TRACKS

TRAnsforming Climate Knowledge with and for Society

Mobilising high-quality knowledge on climate variability with communities in northeast Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the threats of climate change. Many Bangladeshi communities are highly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods and have weak infrastructure for dealing with extreme weather events, meaning that any variability in the weather can have serious impacts on these communities; ranging from low crop yields to flooding or the spread of infectious diseases. It is important to understand the impacts of current climate variations on Bangladeshi communities, so that they can adapt to future climate change. The TRACKS Project focuses on communities in northeast Bangladesh, where there is high uncertainty about climate variation, particularly associated with the monsoon and its impacts on the community. The project studies how these communities can bring together and communicate the best quality knowledge that they have to support local adaptation; using climate science, but also their own local and traditional knowledge and know-how.

The TRACKS Project will implement an innovative approach that brings together climate scientists, government actors, and local enterprises and people as a group of peers, asked to define what counts as high quality knowledge of their local climate. These 'climate investigators' will each bring their own story of the local climate, based on their own knowledge and experience, and together they will negotiate what is most important. The group's main aim is to assemble a set of key indicators for measuring the impacts of climate variation on communities in northeast Bangladesh, which might range from rain-gauge readings, to when certain wild animal species return to the fields. The climate investigators will then monitor these indicators for a year to test their quality for supporting community adaptation to climate change.

By the end of the TRACKS project the communities of northeast Bangladesh will have high quality knowledge of their local climate, and a well-tested set of indicators for measuring its impact on the communities. The case will also provide important lessons for how we can run similar approaches in other vulnerable developing countries, where there is also an urgent need to adapt to climate change.

http://www.uib.no/en/rg/tracks

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Goals & Objectives

There are three broad aspirations for TRACKS, combing basic and applied research:

• Describe, analyse and explore the relationship between scientific and local 'narratives' of climate variability and its impacts on communities in northeast Bangladesh.

• Initiate a process of 'extended peer review' that brings together scientific and local narratives to mobilise high-quality knowledge on climate variability in northeast Bangladesh, for supporting adaptation strategies.

• Evaluate the quality of the project's process and products, for building local capacity to mobilise the best quality knowledge possible to support climate change adaptation strategies.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that TRACKS will focus on past and current climate variability. Understanding current climate vulnerability in northeast Bangladesh is an important prerequisite to building adaptive capacity for future climate change. Knowledge mobilisation is grounded in both the lived experiences within a community and an improved knowledge of the local weather and climate. We must understand today's weather to plan for tomorrow's climate.

Project Partners

- University of Bergen/ Centre for the Studies of the Sciences and the Humanities (SVT), Norway
- University of Bergen/Geophysical Institute, Norway
- Uni Research Climate, Norway
- Uni Research Rokkan Centre, Norway
- Bangladesh Agriculatural University (BAU)
- Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)
- University of Hawaii at Manoa (UH), USA

Research Team

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