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Mid-term report on the first series of the events

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Summary

This mid-term report on the first series of events summarizes the communication and dissemination events' purposes, content and impacts. It includes a reminder of communication and dissemination objectives and metrics to measure user engagement, some alert points regarding COVID-19 related challenges and difficulties to travel, and a summary of the first series of the project's events: Advisory Board meetings, stakeholders' engagement workshops, targeted visits, meetings with sister projects, participation in international conferences, joint events and the expected next events.

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Mid-term Report on the First Series of Events

Deliverable D1.3

Lead Beneficiary: WMO

February/2022

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About FOCUS-Africa

FOCUS-Africa – Full-value chain Optimised Climate User-centric Services for Southern Africa – is developing sustainable tailored climate services in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region for four sectors: agriculture and food security, water, energy and infrastructure.

It will pilot eight case studies in six countries involving a wide range of end-uses to illustrate how the application of new climate forecasts, projections, resources from Copernicus, GFCS and other relevant products can maximise socio-economic benefits in the Southern Africa region and potentially in the whole of Africa.

Led by WMO, it gathers 14 partners across Africa and Europe jointly committed to addressing the recurring sustainability and exploitation challenge of climate services in Africa over a period of 48 months.

For more information visit: www.focus-africaproject.eu

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AB	Advisory Board
ACMAD	African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development
CDP	Communication and Dissemination Plan
CONFER	Co-production of Climate Services for East Africa
CS	Case Study
FA	FOCUS-Africa
IIAM	Mozambique Institute of Agricultural Research
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARCOF	Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum
SSSA	Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies/ Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna
TMA	Tanzania Meteorological Authority
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WP	Work Package
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Executive Summary

This mid-term report on the first series of events summarizes the communication and dissemination events' purposes, content and impacts. It includes a reminder of communication and dissemination objectives and metrics to measure user engagement, some alert points regarding COVID-19 related challenges and difficulties to travel, and a summary of the first series of the project's events: Advisory Board meetings, stakeholders' engagement workshops, targeted visits, meetings with sister projects, participation in international conferences, joint events and the expected next events.

Keywords

Workshops, events, targeted visits, communication, dissemination, Advisory Board, sister projects



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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The central objective of FOCUS-Africa is to develop sustainable tailored climate services in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region for four sectors: agriculture and food security, water, energy, and infrastructure.

The proposed co-production amongst end-users, climate scientists and sectoral service providers ensures that the full value chain for the delivery of the climate services is effectively realized.

This is demonstrated by piloting eight case studies in six countries involving a wide range of end-uses to illustrate how the application of new climate forecasts, projections, resources from Copernicus, GFCS and other relevant products can maximize socio-economic benefits in the Southern Africa region and potentially in the whole of Africa.

An innovative aspect of FOCUS-Africa is to address the recurring sustainability and exploitation challenge of climate services in Africa.

Focus-Africa project gathers 16 partner organizations in Africa and Europe, and lasts 48 months.

The project consists of 8 Work Packages, and 8 case studies.

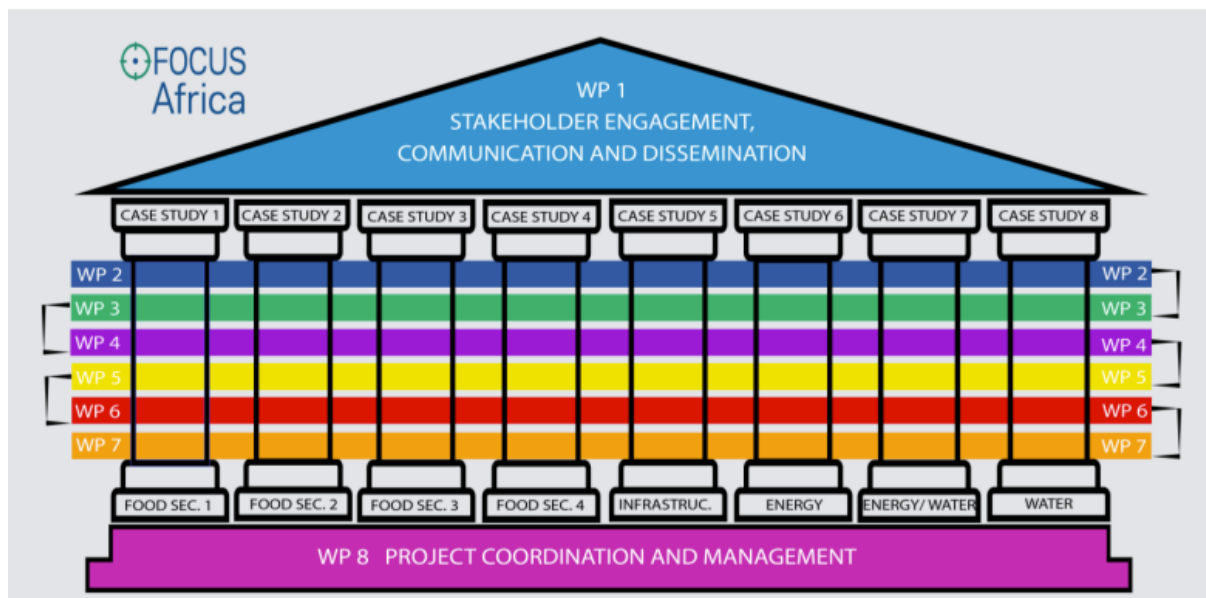


Figure 1 Pert Chart of the project

1.2 Communication and dissemination in the project

Communication and dissemination activities play a central role in ensuring that the results of FOCUS-Africa are shared with the broader stakeholder community to maximize the impacts in the SADC region and on the two continents.

In this regard, the consortium has developed and issued the D1.2 Communication and Dissemination Plan (CDP) that outlines the objectives, target audiences, channels, and activities. The updated version of the Communication and Dissemination Plan is expected in M28 (halfway of the project implementation).

The three **main communication objectives** of the FOCUS-Africa project are:

- Ensure that the project outputs and results reach the relevant target groups, especially service users, in and beyond the participating countries
- Ensure transparency and visibility of the project activities and acquire the needed support from crucial stakeholders

- Ensure exploration of synergies between projects funded under the same or similar calls and related communications opportunities.

Events, workshops, and meetings play a vital role in ensuring user engagement. The project is based on solid and regular iterations with the stakeholders, their inputs, and feedback.

As an illustration, the case studies, which are a central part of the project, need to be produced in conjunction with the project partners and external stakeholders. Stakeholders' strong engagement is necessary for communicating the needs and requirements of the users, co-designing climate services and upscaling them.

A list of different events, with pre-defined targeted audiences, key messages and key performance indicators (KPIs) has been set by the CDP to achieve the goal of user engagement. This report summarizes the main conclusions from the first series of events up to the month 18.

1.3 Covid-19 related challenges

The CDP has listed several main challenges and barriers:

- Unsustainable services
- Limited replicability/scalability of services
- Poor user engagement aggravated by Covid-19

The **Covid-19 pandemic reduced the quality of gathering, networking, and genuine interactions** between participants during events and workshops. Nonetheless, online workshops for the project have proven to help engage with stakeholders remotely, conduct collaborative activities, and gather people across countries that otherwise may not have attended a physical workshop.

The project had planned for between 25-30 participants per workshop, which has been vastly exceeded due to the online format. Moreover, the events achieved a high level of interaction for online events. As an illustration, more than 60% found the Second Stakeholders' Workshop very useful for their work.

However, the consortium is looking forward to engaging more profoundly with national stakeholders and local communities as travel becomes more possible.

1.4 Metrics

The web portal, [website](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) pages were all set up in 2020 and are being used to share information on the project. A [Youtube Channel](#) for the project was set up in 2021. LGIs Vimeo Channel has also been used for sharing some project related videos. Metrics from these web-platforms are being tracked along with those for other communication channels. Table 1 shows the number of target groups and users reached so far by different communication methods.

Table 1: Numbers of users reached

Communication method	Frequency/ Target	Number of users reached
FOCUS-Africa website	As per reporting periods	6,8k visitors since September 2020
Social media	As per reporting periods	LinkedIn - 126 followers Twitter - 174 followers
Newsletter	As per Detailed Work Plan	342 subscribers
Campaign day (Earth Day)	4 campaigns	1 campaign in April 2021
International conferences, GFCS PAC meetings, RCOFs,	As they occur	6 events



joint webinars (hosted at ICPAC)		
Meetings with sister projects	Monthly	18 virtual meetings
Workshops	Every 8 months, 6 in total.	First workshop: 64 participants Second workshop: 200 participants Total: 264
Targeted visits	As opportunity arise	1 field trip to Mozambique
Advisory Board meetings	every 8 months, 6 in total	2 AB meetings, in 2020 and 2021

2 Events, workshops and meetings

2.1 Kick-off meeting

The project [kick-off meeting](#) was held on 16th and 17th September 2020 and marked the first step in the project's actions to engage broader stakeholders and create awareness of the project. The meeting was attended by the project consortium members, invited partner organizations and the European Commission, who made remarks at the opening. The H2020 sister projects ([CONFER](#) and [Down2Earth](#)) also made brief presentations on their projects, highlighting the opportunities for synergies and collaboration.

2.2 First stakeholders' engagement workshop

The First external FOCUS-Africa Stakeholders' Workshop was held remotely on 9th December 2020 gathering participants from various sectors: agriculture, water, policy, energy, infrastructure, insurance, academia, and civil society. The event focused on CS1, assessing the **impact of climate change on food security in this vital maize-producing region (South Africa)** and involving Land Bank as a user.

In total 64 participants attended, with a 40:60 female to male gender split. However, the discussions with smallholder farmers were impossible to hold due to the online format. The workshop covered many topics: the role of science and engagement in climate change, the South African Weather Service presentation, daily work of Climate Services for Credit Decision Making, climate-smart agriculture, food security in agriculture, and smallholder farmer adaptation to climate change.

The event achieved the **objectives of strengthening interaction among key stakeholders within the project**. It ensured that external interested parties knew how FOCUS-Africa's climate services could support the SADC countries' agriculture, water, energy, and infrastructure sectors. Key issues that emerged are the need for greater knowledge sharing between all actors, more technical capacity among users; for quantifying the value of climate services and channelling more significant financial resources towards developing and providing accessible and timely climate services to users.

As part of the internal component of the first stakeholder workshop, dedicated sessions were held on [Responsible Research and Innovation \(RRI\)](#). The sessions emphasised that stakeholder engagement

must be at the core of the design of the climate services. Participants gained understanding of how to integrate RRI aspects into each case study

The full First External Stakeholder Workshop Report can be found at: <https://focus-africaproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FOCUS-Africa-External-Stakeholder-Workshop-report.pdf>

All presentations can be found at: <https://focus-africaproject.eu/resources/>

Case Study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Country	South Africa 	Malawi 	Mozambique 	Tanzania 	Tanzania 	Tanzania 	Malawi 	Mauritius
Sector	Food Security 	Food Security 	Food Security 	Food Security 	Infrastructure 	Energy 	Energy 	Water
Leader	CSIR, Trevor Lumsden	BSC, Dragana Bojovic	SSSA, Matteo Dell'Acqua	BSC, Dragana Bojovic	MO, Nicolas Fournier	MO, Nicolas Fournier	EDF, Hiba Omrani	CSIR, Mohau Mateyisi

Figure 2 Project Case Studies

2.3 Second stakeholders' engagement workshop

The Second FOCUS-Africa stakeholders' workshop was a 2-day virtual meeting held on 14-15 September 2021 **focusing on CSs in Tanzania for energy, infrastructure, and food security**. Participants were government officials, scientists, entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, civil society, academia, public and private sectors. Breakout sessions were organized to understand participants/speakers' perspectives and expectations, collect opinions and allow participants to converse comfortably in smaller groups.

In total, 287 people from 123 organizations across 30 different countries signed up, 169 from Tanzania. Two hundred people participated over the two days, representing 70% of those who registered, a high ratio for an online free event, showing a well-directed and executed communication campaign and high interest in the workshop content.

This event enabled discussions on CS4 that seeks to enhance climate services for agriculture; CS5 which aims to enhance the characterization of the impacts of climate change on the design of railway infrastructure; and CS6 that looks at how the Tanzanian energy sector deals with climate change and seasonal variability.

Some of the key outcomes from the workshop were the following: **raising the profile of the project in Tanzania and awareness on Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) activities**; enabling the gathering of crucial information to inform climate services CS design, as well as broader climate services, work; laying a good platform for further engagement of stakeholders on climate services enhancement in the 3 target sectors; and increasing understanding of the food-water-energy-nexus issues with regards to climate services. Overall, the workshop was a success.

A video from the event is available at: [Summary Video 2nd FOCUS-Africa External Stakeholder Workshop](#)

All presentations can be found at: <https://focus-africaproject.eu/resources/>






Figure 3 Workshop participants




FOCUS-AFRICA

SPEAKER'S INFORMATION

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

- 
Mecklina M. Babyegeya
 Senior Meteorologist and project administrator at the Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA)
- 
Dr. Hidelitha Msita
 Senior Agricultural Research Officer, Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI)
- 
Mponda Malozo
 Agrometeorologist, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

ENERGY

- 
Dr. Sarah Osima
 Manager of Environment and Research at the Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA)
- 
Dr. Richard Muyungi
 Director, Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO)
- 
Sixbert Mwangi
 Climate Scientist, The Climate Action Network Tanzania (CAN)

INFRASTRUCTURE




- 
Dr. Wilbert Muroke
 Principal Meteorologist and Manager International Cooperation Office of the Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA)
- 
Lars Frederiksen
 Specialist and Project Manager, COWI
- 
Prof. Pius Yanda
 Professor at the Institute of Resource Assessment in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Figure 4 List of speakers

2.4 Advisory Board meetings

The members of the Advisory Board in FOCUS-Africa are:

- Dr. Fatima Denton, PhD (United Nations University)
- Alex Simalabwi (Global Water Partnership)
- Erik W. Kolstad, PhD (Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research, CONFER Coordinator)
- Willem A. Landman (University of Pretoria)
- Michael Bliss Singer, PhD, PH (Cardiff University, DOWN2EARTH Coordinator)
- Ana Heureux, PhD (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO))
- Lars Frederiksen (COWI Engineering Consultants)
- Samantha Burgess, PhD (Copernicus Climate Change Service)
- Prof. Bruce Hewitson, PhD (University of Cape Town)
- Filipe Lucio (WMO & Global Framework for Climate Services)
- Dr. Detlef Stammer (University of Hamburg)

So far, **two meetings with the Advisory Board** were held on 19 November 2020 and on 5 July 2021. The first meeting discussed the case studies' objectives, methodologies, and challenges. There was no time for in-depth discussions due to the time limitations. The second meeting was dedicated to the overview of WP and CS progress. In addition, the team has presented the approach for impact evaluation and project evaluation.

The **project evaluation** was not planned in the proposal phase, but having a constant monitoring and evaluation allow us to track progress in a timely manner and quickly adapt to the project design. Monitoring and evaluation of the project can also help that the responsible research and innovation principles are streamlined in all activities and that the team benefits from the shared experience and lessons learned. The responsibility for this task will be with the monitoring and evaluation team (led by WMO) and the Advisory Board. The AB recommendations will become an integral part of the monitoring and evaluation report.

A **new format** of the Advisory Board meeting has been discussed. It has been decided that the Work Package Leaders and Case Studies' Leaders would record a short video with the main results, so that the time during the meeting is dedicated to discussion rather than presentations. In addition, the FOCUS-Africa team will communicate in advance one main topic of conversation to focus on the project's overall direction and possible improvements (zoom out perspective).

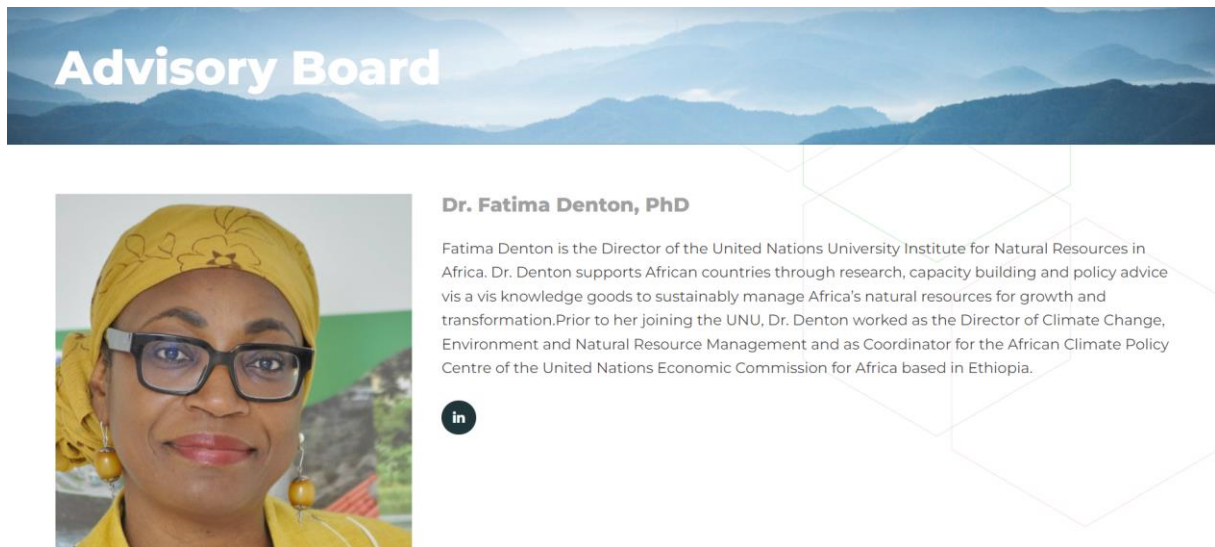


Figure 5 Example of a dedicated page on the FA website to the AB members - <https://focus-africaproject.eu/advisory-board/>

2.5 Targeted visits (trip to Mozambique)

The Case Study 3 (**Food Security in Mozambique**) and the Work Package 6 (**socio-economic impact**) teams organized a joint targeted visit to Mozambique. The mission was joined by the researchers from Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna (SSA), Mozambique's Institute of Agricultural Research (IIAM), PLAN International (PLAN), LGI and WMO.

The trip involved meetings with local experts and institutions specialized in agronomy, cowpea and rice breeding and meteorology. It also included a half-day transdisciplinary seminar to present each partners role and broader activities; a local district stakeholder meeting; focus group discussions with smallholder farmers; meetings with village chiefs; and visits at IIAM's research station, gene bank and biotechnology lab.

The trip was a success, enabling a **better understanding of the socio-economic context, needs and practices of smallholder farmers, local expertise, capacity, and systems** to foster the legacy of the project outcomes.



Figure 6 Photos from the visit to Mozambique

2.6 Interactions with H2020 sister projects (CONFER and DOWN2EARTH)

As a start, the sister projects established cross-project membership on advisory boards, with the two coordinators of CONFER (Erik W. Kolstad) and Down2Earth (Michael Singer) sitting on the advisory board of FOCUS-Africa. Monthly meetings have been held with the sister projects since the projects

began in September 2021. These meetings initially consisted of just the 3 project coordinators but have been expanded to include key staff involved in project coordination. Issues discussed have included: **opportunities for joint activities** (for example, workshops were organised, as well as a joint webinar on “Understanding Seasonal Forecasts in Africa” in October 2021. Its aim was to demystify seasonal forecasts by allowing participants to submit any type of question they might have associated with seasonal forecasting. Why are seasonal forecasts important? How should we use them? Are they reliable? Are they used widely for planning in Africa? This Webinar is part of a series of Webinars planned to be organized by DOWN2EARTH, CONFER and FOCUS-AFRICA. This Webinar series aims to improve understanding and engagement with climate services in Africa); **joint advocacy events** (for example, a joint expression of interest was submitted for consideration at Africa Climate Week 2021 but was unfortunately not accepted); and sharing of information and experiences from the projects to date.

The team has discussed a possibility of a **joint final conference** to mark the end of the projects in 2024 (noting that COVID pandemic has affected the timelines of various deliverables). The three coordinators have discussed an idea to "replicate" the [African Climate Risks Conference \(ACRC 2019\)](#) but focusing on Climate Services, possibly an African Climate Services Conference in 2024. Such a joint conference could also leverage other ongoing initiatives on the Continent, including the Climate Risk early warning Initiative (CREWS), which has projects in East, west and Southern Africa, and the Climate Services and Related Applications Programme (CLIMSA) which also covers these 3 sub-regions.

A mid-term **joint policy brief** was proposed as an opportunity for joint collaboration, although, FOCUS-Africa only has a policy-related deliverable in 2024 and has a geographical difference with the other two H2020 projects. Other considerations include, the possibility for a series of joint policy briefs led by each project according to their policy deliverable timelines and with identified contributions from all projects. Each of these briefs could have a slightly different focus/lenses (e.g., financial sustainability aspects, coproduction, service delivery, capacity) with an overarching theme of legacy/sustainability of climate services projects. The team could present the briefs at the joint conference towards the end of the projects' period. In the shorter term, a joint policy brief could target the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) planned in Egypt in 2022.

The three H2020 sister projects also linked with the HABITABLE project in November 2021 to coordinate on the preparation of a 2-page document on the emerging research gaps related to climate change adaptation in Africa that are emerging from the projects. FOCUS-Africa, through WMO, took a lead in coordinating this effort. Key issues identified included "first-mile" - "last-mile" linkages for climate services, mobility-resilience relationships and "post-COVID" gaps and opportunities, such as the need to enhance the use of technology for climate services.

Linkages and participation in meetings of related projects, particularly the CLIMSA project, which targets four sub-regions in Africa including the SADC region, have also been pursued. For instance, the African Centre for Meteorological Applications and Development (ACMAD), as a World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Climate Centre for Africa, organized a first of its kind one-day Africa Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF-01). FOCUS-Africa participated as one of the supporting projects along with CLIMSA. The purpose of this Forum was to ensure improved capacity amongst established and upcoming Regional Climate Centres to regionalize products from WMO designated Global Centres. It also aimed at providing a platform for technical discussions on drivers of continental climate and interregional interactions. Finally, it gave the chance for experts to review together the SOND 2021 seasonal climate across the continent and to produce a continental consensus climate outlook for the February to April (FMAM) 2022 period.

2.7 Participation at international conferences, meetings

Table 2 Contributions at conferences

Event	Date	Description	Contribution
AU-EU high-level Policy Dialogue on Science Technology and Innovation' Workshop on Covid19 and the Health-Energy-Climate Nexus'	16-17 February 2021	https://ccseworkshop.servicefacility.eu/	Roberta Boscolo (WMO) Keynote presentation on scenarios and solutions to climate change in relation to the Health-Energy-Climate Nexus (FOCUS-Africa and other related projects and initiatives were highlighted)
European Geosciences Union (EGU) General Assembly	19-30 April 2021	https://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU21/session/40791	Roberta Boscolo (WMO) Convener of the session on “Building operational weather and climate services for sustainable development in the global South”
Earth Day 2021 Campaign	22 April 2021	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDWwBlerdPI&list=PLnxIq57pw5yblIMVN32KIWWIzU68fL-4v All Earth Day materials can be found at: https://focus-africaproject.eu/resources/earth-day-campaign/	The FOCUS-Africa team, led by LGI, undertook a dedicated earth day Campaign to share information on the FOCUS-Africa project. Roberta Boscolo (WMO) recorded a video overview of the project, which was shared on the project's social media pages. All case study teams also recorded short videos and were assisted to create graphics on each case study, which were also shared in social media.
Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF)	August 2021 (and update forum held in January 2022)	http://csc.sadc.int/en/news-and-events/326-climate-outlook-forum-2021-sarcof-25	Various FOCUS-Africa consortium members participated in the SARCOFs that have been held since the project inception. The aim was to get a better understanding of the SARCOF process, the user needs and challenges, identify linkages with other initiatives (e.g., CLIMSA) and first-hand information on the outlook for the upcoming season. WMO prepared summary notes on the key issues that emerged and shared with the consortium members. One of the FOCUS-Africa consortium members, ACMAD, played lead roles in the experts' training sessions of the SARCOF.



<p>European Meteorological Society (EMS) Conference 2021</p>	<p>3-10 September 2021</p>	<p>https://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EMS2021/EMS2021-460.html</p> <p>Full presentation: https://focus-africaproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/EMS2021-FOCUS-Africa-08092021.pdf</p>	<p>Roberta Boscolo (WMO) made a presentation on the FOCUS-Africa project titled “Demonstrating the full-value chain of climate services in Southern Africa: the FOCUS-Africa project”. Linkages between partners based in Europe and Africa were highlighted, including how they will collaborate across work packages and case studies to develop tailored climate services in the target sectors and countries. The event had 549 participants from 43 countries, providing a great opportunity to present the project to a wide audience.</p>
<p>Webinar on "Understanding Seasonal Forecasts in Africa: Q&A With Climate Scientists"</p>	<p>13 October 2021</p>	<p>https://www.icpac.net/events/seasonal-forecasting-in-africa-qa-with-climate-scientists/</p>	<p>This webinar was organized jointly with the H2020 Sister Projects and facilitated through the IGAD Climate Predictions and Applications Centre (ICPAC). FOCUS-Africa was represented by Roberto Buizza of the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (SSSA)</p>
<p>First African Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF)</p>	<p>4 February 2022</p>	<p>https://focus-africaproject.eu/2022/02/10/focus-africa-participated-to-the-first-african-continental-climate-outlook-forum/</p>	<p>This initiative was spearheaded by ACMAD who lead Work Package 7 of FOCUS-Africa on capacity building. FOCUS-Africa was recognized as one of the contributors to the event and the FA Project Coordinator was among the invited guests who gave opening remarks. The remarks highlighted the need to enhance synergies and collaboration among climate services projects and initiatives on the continent.</p>



Figure 7 Earth Day campaign 2021



Figure 8 Poster from joint event with EU sister projects

3 Next events

The **Third Stakeholder Workshop is planned to be held in-person in South Africa** in May or June 2022. This workshop will have a focus on the case studies being developed in South Africa (food security) and Mauritius (water resources). This will be the first in-person stakeholder workshop for the project and will provide an opportunity for closer interactions; team building; identification of synergies and connections across case studies; and refining approaches to case study development and capacity building. The 4th stakeholders' workshop will be planned for late 2022.

Other events, such as World Meteorological Day, may be targeted during the year for campaigns, similar to that conducted for Earth Day in 2021. Concerning the desire to have joint activities with the H2020 sister projects, the **UNFCCC COP27** has been proposed as an opportunity for a joint event and sharing of a joint policy brief. Discussions on this matter are ongoing.

In the next period, the consortium members have agreed to conduct **in-country missions to enable closer engagements with the stakeholders** and national meteorological services over several days. Missions to Mauritius, Tanzania and Malawi are planned, while the Third Stakeholders' Workshop in South Africa will provide the platform for closer engagements with stakeholders of Case Study 1 and 8.

Conclusion

In-person engagements have been severely limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The FOCUS-Africa project has adapted to the situation and embraced the use of online platforms for advocacy events, stakeholder workshops and broader stakeholder engagement. The first two stakeholders' workshops were both successfully held virtually with a combined number of 264 participants. Consortium members designed the workshops to be as interactive as possible, with the inclusion of in-session live surveys to gather specific information to feed into the case studies and overall project implementation.

Advisory board meetings have been held virtually, with the major challenge being tailoring the meetings to enable useful interaction and feedback from the AB members. For the third AB meeting to be held in May 2022, the FA team has tweaked the meeting format to allow more time for interactive discussions. Remote engagement of stakeholders through online methods, however, has been only partly effective and **advancing the case studies requires some in-person interaction**, engagement with hard-to-reach users (e.g., farmers) and some joint technical work.

Broader engagement and advocacy through the project's various social media channels, targeted campaigns, and participation in the conferences and webinars of partners has also been undertaken albeit largely virtually, the awareness on the project has been increased.