

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Regional Early Warning Systems (EWS) Consortium

1. Background

The Caribbean is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world. The region is faced with both natural and technological hazards. Regional Strategy on Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) 2014-2024, like the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals identify strengthened early warning systems as a critical component of building the resilience to hazards and by extension contributing to sustainable development. The phenomena of global climate change demands that early warning systems are strengthened. This requirement for strengthening is reinforced by the reality that disasters result in disproportionate impacts on the poor and vulnerable and demands that gender and vulnerable persons are also integrated into our approaches.

Within CDEMA Participating States, early warning systems exist for the traditional cyclonic systems and within recent times they have expanded to include troughs and other rain bearing weather phenomena. EWS also exist for other categories of hazards including those which are seismically generated and health related. Existing regional arrangements that support national systems also exist such as the Early Warning Information Systems Across Climate Timescales (EWISACTs). The REWSC will seek to complement those existing arrangements and build efficiencies through stronger coordination to address multiple hazards.

Globally it is accepted that effective Early Warning Systems (EWS) shall reflect the following four components: Risk Knowledge; Monitoring and Warning Service, Dissemination and Communication and Response Capability. This framework promotes greater efficiency in EWS through the harmonization of components. The extent of these harmonization opportunities requires greater exploration within the Caribbean context.

The 2016 Final Report: Early Warning Systems in the Caribbean: A Desk Review, in tracing the evolution of Early Warning Systems in the region,¹ recognizes "... some progress in advancing early warning in the region whilst at the same time suggesting a need to accelerate the enhancement process."

The study also made a recommendation to: "Revisit and Strengthen the Governance Framework of Early Warning Systems". The Regional Workshop on Early Warning Systems in April 2016 also recommended the establishment of a regional stakeholder mechanism related to Early Warning Systems. The Regional Early Warning System Consortium is being established to address this recognized gap.

2. The Role and Functions of the Regional Early Warning Systems Consortium

The role of the Regional Early Warning Systems Consortium is to serve as a strategic and advisory body for the advancement and strengthened coordination of Early Warning Systems within the Caribbean Region taking into consideration the realities of a changing climate. Whilst it is recognized

¹ UNDP 2016. Final Report: Early Warning Systems in the Caribbean: A Desk Review. Author Jeremy Collymore

that early warning systems can apply to both natural and technological hazards, the initial focus of the EWS Consortium will be on natural hazards.

Specifically the REWSC will:

- i. Establish a regional strategic vision for EWS development linked to Comprehensive Disaster Management
- ii. Establish standards in support of Early Warning Systems
- iii. Promote the articulation of the scientific and technical processes of data acquisition, data sharing, hazard modeling and forecasting in support of EWS
- iv. Promote strategies for the engagement of stakeholders in support of regional Early warning Systems
- v. Articulate strategies for public-private partnerships in support of early warning systems
- vi. Facilitate collaboration and cooperation among regional and national institutions which support the regional vision for Early Warning Systems in the Caribbean
- vii. Promote the consolidation of national integrated multi-hazard Early Warning Systems
- viii. Promote the standardization of alerts for different hazards and harmonization of key messages
- ix. Promote the expansion of community based EWS including consideration of gender and vulnerable groups
- x. Development of a Harmonized Regional Action Plan for Advancing EWS
- xi. Support resource mobilization efforts in support of Early Warning Systems
- xii. Support Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting on Early Warning Systems

3. Membership/ Composition of the Regional Early Warning Systems Consortium

The REWSC will comprise representatives of institutions which have a mandate to support Early Warning Systems in the region and comprise the agencies:

- i. Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)
- ii. Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)
- iii. Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARISEC)
- iv. Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) (Chair)
- v. Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH)
- vi. Caribbean Meteorological Organization (CMO)
- vii. Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)
- viii. Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU)
- ix. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO-IOC)-led Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (ICG/CARIBE EWS)
- x. National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) – St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- xi. National Meteorological Service (NMS) – Jamaica
- xii. Seismic Research Centre (SRC), University of the West Indies (UWI)
- xiii. University of Guyana (UG)
- xiv. University of the West Indies (UWI) Climate Studies Group
- xv. University of the West Indies Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (UWI DRRC)

Observers

The following institutions will have observer status in the Consortium. Observers are non-voting members that will provide technical input to the Consortium.

- xvi. International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)
- xvii. Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems Initiative (CREWS)
- xviii. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Barbados and the OECS
- xix. Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Membership in the Consortium may be expanded as deemed necessary.

4. Frequency of Meetings

The REWSC will meet twice a year and any other time deemed necessary by the body thereafter.

A majority (51%) of the representatives of the REWSC as named in Item 23 above will constitute a quorum and must be present for meetings to be convened.

In keeping with its specific functions and responsibilities, the REWSC shall regulate its procedures for conduct of the meetings and regulate its own proceedings

5. Duration of Regional Early Warning Systems Consortium

The REWSC will sit for the duration of the current CDM Strategy to 2024.

6. Chairmanship of the REWSC

The REWSC will be chaired by the Executive Director of CDEMA or nominee. The Chair is responsible for:

- i. The conduct of the meeting.
- ii. Ensuring that an accurate record of the discussions and decisions of each meeting is prepared and forwarded to all members and that decisions are actioned.
- iii. Ensuring adequate follow-up on the undertakings of the members of the Sub-Committee

7. Secretariat

The CDEMA CU will serve as Secretariat of the REWSC.

8. Communication

The preparation of the records of all official meetings of the will be the responsibility of the Secretary. An accurate summary of all meetings including actions and decisions taken will be compiled and forwarded to all members of the committee within three (3) weeks of the conclusion of each meeting.

9. Meeting Location

Meetings of the REWSC may be “face-to-face” at a location that is agreed to by the membership of the committee, virtual or a combination thereof. Opportunities shall be sought by the CDEMA Coordinating Unit as well as Consortium members through their programmes to cover the costs of their participation.

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