



The 2024-25 Dry Season Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF)

Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia
November 25th – 29th, 2024

Concept Note

Background

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, heat waves 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) were first organized in 1997 in response to a threatening El Niño event, to provide seasonal climate information to help decision-makers reduce climate-related risks, develop technical forecasting capacity, and to strengthen connections between science providers and decision-makers. Thanks to the promotion by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), RCOFs are now active in several parts of the world. The Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) is a significant step towards providing those relevant and necessary climate information and services to support adaptation and disaster risk reduction in climate sensitive sectors and communities across the Caribbean.

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) after its hiatus in the early 2000s, in order to develop a sustained collaborative process that provides credible and authoritative real-time regional climate products. To cement the re-establishment, the first of many CariCOFs was held in February/March 2012 that consisted of three separate but complementary activities:

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





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, both nationally and regionally, 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 face to face workshops were held in:

- Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Sint Maarten and Barbados prior to the 2013 to 2019 and the 2024 wet/hurricane seasons;
- Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Dominica for the Dry Season CariCOF prior to the 2014 to 2019 and 2022 to 2023 dry seasons.

The face-to-face forums followed a similar agenda to that in 2012, but with the partnership workshop and forum merged into one General Assembly. From May 2020 until May 2022, CariCOFs were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2024-25 Dry Season Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF)

The Caribbean dry season typically has implications for water management and agriculture, with water availability often challenging these two sectors, with cascading effects on other sectors. It is now customary to have participation from practitioners from the water and agriculture sectors for this CariCOF.

In collaboration with our partners the European Union, the Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the Department of State of the USA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Columbia Climate School International Research Institute for Climate and Society of Columbia University, the 2024-25 Dry Season CariCOF is scheduled for November 25th – 29th, 2024 in Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia. The Stakeholder Forum will be held on November 28th and 29th featuring 4 themes:

1. The delivery of the regional forecasts for the season (which includes rainfall and temperature forecasts, as well as forecasts of drought and dry spells that limit water availability, wet days, wet spells, extremely wet days and extreme wet spells that provide insight into the potential for flooding), the Atlantic and heatwaves along with sub-seasonal forecasts up to 4 weeks,





2. Interactive exercises, initiated by the forecasts and recent climate conditions, that encourages dialogue between national meteorological services and practitioners from climate sensitive sectors on action to reduce climate risks,
3. Discussions surrounding current and future climate services for the water and agriculture sectors,
4. Sub-seasonal forecasts for the Caribbean.

This agenda reflects strides to transition the global RCOF to Regional Climate Forums where the focus moves beyond just the outlooks for the season, but broader climate related issues.

Pre-CariCOF Training of Caribbean Meteorologists and Climatologists

The technical training workshop, often referred to as the pre-CariCOF training of Caribbean meteorologists and climatologists will take place from November 25th to 27th 2024. The training enhances the capacity of the region's National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in the delivery of climate information and services to the climate sensitive sectors. The training will also take the opportunity to prepare the 2024-25 Dry Season climate outlooks. The objectives of the training are to:

1. Learn how CAROGEN version 2 operates and improves efficiency of climate early warning operations – CAROGEN is the online platform the region's meteorologists and climatologist use to prepare their regional and national forecasts.
2. Learn about the latest developments in heat indices for heat-health early warning and apply them to sub-seasonal forecasting.
3. Learn to use CPT 18 to make weeks 2 or 3-4 retrospective and real-time predictions of
 - a) the number of days above a given threshold across Caribbean stations;
 - b) temperature anomalies across Caribbean stations;
 - c) heatwave occurrence across Caribbean stations.
4. Learn how to produce hazard-tailored climate early warning products using the ClimSA Station developed by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission.





The 11th Meeting of the Consortium of Regional Consortium of Sectoral Early Warning Information Systems across Climate Timescales (EWISACTs) Coordination Partners

Critically important to the climate services agenda in the region, is the implementation of a regional Roadmap and Plan of Action (RPA) 2020 to 2030 - the Caribbean’s long-term vision for the co-design, co-development and co-delivery of sector-specific climate services. RPA implementation is being advanced by the Regional Consortium of Sectoral Early Warning Information Systems across Climate Timescales (EWISACTs) Coordination Partners. These partners include seven regional sector agencies¹ with mandates related to the six climate sensitive sectors served by the Caribbean Regional Climate Centre at CIMH. These include the two sectors targeted for the 2024 Dry Season CariCOF, along with health, energy, agriculture and tourism. Several other regional and international agencies provide support for the work of the Consortium as Observing Members².

The 11th Consortium Meeting will take place from 26th to 27th November 2024. The objectives of this meeting are:

1. To review progress on RPA implementation over the period June 2023 – November 2024;
2. To present progress on triennial work plans for Performance Period 2 (2023-2025);
3. To discuss ClimSA support for Consortium activities 2024-2026;
4. To discuss Consortium Members' role in the planning of future CariCOFs;
5. To discuss resource mobilization for RPA implementation over the period 2025-2026.

¹ Including the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

² Including the CARICOM Secretariat, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs), the Commission of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Climate Studies Group of the University of the West Indies, Mona campus (UWI CSGM), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Agricultural Alliance of the Caribbean (AACARI).

