Lessons learnt from collaborative efforts of WIMEA-ICT project in improving weather information management

Julianne Sansa-Otim, Mary Nsabagwa

Department of Networks,

Makerere University, Uganda

Emails:{sansa,mnsabagwa@cit.ac.ug}

Abstract

The growing demand for climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, necessitates the relevant information to be of good quality. This has led several researchers to increasingly engage in multidisciplinary and collaborative research so as to contribute to quality improvement of this information. Collaborative research is said to strengthen research outputs through engaging a multitude of professionals to represent interests of different stakeholders.This paper presents an account of the lessons learnt from WIMEA-ICT[1] project's collaborative approach in solving the weather information management challenges using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The project was designed around four core research components, with four collaborating Universities engaging researchers picked from different academic disciplines. The project goal was to innovate weather data/information solutions. Implementation of the solutions was led by PhD and masters scholars, assisted by undergraduate students and reporting to research component heads or academic supervisors. As a result of the collaboration, the project benefitted in terms of knowledge transfers, resource sharing and joint publications among others, which altogether saved project funds and reduced implementation time. The project has successfully developed ICT weather solutions which will require human effort and funds to be sustained especially at the end of project. In 2015, Sci-GaIA[2], a communication platform was introduced to provide a common communication place for all project members. Adopting Sci-GaIA however failed, citing complexity in authenticating new members and a big learning curve. Team members also rejected the tool due to the variation in skillset and interests. We recommend an increased engagement of all stakeholders and especially system users to ensure that at the end of the project, outputs are seamlessly taken up. Improved communication platforms should also be adopted for better and timely communication of project activities and outputs.

Keywords: WIMEA-ICT Project, collaborative research, communication platform, weather, Information and Communication Technologies

[1] Improving Weather Information Management in East Africa for effective service provision through the application of suitable ICTs

[2] http://discourse.sci-gaia.eu/c/projects/wimea-ict