Summary factsheet:

Communicating forecasts effectively across the 'producer-user' boundary

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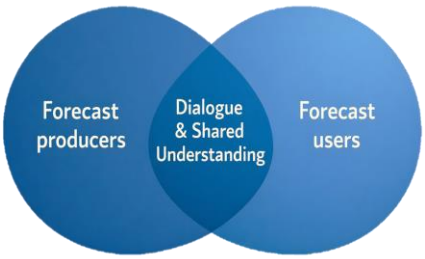
Effective communication relies on honest, two-way dialogue

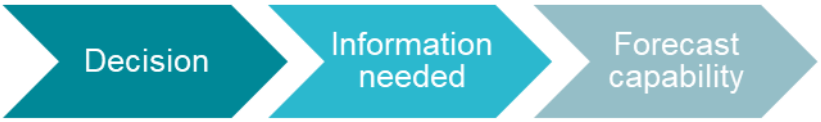
Forecasts become useful only when producers and users openly discuss what information is needed and what can realistically be provided.

Neither side can fully adapt without understanding the other's constraints. Honest feedback about what worked, what did not work and why that was is essential for building trust and improving products over time.



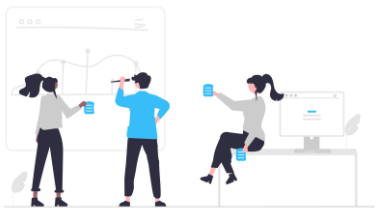
Start with real decisions

Useful forecast information is shaped by the decisions people must make, the timescales they work on and the consequences of getting it wrong. For example, beginning with large-scale climate drivers can lead to tools that feel disconnected from real choices, whereas beginning with decision calendars, thresholds and local context helps ensure forecasts align with practical needs.



Iterative and sustained co-production

One-off consultations rarely deliver genuinely useful tools or sustained operational value. Forecasts improve when producers and users engage repeatedly, refine products together and test them in real operational settings as part of ongoing collaboration.



Examples like the Kenya energy partnership show how long-term collaboration builds products that directly respond to local priorities, constraints and decision-making needs.

Translate complexity into locally meaningful formats

Raw model outputs and specialist terminology often create barriers. Useful communication involves tailoring visuals, adding familiar geographical markers, drawing on past similar events and focusing on impacts rather than technical drivers. Small visual changes can make big differences in interpretation and confidence.

Build trust through transparency and realistic expectations

Forecast skill varies across seasons, regions and lead times. Acknowledging uncertainty helps avoid over-promising and enables decision-makers to use probabilistic information appropriately. Trust grows when forecast producers are open about limitations, past performance and the uncertainties that matter most at sub-seasonal timescales.

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