

Enhancing MRV/Transparency Processes in Climate Action in the English-Speaking Caribbean



2019 Report of the Caribbean Cooperative
Measurement, Reporting & Verification Hub Annual
Meeting

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In collaboration with

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1. Executive Summary

Properly constructed, national systems for transparency in the Caribbean can improve domestic policymaking, create efficiencies in climate action, and bolster support for international climate finance. Internationally, one of the key pillars of the Paris Agreement, ratified by all countries in the Caribbean, is the enhanced transparency framework as set in article 13, which requires countries to provide national greenhouse gas inventories and information necessary to track progress made in implementing and achieving its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as well as encourages them to provide information related to climate change impacts and adaptation and information on, technology transfer, capacity building, and financial support needed and received.

Access to climate finance especially requires extensive measuring reporting and verification to demonstrate the impact of mitigation measures in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions. The

countries not having updated MRV systems and national inventories will be at a disadvantage without the ability to credibly demonstrate the impacts of policies and projects in their applications for climate finance.

While also recognizing the special circumstances of small island developing states, data analysis on submitted NCs and BURs show that Caribbean countries are facing significant challenges in advancing with the establishment of an enhanced transparency framework.

Therefore, a group of organizations, namely Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Windward Islands Research and Education Foundation (WINDREF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the UN Environment (UN Env), with generous funding from the International Climate Initiative (IKI) and Global Environmental Facility (GEF), have collaborated in partnership with twelve countries to set up the **Caribbean Cooperative MRV Hub (CCMRVH)** or the MRV Hub, to empower English-speaking countries in the region to efficiently develop GHG inventories, mitigation assessments, and track NDCs.

The CCMRVH was formally launched at this meeting in Grenada (5-6 February 2019) at St George's University 'True Blue' campus. This inaugural annual meeting was attended by 20 representatives from the participating countries in the CCMRVH and representatives of regional and international organisations – operating in the region supporting countries on the topic. During the meeting, the implementing partners shared their vision for an MRV Hub that will operate as a unique, sustainable, and country-driven cooperative partnership designed to foster regional technical excellence and generate stronger policy-relevant carbon accounting. Experts from the member countries and Hub staff discussed how the MRV Hub should function as a learning and mentoring cooperative. The experts presented the challenges and opportunities for working in the region on the topic of MRV, their status on the development of national MRV systems, and the importance of incorporating gender considerations in MRV work. The partners and other regional institutions represented at the event provided a brief outline of other climate change capacity building work being done in the region and opportunities for collaborations with the MRV Hub to support CCMRVH member countries.

The country representatives welcomed the concept, highlighted need for such an initiative and reiterated their continued support for the hub concept.

The representatives from the countries in their discussions identified data collection, data management and data analysis as a challenge many countries face as they move away from a project based approach to reporting under an enhanced transparency framework.. The goal of developing internal capacity and building a regional roster of experts and verifiers was also identified as a desired outcome. Some of the participants felt that the MRV Hub should take a sectoral approach in building capacity; the LULUCF sector was highlighted as a category where capacity is lacking in the region and an area in need of assistance from the MRV Hub. As a starting point the countries requested training on the IPCC

guidelines to better enable countries to identify data reporting requirements and key indicators needed for data collection.

There was also discussion about the continuation of the project through country contributions after the IKI grant expires in 5 years as well as supporting the establishment of other similarly designed MRV Hubs in other regions based on the model of the CCMRVH. The annual meeting concluded discussing the immediate next step for countries to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with GHGMI to formalize their participation in the MRV Hub and to benefit from its services.

2. Introduction

The CCMRVH was officially launched with the member countries (English speaking Caribbean- CARICOM members) on 5-6 February at St George's. Twenty representatives hailing from 10 of the 12 countries aligned with the MRV Hub (i.e., Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and Grenadines), joined the meeting in person, while Trinidad & Tobago sent a recorded message of support for the MRV Hub and expressing their regret on inability to attend in person. Dominica was not able to send a representative to the meeting, but was in communications with the MRV Hub staff prior to the meeting.

Wiley Barbour made opening remarks on behalf of the implementing partners and invited Dr. Calum Macpherson (Head of WINDREF) and Dr. Randall Waechter from WINDREF to welcome the participants to the St George's University that will initially host the secretariat of the CCMRVH. This was followed by a welcome address and opening remarks by Mr. Trevor Thomson on behalf of government of Grenada the host country.

Following the introductions, Mr. Damiano Borgogno, UNDP, set the scene for discussion by introducing the goals of the CCMRVH and why the establishment of the CCMRVH was critical at this juncture.

Mr. Carlos Fuller, International and Regional Liaison Officer of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) further set the scene by pointing to the importance of the MRV Hub in the regional context, and pledged the full commitment of CCCCC to support the initiative.

Regional organizations such as Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Secretariat, as well as other key institutions working in the region including GIZ, WRI, NDC Partnership, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), Global Water Partnership, UNFCCC, UN Env , UNDP, RCC St George's, Green Climate Fund, and GHGMI were all represented at the event.

3. Climate Change as a cross-cutting and development issue

This session provided an updated understanding to the participants on the key messages on climate change and the main elements of the Paris Agreement, which has been ratified by all countries in the region.

The scene for urgent action was set by Mr. Damiano Borgogno, UNDP, introducing the key highlights of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): Global Warming of 1.5 degrees' report and in context of Caribbean the importance of expedited ambitious climate action. This was followed by Mr. Jigme, UNFCCC, introducing the Paris Agreement and its objectives, including on the enhanced transparency framework. He, in his presentation, highlighted the reporting obligations for the member countries arising from the recent climate negotiations coming from Katowice sessions on the Paris rule book and the flexibility provisions provided for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The participants gave special attention to the MRV provisions under the new rules and guidelines regarding flexibility, but Jigme cautioned that these flexibilities will be reduced over time. Mr. Carlos Fuller, CCCCC, further highlighted the importance of the MRV topic from the Caribbean perspective on NDCs as to what further needs to be done. He pointed that while NDCs are predominantly woven around plans that address national power companies and industry, which are more significant in Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, the main challenges for MRV, in his thinking, are with regards to the transportation and the LULUCF sectors.

During the following discussions, Ms. Dianne Black-Layne, Antigua & Barbuda, highlighted that MRV is a low priority for many political level administrators, and this situation will need to be addressed. Mr. Rickardo Ward from Barbados mentioned that countries should not be reporting for reporting sake but to identify what it means for the region and country. Also, it came to light that there was no representative in the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) from the English-speaking Caribbean countries, as well as the fact that there needs to be a focus on reporting on adaptation, which is key for the region, given insignificant emission levels from the region.

4. A New Model for Support: the Caribbean Cooperative MRV Hub

This session introduced the MRV Hub as envisaged by implementing partners for inputs and ideas from the member countries to build on. It started with the vision/idea for a regional cooperative MRV Hub by Mr. Michael Gillenwater of GHGMI and an overview of planned CCMRVH project activities by Mr. Wiley Barbour, CCMRVH project director from GHGMI.

5. NCs and BURs in the region

This session introduced existing UN reporting requirements and highlighted the variety and main characteristics of some of the NCs and BURs in the region.

Mr. Jigme from UNFCCC presented the role of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports (BUR) within the enhanced transparency framework process. In his presentation and answering follow up questions he mentioned that BURs and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTR) have an almost 1 to 1 relationship with what is being reported but have differences in legal character, with the BTR being more stringent with more detailed requirements on what is to be reported in mitigation and support received.

This was followed by a discussion on status of NCs and BURs submission in the region by Mr. Damiano Borgogno from UNDP. He highlighted that only 1 BUR has been submitted and said that all member countries of the MRV Hub are supported by UNDP or UNEP but questioned if all countries had applied for support for BURs although this is available.

There were 3 presentations that shared country reporting experience, the first covering the BUR report of Jamaica by Mr. Omar Alcock followed by experience with the third national communication by Ms. Shanna Emmanuel from Saint Lucia, and Ms. Brittany Meighan from Belize.

Mr. Omar Alcock speaking on the Jamaica experience with the BUR mentioned that the analysis for the BUR required 7 persons to be engaged full time; and he pointed out that currently Jamaica only has 3 key staff members in the climate change division. Besides this, the staff needs to be technically trained. Jamaica had received US\$352k in expedited grant funding from GEF to prepare the BUR (and 3rd NC) and due to similar requirements for the 2 reports, BUR 1 and NC3 were done at the same time.

Jamaica, in its procuring process has tried to use the national experts where available (especially some sectoral experts from UWI campus in Jamaica) but the challenge is that the national experts are not familiar with the IPCC guidelines and necessary data and hence needed to also get external expertise. Although basic training on IPCC requirements were provided to the national experts, it was insufficient and more advanced training is needed. Other challenges exist with respect to obtaining data in the absence of a legal mandate to do so; stakeholders are reluctant to get data or had not collected data and cited a lack of rationale to justify collecting the data. Mr. Alcock highlighted the need to break away from a 'project-based approach to producing reports' in favor of implementing a full time programmatic approach, but for the time being by necessity Jamaica is continuing the production of reports on project basis.

Ms. Brittany Meighan from Belize discussed experience with the third National Communication and stated that the National communications in Belize are done on a consultancy basis including with

national experts like Mr. Fuller from CCCCC. She pointed that at the core, a key challenge resides with limited familiarity with the IPCC guidelines and that the CGE training – the crash course – is not enough to actually use the software and all the different elements. Belize plans to submit the first BUR next year (2020) after starting of development in 2019 and the 4th National communication is to be expected in 2021, both being worked in parallel. On challenges with the data she indicated their experience is that the data exists, but locating it, getting the buy-in of organizations, especially private organizations, and data storage are some of the main challenges they faced.

The climate change division (CCD) in Belize is a coordinating structure, rather than a legal structure, so not supporting legal mandates nor a permanent budget. It is currently staffed with only 3 persons (2 technical officers and the head). Ms. Meighan expressed a need for more technical support for reporting going forward and also to address the challenges of data. On REDD readiness, they expressed interest to integrate FORIS analysis of FOLU into GHG Inventories later in 2019. Belize had approached both CBIT and Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) for support.

Mr. Fuller from CCCCC also added the importance of verification of the data to make national MRV systems more resilient. It is important to have the right robust structure set in place for verification of information that you present in the national Communications and BURs.

Shanna Emmanuel (St Lucia) presenting on the experience with the 3rd national communication of St Lucia said the key challenge is mainstreaming MRV as a major requirement. St Lucia has a data storage facility and have signed MoUs with other relevant institutions to provide data (but there were no specifics on the frequency and when to report). But still obtaining the right data had been a huge challenge. e.g. they did not include LULUCF in their inventories as they did not have the necessary data. The other challenge is lack of staff with she being the only dedicated resource allocated for the MRV work.

During the following discussions on the status of reporting and experience from countries who presented, there was a discussion around why the countries are behind on producing reports.

Several countries highlighted as ongoing challenges a lack of access to information, inadequate facilities to store proper data in place, and human capacity constraints (i.e., even though a country may succeed in requesting financial support from GEF, the country may not necessarily possess the capacity to implement). Jigme from UNFCCC also pointed out the difficulties faced by countries on not getting the forest reference level assessed (which takes place only once a year) in a timely manner as a challenge for REDD+ reporting

The participants discussed several questions raised by Mrs. Marcelle Edwards-John of St. Vincent: What types of levels of resources are needed for the MRV process, and for the Hub: what resources are requested to maintain the operations of the Hub after this project is finished? Omar from Jamaica responded that based on their experience, a staff of 7 being dedicated to the BUR project is required.

Jigme from UNFCCC weighed in on this question by indicating that it depends on the degree to which MRV activities are incorporated into the line agencies. Being able to integrate and mainstream in the work of the relevant line ministries would be key. Mr. Michael Gillenwater of GHGMI responded on the Hub resource question, stating that over the next several years we will all be designing the Hub to meet needs. The resources will depend on questions like how much does each government want to participate in the Hub? How many want to share economies of scale and resources and tools? How many want to secure their own technical support and do their own thing? There are going to be trade-off between costs but possibly more customization of service delivery as well. Several participants expressed confidence that financial resources are out there, and noted that we still have 5 years with grant funding to get the MRV Hub off the ground and running smoothly. During that time, we will be planning for making this MRV Hub sustainable and resourcing it permanently. Prof Hugh Sealy mentioned that to him it depends on the countries; if the MRV Hub adds value; if we believe that there are areas of expertise to draw upon from others; if we are prepared to share with others, etc. He also pointed to the need to implant the means of gathering data systemically from each ministry (tourism, water, energy, etc.) It was noted that for BUR the process takes 15 months; countries will start one as soon as one ends; over time it will get faster and more efficient.

Dr. Spencer Thomas of Grenada questioned how can the international consultation and analysis (ICA) process support increased ambition to levels all SIDS want, to which Damiano Bongo from UNDP responded that if information is available and shared the increased trust generated will move the negotiations forward and enhance ambition. In short, reporting builds trust, ambition and coherence.

Ms. Rochelle Newbold, Bahamas, suggested that countries still struggle with training being cursory, as understood from the Jamaica experience, and now with 12 countries producing reports every 2 years, with the help of the MRV Hub we should be able to identify means of training nationals to overcome this challenge and be better prepared. Dr. Michael Gillenwater complimented this indicating this is certainly something that the MRV Hub can deliver on and pointed out that the GHGMI has over a decade of experience providing training in this field and developing capacity internationally.

6. Tracking the NDC progress and the role of MRV Hub linked to NDCs

The session was conducted as a joint brainstorming on NDC implementation with all participants breaking-out into four groups and discussing how Caribbean countries are planning to implement and track their NDCs. The countries discussed in their respective groups on the three questions shown below and one person from each group presented a summary of the discussion at their table:

- Where are we in terms of NDC implementation (lessons learned, challenges, opportunities)?

- Where do we want to go (what needs to be improved)?
- How can we get there (what is what we need from the MRV Hub to implement our NDCs)?

a. Where are countries in terms of implementation?

It became evident that most of the countries in their NDCs had committed to what was already planned (in national policies and strategies) at the time that intended Nationally Determined Contributions (iNDCs) were developed. However, since the iNDCs were developed, it was now evident that new projects had come on board that were not planned, (e.g. new transportation sector projects in St Kitts and Nevis) but will contribute towards achieving the targets in the NDC. Participants felt that most of the NDC unconditional objectives will be achievable as they were already planned projects and will succeed if they are implemented as planned. However, almost all countries have components in their NDCs that are conditional and will require international support in order to be achieved.

Many countries are also targeting to update their NDCs by 2020 and some have already launched work on this. However, many of the countries also expressed that the baselines and emission reduction calculations will need reworking and further studies need to be done.

An overall challenge remains on the implementation of the iNDC which many countries are grappling with, mainly, how to structure the financing for implementation?

The engagement of the private sector in the NDC has been mixed; while some countries had engaged the private sector, others had not, mainly due to the NDCs being developed in a short period of time with minimum resources. There exist policy and legislative barriers that allow only one state owned or sanctioned provided of generation; independent power producers hence are discouraged.

Mr. Crispin D'Auvergne from OECS spoke from a regional perspective and indicated that some countries are more advanced than others in certain areas(e.g. St Lucia for example rolling out NDC implementation plan, or from the OECS countries, the 680 Million US\$ for mitigation from the 4 countries that had estimated the costs in NDC which he believes could be an underestimation). Mr D'Auvergne stated there has not been an outpouring of investment support, but some technical support has been and continues to be made available to the countries.

Most NDCs are currently focused on the Energy sector, while some countries mentioned Waste and Transport sectors as well as agroforestry as important sectors. There is reference to adaptation in many NDCs but the participants felt that this was not well structured.

b. Where do countries want to go?

Mr. Crispin D’Auvergne from OECS mentioned a possible Regional effort to coordinate and communicate the regionally determined contributions (RDC) performance at OECS level with the objective of leveraging regional level projects.

Countries expressed interest to add new mitigation sectors that had come into priority but also there was an interest to focus on adaptation components of the NDC to strengthen these sections.

Antigua presented an example of actions taken by them to change the government procurement policies to support low carbon transition. The representatives also highlighted the importance of getting people involved and developing capacity. As an initiative, they introduced the internship programme the government has developed to provide exposure for young graduates.

Guyana on the other hand indicated it has embarked on an effort for a green state economy which is legally mandated and has already reduced tariffs on climate smart equipment and technologies.

c. How can the countries get there?

Establishing baselines and means to track progress, and MRV were identified by Grenada and some other countries during the discussions as key factors for successful implementation. The need for identifying the parameters to be monitored upfront was noted, as well as the need to design systems for data collection in order to support this effort. Then some countries presented the need for a robust implementation to move forward as well as tracking of policies to support NDC implementation.

Ms. Jessica Jacob from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) highlighted that for the first 2 questions under discussion, the countries are best to determine, but on the last question the countries need to think in long term as investing in MRV may seem less important but on the long run when expecting climate finance it will be facilitating if you have already invested time on the domestic MRV system. Prof. Hugh Sealy also got the countries thinking on the possibility to trade ITMOs and the need for an MRV system to support this in accounting for what is counted nationally and what is traded.

On engagement of private sector, it was highlighted that Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica are exceptions in having more established industrial sectors, but in smaller islands - except for tourism - most other sectors are publicly owned.

Sharing of best practices and lessons learned was also brought forward by Mr. Crispin D’Auvergne, OECS, as a possible solution. He also added the need to focus not only on renewable energy but also on the resilience of the mitigation projects to survive extreme weather events.

Countries highlighted that getting the high-level buy-in is important to move the efforts forward.

Also, with most countries facing similar conditions, regional approaches were highlighted by some countries as a way forward. This will prevent each country having to re-invent the wheel. The need for building regional and national capacity on technology, and finance mobilization was identified as important by many of the groups.

Engaging the private sector in NDC implementation was identified as a critical factor by many of the groups, while some groups also specially highlighted importance of also engaging them in the adaptation aspects of NDCs.

Need for collaboration amongst supporting organisations & regional bodies like the MRV Hub, and institutions in order to streamline support was highlighted by countries as a part of the effort towards successful implementation.

In summary, it was agreed that the priority uses for the MRV Hub need to be identified and delineated. Actual activities of the MRV Hub will depend on country priorities based on results of MRV system status assessments, stakeholder consultations and inputs from steering committee. Also on the list to explore are non-reporting benefits of MRV and other domestic uses of the MRV information.

7. Review of Progress and Priorities of the Hub

This was conducted in an open discussion allowing member country representatives and other partners presented to identify the priority work of the MRV Hub and to receive inputs on how to formulate the work of the Hub.

Mr. Rickardo Ward, Barbados: Requested that it will be good to have a document indicating what the Hub will do in general (comprehensive project document).

Dr. Spencer Thomas, Grenada: Commented on the cooperative aspect of the MRV Hub now coming out in this light & suggested the possibility to look at multiple country reporting, rather than single country reports, at which prof. Hugh Sealy suggested that maybe the way to begin this is for an OECS national communication to be developed as an add-on to the national communications. This idea of collaborative reporting was further explored by Carlos Fuller and Diann Black-Layne, Antigua and Barbuda, who stated that under current rules such a regional report would not be linked to UNFCCC compliance.

Mr. Omar Alcock, Jamaica, proposed where you have expertise in one area, in one sector in a country, but are falling down in another, the MRV Hub could serve to share technical knowledge and expertise between countries.

Mr. Rickardo Ward, Barbados: He further added that capacity to do LULUCF was a major challenge that the MRV Hub can focus on to build support. Hugh Sealy, advisor, building on this indicated that sectoral approaches may work better than an Island approach.

Mr. Crispin D'Auvergne, OECS : Suggests that we make a list of possible suggestions the MRV Hub can help with, such as providing guidance, templates for facilitating and simplifying MRV work, and a system to deal with the turnover in individual country offices so any new officer can start and have an MRV system up and running after taking over without gaps.

Dr. Spencer Thomas, Grenada: Added the need for digitized data management solution for the region so all historical data is saved backed up and accessible for retrieval at convenience.

8. MRV Gaps Needs, and Priorities

This session presented a **MRV System Status & priorities in the Caribbean** by Mr. Patrick Cage, GHGMI, and Ms. Molly White, GHGMI. This presentation introduced the MRV system status assessment template for capturing capacity needs & priorities used by the MRV Hub. These 2 presentations were followed by breakout group discussions on MRV gaps, needs and priorities. Discussion during the breakout group discussion was guided by 3 questions after brief introduction to the participants that link to MRV work. A summary of these discussions is presented below

a. In thinking about the 'menu' of MRV activities, components and infrastructure - what is working well?

Saint Vincent and Grenadines indicated that the data is not missing, but the challenge is how to access data and convert it to a useful format. Many initiatives take place without measurement and establishment of a proper baseline, and later countries are not able to prove the impact of the actions, and hence, there is an opportunity to promote the MRV Hub to fill this gap.

Saint Kitts and Nevis is working on an environmental data management system that will also encompass climate change data requirements. This would be beneficial for future MRV work but there is reluctance to share and handling large amounts of unprocessed raw data remains an issue.

The OECS Secretariat reminded all that a large component of a NC and BUR is based on socio economic data which is already available in several of the regional databases (CCCC, Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, Caribbean Meteorological Organization or CMO which houses a WMO interface, and UWI) and sub regional (like OECS commission statistical office) as well as national centralized statistics offices, which can be built on. Also, projects like the Pilot Project for Climate Resilience (PPCR) had collected pockets of data scattered throughout various ministries which can be built on.

Saint Lucia under climate change legislation has established a mandate to collect data for MRV.

Jamaica's example of how they taken stock of resource requirements and engaged both government and non-government resources like private sector and academia has worked successfully.

Guyana mentioned their forestry sector work is quite advanced. Institutions, resources, and rules are well established in standardized formats. The systems in place in Guyana are effective in monitoring performance and because forest conservation is mandated by law they are empowered to execute certain MRV requirements.

The Bahamas indicated that project verification is a strength for them; this is a key activity of the BEST commission. The rules protocols, standards and codes for that are needed for project verification have been put in place systematically.

Antigua and Barbuda discussed their Environmental Protection Act which provides the legal backing for collecting data. This facilitates the Department of Environment's role to monitor environmental outcomes and to generate relevant documents for reporting. The tracking system for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) performance monitoring sends surveys that need to be completed and then communicated back to the focal point. GIS system working quite well with surveys and mapping.

b. What are near-term (1-2) year MRV priorities?

Saint Kitts and Nevis are exploring the possibility of advancing legislation for provision of data as one of the ways to move forward and to overcome reluctance for data sharing from other institutions in the country.

Antigua and Barbuda is working on an app for remote data entry, and monitoring aspects of NDCs will be a key focus area to work on.

The Bahamas is working on submitting the third national communication and Biennial Update Report, and is improving data storage and digitizing of existing information.

Guyana in near-term is focused on developing a national forest monitoring tool linked with REDD+ implementation.

CCCC is working on a regional protocol for data gathering, i.e. type of cars, type of fertilizers, all to be captured at the regional level.

Finally, many participants felt that having policies and legal frameworks that inform the MRV process was foundational for future efforts and part of the critical path forward.

c. What types of MRV Hub activities would be the most beneficial?

Participants actively discussed hopes and suggestions for the MRV Hub's activities, and agreed that having regional data references is better. If at least one island produce a detailed study, this could be a better reference for other countries in the Caribbean than a reference coming from another region.

The ability to analyze data is something some groups would like to see improved across the region through intervention of the MRV Hub. The MRV Hub can help find best data management tools, help countries organize and synchronize data management and share information. The MRV Hub can take the lead on data storage, supporting countries with digitization, as well as sector-specific analyses and activities such as regional models. Instead of inventing new things, some participants were of the opinion that the MRV Hub should take the approach of analyzing and improving existing databases.

IADB suggested also the possibility to support development of municipal level or private sector reporting and integration of these subnational level data elements in national reporting.

Training on IPCC Guidelines should help solve the indicator problem partially, and help guide on what information needs to be collected.

There was discussion around verification of data and the challenges faced which the countries seeked support from the Hub to resolve. Participants found it useful for the MRV Hub to have a regional database of experts to verify the data of the various countries.

Other countries expressed a goal for the hub to focus on sector-specific analysis and activities. The MRV Hub can check with CARICOM to determine if they have similar models like in tourism sector. Trainings can also be focused towards sectors like tourism energy and agriculture.

The OECS secretariat pointed that as highlighted previously during this meeting there is a potential for support from the MRV Hub on developing LULUCF sector expertise in the region. Mr. Crispin D'Auvergne also added a suggestion to consider coastal resources and oceans.

Other proposals also included establishing MoUs with sector leads to collect data with some incentive for them to get the buy-in and training to create continuity.

Some groups felt that the MRV Hub can play a role of information dissemination across the region like sharing of lessons learned through newsletters or a frequently updated website.

During the discussion, Mr. Rickardo Ward, Barbados, added that getting the political buy-in is important and that while International reporting is an obligation, this is secondary and the primary focus of MRV should be promoted as to support the national development effort.

9. Mainstreaming gender into climate action and MRV

This session explored and assessed entry points for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment into national climate change planning and policy, and for harmonizing gender and climate change actions across ministries and sectors. Mr. Damiano Borgogno (UNDP) presented the Gender Action Plan approved at COP23 and the gender responsive toolkit which articulate how to integrate gender into MRV. He further explained that the countries can turn to implementing agencies such as UNEP and UNDP for support on integrating the gender aspects in MRV if required. This was followed by a presentation by the Barbados' UNFCCC Gender Focal Point, Mrs. Patricia Boyce, and a discussion amongst participants moderated by Ms. Rochelle Newbold of The Bahamas. It was highlighted by participants when considering gender equality in Caribbean that marginalized men as well as women needed to be considered. Ms. Diann Black-Layne expressed how this is considered in the activities in Antigua where they try to achieve a parity on representation. Ms. Rochelle Newbold also posed the question to the MRV Hub to also focus on how the gender aspect is integrated into the work of the Hub.

10. Building the MRV Hub: MoU for country participation

This session was dedicated to introducing the MoU agreement between countries and the implementing partners of the project to establish the MRV Hub. After introducing the outline of the framework and discussing aspects of the MoU, a round table discussion took place between the countries seeking their inputs.

Many useful inputs and clarification questions were posed by the participants during this discussion. Specially to note are the inputs by Dr. Spencer Thomas of Grenada, Mr. Rickardo Ward of Barbados, and Ms. Rochelle Newbold of The Bahamas, on suggestions to streamline the MoU and to simplify as far as possible.

There was a special request by Mr. Rickardo Ward and Mrs. Marcelle Edwards-John of St Vincent and Grenadines to also provide a provision of the elaborated details of the project that includes its core elements and schedule to accompany the MOU. The implementing partners agreed to revise the MoU and to include an Annex to contain an informational primer on the MRV Hub and its activities and provide a separate workplan.

The MRV Hub project implementing partners agreed to revise the MoU based on the inputs received and recirculate to all before end of February. The objective was set to complete the signing of MoUs by end of April 2019 so further work of the Hub can be launched.

11. Capacity building initiatives in the region and tools available

This session was designed to provide an overview of support available for MRV activities which the countries can benefit from. Mr. William Holness from UNEP introduced the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT). He presented the various categorization of CBIT projects by funding region and outputs. Highest output is data and information management system, then coordination and institutional arrangements, guidelines for consistent data management, followed by indicators and NDC progress tracking while laws and regulation had the least requests so far. This was followed by presentations from Antigua and Barbuda (presented by Ms. Aaliyah Tuitt) and Jamaica (presented by Mr. Omar Alcock) on their respective country experience with CBIT applications.

There were discussion around encouraging countries to think about including the MRV Hub as they develop CBIT proposals. Mr. Damiano Borgogno encouraged countries to try to blend national initiatives like the NCs/BURs with regional initiatives like the MRV Hub to maximize benefits.

There was a discussion on support provided from CBIT versus support from the MRV Hub and how countries see the roles of the two, and how countries will determine the type of support to request from each.

Mr. Omar Alcock, Jamaica, clarified that they view it as CBIT supporting short term (2 year) needs, filling in resource gaps, etc., whereas the MRV Hub plays a long-term role in the region building long term capacity, utilizing outputs from work of CBIT, etc., and hence the efforts are complimentary.

Prof. Hugh Sealy, building on this and inputs from Mr. Rickardo Ward, indicated that it was important to look at ways to identify and build on regional level activities with the Hub to benefit from economies of scale, while we also consider implementation at country level.

Mr. Jigme from UNFCCC presented a tool for supporting transparency in the region: Workbook for national inventory development for SIDS that was co-developed by UNDP and UNFCCC. The workbook which is yet to be released contains simplified versions and approaches for application of the 2006 IPCC guidelines in context of SIDS, with worksheets to plugin data.

Finally, there were round table presentations from other relevant initiatives to support countries.

Ms. Danielle Evanson, with UNDP Barbados presented on the UNDP Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership (JCCCP) and other initiatives from UNDP office in Barbados supporting the OECS countries and Barbados.

Mr. Gerard Alleng, Inter-American Development Bank, presented on the initiatives by IADB in the region including CBIT support for Jamaica, and the use of innovative technological solutions. He also presented on the regional project on mangroves and possibly developing a linked regional MRV system.

Mr. Asher Lessels with UN Environment indicated that with MRV you start to see what's going on in the country; to see how policies are working. He added that strong capacity in country can help to bring in international support

Ms. Yamide Dagnet, with WRI - NDCP, presented an overview of the NDC Partnership work in the Caribbean.

Ms. Molly White, GHGMI, introduced the support provided under the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) followed by Mrs. Joyce Thomas Peters, with the Global Water Partnership introduced the activities of the Global Water Partnership in the Caribbean.

12. Future of CCMRVH and next steps

The final session started with a proposal for Steering Committee Design and Operation by Mr. Carlos Fuller, CCCCC who is also member of the MRV Hub Provisional Steering Committee. During the discussion, Ms. Dianne Black Layne and a few others highlighted the need for a representation from OECS countries on the Steering Committee.

This was followed by a presentation on CARICOM & reflections on regional cooperation on climate MRV by Dr. Devon Gardner from the CARICOM Secretariat. He presented an outline of energy sector initiatives in the Caribbean and emphasized possibility for information sharing and opportunities for regional level data from CARICOM institutions for the hub work.

There were discussions by participants around continuation of the hub after the 5-year project period. There were ideas around how to finance it from contributions from portions of support countries receive to their transparency capacity building, as well as possible extension of the grant. Countries expressed keenness on sharing information and lessons learned with other regions once the MRV Hub advances its work.

The last presentation and discussion was on the path forward for CCMRVH, which was presented by Dr. Michael Gillenwater, GHGMI. Michael indicated the next steps will be to get the countries the revised MoU and to include a project description in an Annex as requested for internal communications. It was highlighted that from most of the discussions a key requirement that became obvious to be addressed was a data management system for MRV work. He promised that the partners will start to work on addressing this on priority and get back with some ideas and plans for possible solutions to the data management issues. In the meantime, the MRV Hub secretariat will also approach the countries for conducting the MRV system status and readiness assessment and MoU follow-ups.