A Preliminary Evaluation of the Latin American Observatory’s Climate Services

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- Regional informal partnership
- Since 2008, still growing
- No external funding
- Use of resources already in existence
- Boundary institutions
- Strong training component
- Tech and knowledge transference
- Tailored, impact-oriented products: risk maps (hazard and vulnerability)!
- Model validation, but **NO climate service evaluation yet**

Methodology

- Case-by-case analysis of OLE²’s climate services reported in the literature [Muñoz et al., 2012; García, 2012a, 2012b].

- Analysis of the partner interactions (email list).

- Online surveys

- It was followed the approach suggested by Vaughan & Dessai [2014], which involves the following evaluation elements:
  
  - Structure, Governance and Decision-Making Context
  
  - Problem Identification, Characteristics and Tailoring of Services
  
  - Communication, and Technology-Knowledge Transfer
Structure, Governance and Decision-Making Context

- Flexible structure, autonomous sharing policies (voluntary)
  - 15 countries, 100+ users
  - free interaction (peer2peer and community based, loosely moderated)
- multiple channels of communication/transference of data, methodologies, tools, experiences
Structure, Governance and Decision-Making Context

- No regional funding
  - Strong inter-dependence for co-production of services is identified as being the key element of sustainability of OLE²
- Stable, but slow growth
- Local funding-dependent growth dynamic: “service propagation” in the OLE² network

Free riders are moved to the periphery or out of the network!

“Incentive” (e.g., funding) generates climate services

Service gets “viral”: regional asymmetries

Healthier partnership

After a while service is assimilated by other partners, which also propagate the service

Service has propagated, and matured, in the OLE² network
Problem Identification, Characteristics and Tailoring of Services

- Problems are in general clearly identified (user feedback), BUT
- Services not necessarily defined in terms of the actual end-user’s requirements, but in terms of other institutional commitments and funding availability (international donors with specific agendas, e.g. climate change scenarios).
- OLE² is committed to follow IRI’s “Ready-Set-Go approach”, but there is still a huge inertia.

Ready
Seasonal forecasts
- Begin monitoring mid-range and short-range forecasts
- Update contingency plans
- Train volunteers
- Sensitize community
- Enable early-warning system

Set
Mid-Range forecasts
- Continue monitoring shorter-time-scale forecasts
- Mobilize assessment team
- Alert volunteers
- Warn community
- Local preparation activities

Go!
Short-Range forecasts
- Deploy assessment team
- Activate volunteers
- Distribute instructions to community, evacuate if needed

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Problem Identification, Characteristics and Tailoring of Services

- Different partners focus on different time scales but typically the order of importance is:
  - Weather (up to 48-72 hours)
  - Seasonal (next two seasons)
  - Historical (20-40 years)
  - Climate Change (end of the century)
  - Near-term Climate Change (next 20-30 years; only a few)
  - Sub-seasonal (interest)

- More work *with* the user instead of *for* the user is required.
- Partners recognize the importance of using both hazard and vulnerability products (e.g., risk maps), but more effort –and funding– is required to implement pilot projects.
Communication, and Technology-Knowledge Transfer

- Strong training component (virtual and *in situ*).
- OLE\(^2\) as a boundary institution between “providers” and “middle-users” (NWS, ministries, development project agents): better services for the end-user.
- Uncertainties are typically communicated in terms of probabilities, but some partners consider this insufficient.
- Unanimously, partners recognize the OLE\(^2\)-Wiki as the most important reference for technology and knowledge transfer. It’s used outside the partnership too (in Spanish)!
Conclusions

- This is a preliminary, internal evaluation. An external one must be accomplished (partners provided a “too good” evaluation).

- With no external funding, the Observatory is stable and slowly growing; it is suggested that this is due to *inter-dependence and co-production*. The OLE² provide high quality training, project support and training in Spanish, basically for free.

- Two ways of supporting OLE²: fund the partnership or fund one or a few partners (the service will propagate).

- Several ways to advance, one is to increase the number of services considering both hazard and vulnerability (e.g., risk).