



SERVIR training in East Africa to help in assessing water resources

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Twenty-one people from 13 countries, including many East African countries as well as Bhutan and Nepal, participated in a hydrological modeling training workshop at the Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) in Nairobi, Kenya, 2-6 April 2012.

CREST, the Coupled Routing and Excess Storage model, is a powerful tool for assessing streamflow by using satellite rainfall datasets. Floods and droughts are two of the most catastrophic natural disasters in Africa, and CREST, which is accessible through the SERVIR portal, will help hydrologists from water ministries in the region predict where these disasters might occur.



CREST Workshop Participants at RCMRD

"The sessions went really well," says Dr. Xianwu Xue, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oklahoma, who taught the workshop. Dr. Ashutosh Limaye, SERVIR Science and Applications Lead, added, "Most of the participants were the people who assess and make decisions about water resources in their countries. It was a fantastic group, very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They worked hard to learn the intricacies of the model."

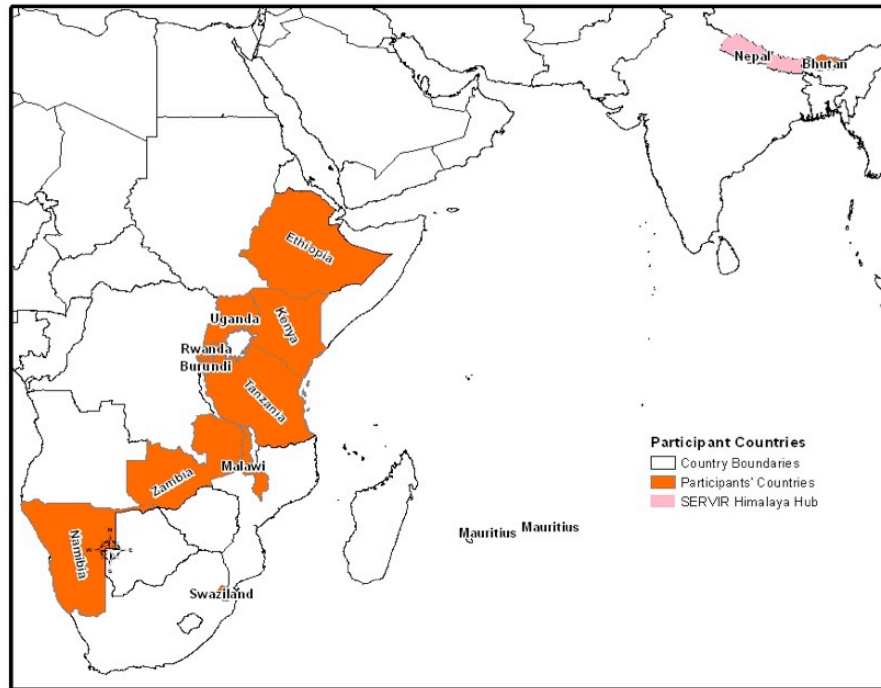
Many of the attendees plan to advocate use of CREST in their operations upon returning to their countries.

"The CREST hydrologic modeling tool is exactly what we need," says Mr. Vincent de Paul Kabalisa, Deputy Director General of the Integrated Water Resource Management department of Rwanda.

Ms. Jacobine Amutenya, hydrologist at the Namibia Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, modeled and calibrated the important Rundu watershed using the CREST model while at the workshop. She sees many opportunities to expand this work.

From Uganda, Senior Water Officer Ms. Sylvia Nanyunja, and Mr. Benon Lwanga, hydrologist at the Directorate of Water Resources Management, Ministry of Water and Environment, were excited about the possibilities offered by the CREST model. They quickly learned the model and worked hard during the workshop to calibrate it on one of the gauged watersheds in their country. The Ugandan team has already requested SERVIR-East Africa to use their calibrated model and begin making near real time runs for them.

CREST Workshop Participants' Countries



Hydrologists from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Swaziland, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Bhutan, and Nepal attended the workshop.

Together, the workshop participants came up with an idea for an "Action Plan" outlining ways to incorporate the model and tools in their water resource management operations. They also voted to create a "google community" to continue corresponding and sharing information with one another. In addition, the participants asked for a follow-on workshop next fall, when they will share information about how they have used CREST. In the meantime, they have produced analyses of river basins in their home countries and shared these with SERVIR.

"We are so pleased that the attendees see the value in this model," says Limaye, "and that some of them are setting it up in important basins in their countries. When we make it operational for them, they can use it in real situations, for example, to warn people of flood risks. This could save lives."

The RCMRD-hosted workshop was supported by USAID and executed by NASA and Oklahoma University.



At the CREST Workshop closing ceremony, RCMRD Director General Dr. Hussein Farah gives a completion certificate to attendee Mr. Benon Lwanga of the Directorate of Water Resources Management in Uganda. Pictured from left to right are Mr. Lwanga, Dr. Farah, Dr. Ashutosh

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