

The Caribbean Regional Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF)

Basseterre, St. Kitts

November 23rd – 27th 2015

Concept Note

Addressing climate change and increasing climate variability have been made regional and national priorities by the heads of government of the Caribbean community. Climate variability and change, as exemplified by extreme weather and climate events, such as droughts, floods and tropical cyclones, continue to pose significant risks for the Caribbean region. These make early warning information systems critical components of preparedness, risk reduction and adaptation.

Regional Climate Outlook Forums (RCOFs), promoted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) are active in several parts of the world. These RCOFs are critical for the development and effectiveness of early warning systems in that they provide real-time seasonal climate forecasts and interpretation across relevant time and spatial scales. Appropriate climate services, tailored to the Caribbean islands, will rely on such early warning information systems if the goals of supporting adaptation and disaster risk reduction are to be realized.

In June 2010, a workshop was convened to re-establish the Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CARICOF) in order to develop a sustained collaborative process that provides credible and authoritative real-time regional climate products. In February/March 2012 a CARICOF was held that consisted of three separate but complementary activities:

- A Technical Training Workshop that developed a draft seasonal (three-month) rainfall outlook,
- A Partnership Workshop that brought together key partners and users of climate information and
- The Outlook Forum that discussed the rainfall forecast with users, which determined the final product.

At the 2012 CariCOF, it was agreed that the bi-annual hosting of such forums throughout the region just prior to the beginning of the wet/hurricane and dry seasons in

the Caribbean, with their contrasting impacts, be pursued. Since then, CariCOF workshops were held in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and St. Lucia prior to the 2013, 2014 and 2015 wet/hurricane seasons; and in Antigua and Barbuda in December 2014 for the first Dry Season CariCOF. These followed a similar agenda to that in 2012, but with more forecasts products being delivered to stakeholders with each training workshop. Forecast products now include 3 to 6 month forecasts of rainfall and temperature, along with a specialized drought alerting system. Training during the most recent CariCOF will allow for near-future regional products on the possibility for extreme events such as flood potential rains, dry spells and heat waves within a season.

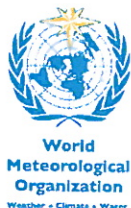
In collaboration with our partners the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of the Environment, Government of Canada, and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), our 2015 Dry Season CariCOF is scheduled for 23-27 November, at the St. Kitts Marriott Hotel in Basseterre.

As is customary, this CariCOF takes the form of

1. A pre-CariCOF training session for meteorologists/climatologists
2. A Stakeholder forum

The pre-CariCOF training will focus on

1. The use and application of the newly developed CariCOF Outlook Generator (CAROGEN); an automated system that seeks to reduce the amount of man hours in producing forecasts, as well as to harmonize the process for developing the outlook products.
2. Verification of forecasts, and
3. Media training as part of a WMO-sponsored campaign to promote the value of climate services for island nations. Participants will be provided with specific skills necessary to deliver what journalists require and understand how to frame effective messages for print and broadcast media.



Training for meteorologists building on previous pre-COF training sessions, will take place from 23rd - 25th November, followed by the Stakeholder Outlook Forum on 26th and 27th November, 2015.

