



PICSA Refresher Training to Strengthen Agricultural Resilience in Guyana

Georgetown, Guyana – February 7, 2025 – The Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), in collaboration with the University of Reading (UoR) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) through the Guyana Hydrometeorological Service and the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI), conducted a two-day Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) Refresher Training from February 4 - 5 in Georgetown, Guyana. This event, supported by the Intra-ACP Climate Services and Related Applications (ClimSA) Programme and financed by the European Union, catered to approximately 20 agricultural extension officers, further strengthening the skills and capacity of agricultural stakeholders to improve climate resilience in farming communities across Guyana.

This refresher training built on the success of the first PICSA workshop held in Guyana in June 2023, where 30 Extension Officers were introduced to the approach under the Intra-ACP ClimSA Caribbean Programme. The training demonstrated the vital role of integrating climate information with participatory extension methods to help farmers adapt to climate variability. The workshop equipped participants with the tools to use weather and climate forecasts to guide agricultural decision-making, such as selecting appropriate crops, adjusting planting times, and implementing soil and water management techniques that align with local climate conditions.

Dr. David Farrell, Principal of CIMH, emphasized the importance of this continued training, stating, “The upcoming refresher session is an important milestone in our efforts to enhance food security and agricultural resilience in Guyana and by extension the Caribbean recognizing CARICOM’s decision to make Guyana the bread-basket of the Caribbean. By empowering agricultural extension officers with climate-smart tools, we are equipping them to train the farmers they work with, helping them to navigate the challenges of climate change and variability but also ensuring sustainable agricultural development in the region.”

Dr. Graham Clarkson, Research Fellow at the University of Reading, also highlighted the significance of the collaboration, saying, “The partnership between CIMH, UoR, the Guyana Hydrometeorological Service, and NAREI has been instrumental in the success of the PICSA programme. These collective efforts enable us to support farmers in addressing the challenges they face in adapting to climate change and variability, ensuring they have the knowledge and resources to make informed decisions.”

Chief Executive Officer of NAREI, Mr. Jagnarine Singh, reflected on the role of agricultural extension officers in the success of this initiative. Mr. Jagnarine Singh noted, “Agricultural extension officers play a critical role in empowering farmers with climate-smart tools and techniques, and it is essential that they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively communicate climate information to farmers and assist them in making informed decisions about agricultural practices. The PICSA programme has already demonstrated its potential in strengthening agricultural resilience in Guyana, and I have no doubt that this refresher training will further enhance the capacity of our extension officers to support farmers in adapting to climate change and variability.”



Dr. Garvin Cummings, Chief Hydrometeorological Officer of the Guyana Hydrometeorological Service, further emphasized the value of data-driven decision-making in agriculture, remarking, “Weather and climate conditions have direct impact on agricultural productivity and production and it is therefore critical that both farmers and extension services are aware of local conditions to the extent that they can prepare for short-range and seasonal changes and variability to mitigate impacts and to sustain productivity. This follow-up training is therefore an essential element in Guyana’s efforts toward national and regional food and nutrition security and the reduction of the regional food imports bill.”

The PICSA approach is designed to empower farmers by integrating climate services into their everyday agricultural practices. It combines short-term and seasonal climate forecasts with participatory extension approaches, enabling farmers to make informed decisions about which crops to grow, when to plant, and how to manage risks associated with extreme weather and climate events. This methodology not only helps farmers reduce the impact of climate change and variability but also increases their productivity and long-term sustainability, contributing to greater food security.

As Guyana faces the impacts of climate change and increased variability, the ongoing PICSA training initiatives are a critical component of the country’s broader efforts to strengthen agricultural resilience and ensure food security for the future. The recent training session was yet another step toward a sustainable agricultural sector, better equipped to tackle the challenges of a changing climate.