies and directly supports (i) smart agriculture; (ii) water resources for irrigation, hydropower, renewable energy and water supply; (iii) better planning for health services; (iv) improving access to safe air, marine and road transport; and, (v) reducing the socio-economic impacts of floods, drought and other natural hazards. They also support disaster and climate risk mapping, and disaster/climate risk financing and insurance solutions. Furthermore, they help contain fragility and promote peace-building by promoting sustainable natural resource management and growth, apart from boosting tourism and travel sectors that promote economic development and employment.

Central Africa Hydromet Program

Given the vulnerability of Africa's socio-economic sectors and production systems to climate variability and change, strong concerns had been expressed at the regional level. This led to many calls for improved climate change data analysis tools to provide credible information and to integrate adaptation into decision-making processes. This will provide a reliable and modern meteorological network that can generate meteorological, climatological and hydrological data and information that can be analyzed to effectively assess risks and make immediate and appropriate decisions at the local, national and sub regional levels.

As such, most of the declarations and recommendations made in these different spheres of international and regional meetings and decisions called for the establishment of Regional Climate Centers (RCCs) in all the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), republished through different ministerial meetings in Central Africa, in order to mitigate all these climatic threats. Thus, the ECCAS Climatological Prediction and Application Center (ECPAC), was created by the 16th Ordinary Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS, filling a Community, continental and global gap. The ECPAC aims at providing substantial support to the NMHS of the sub region for effective and efficient integration in the climate field, including through the development of their climate prediction capabilities and the provision of climate information, climate forecasts to Member States and other partners.

In this extension, ECCAS Ministers recommended to the Secretary General of ECCAS to draw up a roadmap for the sectors of DRR and Meteorology, at the end of the third combined ministerial conferences on Disaster Risks Reduction (DRR) and Meteorology, 1st Joint Ministerial Conference of the kind.

Goal of the Forum

A summary overview of different interventions in the ECCAS Region for strengthening and modernizing hydromet services shows that there is a need for harmonizing the actions taken at local, national and sub-regional levels by communities, governments, development partners and other stakeholders. This will maximize results from the modernizing hydromet services for cross-cutting development dividends to agriculture and food security, disaster risk reduction, water, energy, health, as the priority pillars of the Global Framework for Climate Services. In this perspective, development partners need to ensure that they are complementing efforts for building climate and disaster resilience in Central Africa and supporting the mainstreaming of disaster and climate risk management in national and regional efforts through coordinated financial and technical contributions.

Investments in climate services should help safeguard development gains, and contribute to the achievement of the 2030 and 2063 African objectives and those of the ECCAS Strategic Plan. Moreover, an increased collaboration and coordination between stakeholders would result in harmonized activities on weather, water and climate services, that take into consideration the capacities of NMHSs and national governments. This harmonization would ensure greater return on investment and potentially achieve successful implementation of weather and climate service initiatives at regional and national levels.

The Forum objectives

The Central Africa Hydromet Forum has multiple objectives. Some of these are:

1. Develop a regional leadership to strengthening weather, water and climate services in their global public good function in support of climate risk management and climate adaptation;
2. Serve as a platform for exchange of knowledge, information and ideas – and stock-taking of progress in modernizing the hydromet landscape of Central Africa;
3. Become a listening post for development partners on the needs of sectors and user groups in order to customize and own programs and investments;
4. Generate consensus and awareness among stakeholders about the benefits of investments in weather, water and climate services and early warning systems;
5. Foster stronger country and stakeholder ownership of weather and climate service programmes, results and outcomes in order to ensure sustainability; and
6. Convene a platform for governments, regional organizations, donors, private sector, civil society, academia, technical community, youth and gender groups to discuss and design the future course of hydromet service modernization in Central Africa

The first Central Africa Forum will draft *a time bound action plan for modernization for hydrometeorology services in the ECCAS Region and Members' States*. It is an *inaugural* Forum conceived to become an Annual or biannual event.

Partners and participants:

The Forum is being convened by and under the leadership of the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS) in partnership with the government of Gabon, WMO, World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB). Organized within the framework of Result 2 of the ACP-EU Program for Disaster Resilience in sub Saharan Africa managed by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery of the World Bank, these meetings will also benefit from the Climate Development Program of the AfDB *(TbC)*.

It will bring together high-level representatives from ECCAS governments and Sub-regional institutions such as the UN, development partners, technical institutions, civil society, private sector, media and user groups. Participants will deliberate and provide insight on how existing weather, water and climate information strategies and programs can be harnessed to achieve sustainable development in the ECCAS Region.

