Agro-met services and farmer responsiveness to advisories: Implications for Climate Smart Agriculture

Context

Agro-met services delivered through SMS by Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR) provides crop and locale-specific agro-advisories based on weather forecasts and the particular crop growth stage in order to reduce risks and improve agriculture productivity despite local climatic variations. The objective of the paper is to understand the nature and importance of different components of WOTR advisory system and the response of farmers to the agro-met advisory services.

Stakeholders and Roles

Key messages

• In developing a farmer-responsive agro-advisory system, it is essential that the diverse stakeholders (farmers, NGOs, Research institutions, Government institutions, private organizations) collaborate for convergence of respective strengths.

• In general, farmers follow advisories in case of high value crops (e.g. onion) as compared to staple food crops (e.g. pearl millet) for application of DAP and complex fertilizers, micronutrients, pesticides, weedicides.

• Some crop advisories received greater positive responses in terms of adoption as compared to others such as weather advisories, FYM application, urea application, harvesting.

• To make an advisory system demand driven and effective, the advisories need to address farmers’ requirements; be tailored to farm-specific conditions; the farmers’ resources and constraints; crops grown; observed weather data and high resolution weather forecasts.

Going forward:

• Where there is poor or no mobile connectivity, then public address systems, wallpapers, advisory bulletins, Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), telephone calls to local contact persons can be deployed.

• Where there is good mobile telephone connectivity, SMSs as well as IVRS can be used.

• Where there is good data/internet connectivity and smart phones can be used (3G and above), Apps which allow the farmers to provide inputs can be developed to deliver customised farm specific advisories.

For further details Contact:
Nitin Kumbhar: nitin.kumbhar@wotr.org.in
info@wotr.org
Poster prepared by: Ramkumar Bendapudi, Nitin Kumbhar, Prithviraj Gaikwad and Crispino Lobo

Watershed Organisation Trust

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This work was carried out under the Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions project (ASSAR). ASSAR is one of five research programmes funded under the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA), with financial support from the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DfID) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. The views expressed in this work are those of the creators and do not necessarily represent those of DfID and IDRC or its Board of Governors.

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