

## Background of SAFOAM

South Asia is highly prone to extreme weather events and weather aberrations that frequently cut across national borders and result in major impacts on crops and live-stocks. Repeated exposure to such hazards and climatic variability often pushes the poor, particularly rural poor engaged in agricultural activities, into chronic poverty. This is likely to get worse with climate variability and change. The productivity of key economic sectors such as agriculture is also compromised by limited access to information services relating to trans-boundary and local weather phenomenon by sectors and communities. Yet, in most countries in SAR, despite demand, access to weather based information services is limited and the monitoring, forecasting, technical human resource capabilities and organizational arrangements that contribute to the supply of such information products and services, are not adequately in place.

Because all the countries in South Asia are heavily dependent on agriculture, there is an urgent need to strengthen agrometeorological services in all of them. To support these activities, the network of weather observatories in each of these countries must be strengthened. The weather forecasting capabilities should be increased in all the South Asian nations. Information should be freely exchanged across the countries. The research wings of agrometeorological institutions should be strengthened. Increase awareness among the farmers regarding the importance of weather information for agricultural decision-making is required. Need-based training and the use of information and communication technology to reach the farmers effectively on a near-real time basis need to be planned. Improvements of Climate Service Information system and Climate Service tools in South Asia along with cross-regional experiences with participatory agricultural climate services projects in sub-Saharan Africa are very much essential. Documentation of success stories of Climate Services in both South & South Asia & sub-Saharan Africa create examples for enhancing agromet services. Mechanism for regional cooperation through collaboration in exchange and capacity building of climate service and the extension activities in these countries need to be strengthened.

To address all the issues mentioned above, there is need to work collectively by all the countries in South Asia. Hence, there is an urgent need to strengthen regional cooperation among agrometeorological services of the member countries. **Thus, a need was felt to form a Forum i.e., South Asian Forum on Agriculture Meteorology (SAFOAM)** to strengthen regional collaboration. South Asian Forum on Agricultural Meteorology (SAFOAM) was launched on 9th February, 2021 to strengthen regional cooperation in agrometeorological advisory services of the member countries in South Asia.

### Objectives:

Among others, the key aims & objectives of SAFOAM are:

- ❖ Enhance agro-meteorological information sharing.
- ❖ Improving impact based forecasting skills with special emphasis on high-impact weather events in agricultural sector.
- ❖ Develop agromet decision support tools.
- ❖ Deliver user-oriented services to farmers.
- ❖ Address common implementation challenges.