



The Caribbean Regional Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) Port of Spain, Trinidad November 25th – 29th, 2019

Concept Note

Addressing climate change and increasing climate variability are regional and national priorities established 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, as 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. CariCOF is a significant step towards providing those relevant and necessary climate services for over 25 Caribbean states and territories. CariCOF is viewed by WMO as one of the most successful and innovative RCOFs globally.

In June 2010, in the wake of one of the most intense droughts in Caribbean history, 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.

Collaborators:





Since the 2012 CariCOF, the CIMH has been coordinating climate forecasting activities leading to a consistently growing body of climate forecasters who (i) contribute to the monthly production of consensus-based seasonal climate outlooks and (ii) engage with the user community to facilitate awareness-building within climate sensitive sectors. At the 2012 CariCOF, it was also agreed that the bi-annual hosting of such forums, roving across the region, just prior to the beginning of the wet season and the dry season in the Caribbean, be pursued. Since 2012, CariCOF workshops were held in:

- Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados and St. Maarten prior to the 2013 to 2019 wet/hurricane seasons, respectively;
- Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Guyana and Barbados for the Dry Season CariCOF - November to December 2014 to 2018, respectively.

These followed a similar agenda to that in 2012, but with the partnership workshop and forum merged into one General Assembly.

Since 2012, CariCOF outlook products have expanded to include:

- Drought outlooks that combine alert maps, with four categories of increasing alert level, with a narrative on recent and near-future drought conditions;
- Dry spell outlooks designed more for the agriculture (crops) sector;
- Wet Days and Wet Spells outlooks of number and frequency shifts in wet days and wet spells;
- Heatwave outlooks important early warning information for adaptation related to human and animal health given our increases in temperature associated with climate change. .

In collaboration with our partners the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), through the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative, the 2019 Dry Season CariCOF is tentatively scheduled for 25th – 29th November, commencing with the training of meteorologists and climatologists (25th – 26th) in the art of climate forecasting, followed by the stakeholder forum on the 27th. As has become the norm for the dry season forum, greater emphasis will be on the agriculture and water sectors.

The CIMH, in association with its Consortium of Regional Coordination Partners (herein called the Consortium), has made significant strides towards the development of sectoral Early Warning Information Systems across Climate Timescales (EWISACTs). Key to the long-term development of this portfolio is the new Sectoral EWISACTs Roadmap and Plan of Action (RPA) 2020-2030 - the Caribbean's

Collaborators:





long-term vision for the co-design, co-development and co-delivery of sector-specific climate services. At its 6th meeting in May 2019, the Consortium continued to advance the RPA for Caribbean climate services, and its Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The Consortium also drafted a new multi-lateral Letter of Agreement (LoA) and associated Terms of Reference (TOR) that continues the Consortium partnership. Parallel to the training of meteorologists and climatologist, the 7th Consortium Meeting is scheduled for November 25th and 26th, 2019. It is anticipated that the draft RPA, LoA and TOR documents will be finalized at this meeting to be adopted, in principle, by Consortium partners.

To close off CariCOF week, a workshop entitled Climate Change in the Caribbean – Strengthening the Science to Services Interface, will be held from the 28th – 29th November. The workshop is being hosted by The Meteorological Office of the United Kingdom, in partnership with the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative and CIMH, as part of the Commonwealth Climate Service Demonstrator, and will focus on long-term climate change for Caribbean islands, to include a mixture of plenary talks from experts, group discussions and activities, as well as a question time with an expert panel. Topics include the co-development of a Sea Level Rise tool based on new scientific work on climate projections for the Caribbean.

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