

CDEMANews

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ROVING TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAM



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WHAT IS THE ROVING TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAM?

The Roving Technical Support Team (RTST) is a CDEMA Coordinating Unit initiative which was established in December 2012 and commenced work in January 2013. The Roving Team, as they are referred to at the CDEMA Coordinating Unit, is a team of disaster management and information technology experts who, as the name suggests, stand ready to provide technical support in a diversity of areas to CDEMA's Participating States (PS). This newly established mechanism is a direct response to the widely recognised challenges of countries (primarily at the national disaster offices) in advancing Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) with limited resources and limited technical capability.

The need for this type of intervention was highlighted in reports by Participating States over the years. This information was harnessed via the CDEMA Disaster Management Audits of 2006 and 2010, several Country Reports, CDM implementation experiences of the CDEMA Coordinating Unit and specific requests from national disaster offices.

According to Brigadier General (Ret'd) Earl Arthurs, the Team Leader of the RTST for the period December 2012 to August 2014, this mechanism represents the demonstration of CDEMA's efforts to deepen its service delivery to the PS to achieve tangible CDM results in specialised areas at the national level.

He added, "Our support is not intended to replace local expertise but to complement existing systems. We hope to raise the "absorptive capacity" of Participating States. As such, we will work with the national disaster offices and other lead agencies to train and enhance technical capacity and disaster management skills and systems in various areas. This will help those entities to better implement CDM initiatives such as those presently funded through the CDEMA Country Directed Fund and prioritized in their national work programmes and also contribute to more effective arrangements within the regional response mechanism during emergency operations."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 RESPONSIVE**
Ready to support the immediate needs of the Participating States
- 2 SUPPORTIVE**
Of Participating States' Work Programmes
- 3 ENABLING**
“Hand-holding” to achieve desired results
- 4 FLEXIBLE**
Country-Paced and Country-Driven
- 5 RESULT ORIENTED**
Measurable Results
- 6 EQUITABLE ASSETS**
Available to all National Disaster Offices
- 7 COMPLEMENTARY**
Designed to Reinforce & Support, Not to Replace Local Labour

THE STRATEGY

The primary objective of the CDEMA Roving Team is to facilitate the strengthening of capacity and capability of the National Disaster Offices and other key agencies in areas that have been prioritized for achieving specific CDM results. Working across diverse areas, and with funding constraints, the team utilised a strategy which has resulted in successes within CDEMA's Participating States.

1. ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP

Work in support of the NDO or Lead Agency and allow the intervention to be led or coordinated by them.

2. FORM WORKING GROUPS

Use a participatory approach. This allows for partnerships to be formed among national agencies and the NDO to lead processes with shared responsibility amongst agencies.

3. DEVELOP WORK-PLANS FOR INITIATIVES

The RTST develops guidelines, budgets, timelines and goals to guide activities undertaken and to provide a general framework for the NDO and agencies to follow.

4. OWNERSHIP

The RTST seeks to have the NDO to take ownership of the intervention and encourages NDOs to request interventions which are part of their work program. It is recognized that national level buy-in is critical to continue several of the activities undertaken by RTST.

5. TRAIN THE TRAINERS

By building capacity in country, including outside of the NDO, initiatives started by the RTST will be sustained.

6. QUICK WINS

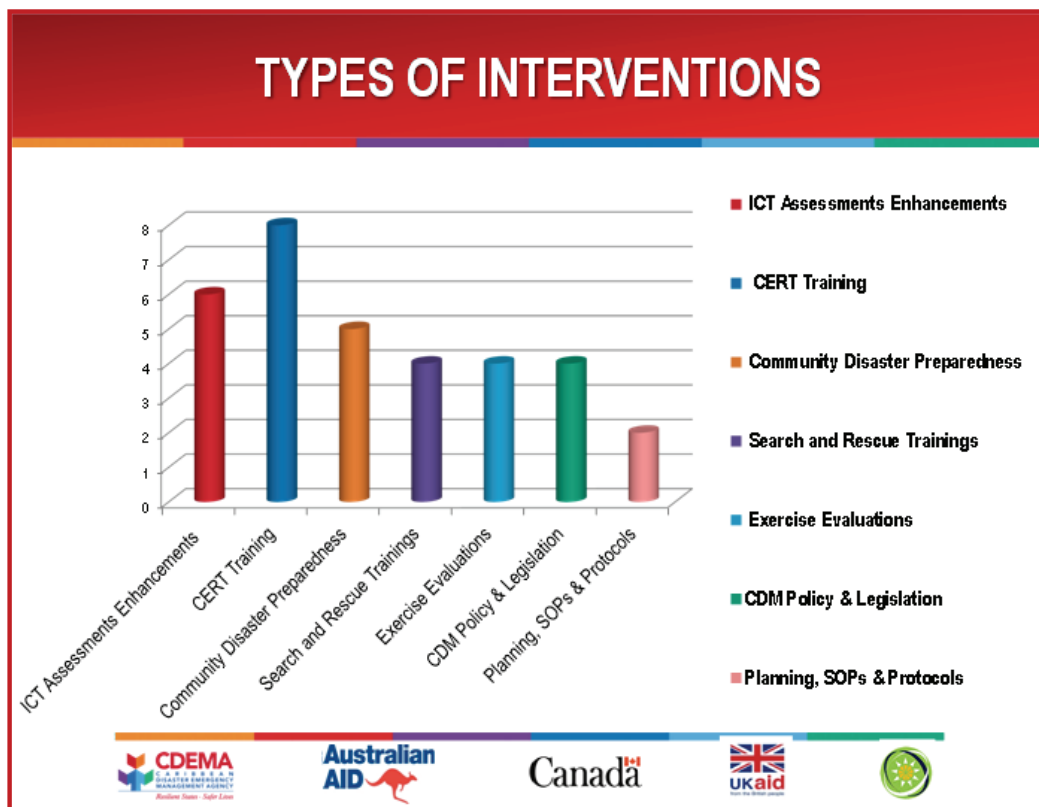
The principle of going for the “low hanging fruit” first is important in achieving and maintaining momentum in the various programmes.

Types of Interventions

The RTST has been very active since January 2013. During the first six months requests were received from five (5) countries and by July 2014 a total of 16 of the CDEMA Participating States (PS) had submitted 40 requests. Of the 30 approved requests the RTST successfully completed 20 by March 2014 and is on track to complete the remainder by August 2014. The RTST has also provided assistance to the CDEMA Coordinating Unit.

The types of interventions requested have been varied due to varying levels of development in the PS and National Disaster Offices (NDOs), coupled with their needs and economic realities. In addition to the onsite support provided for the activities completed, there have been many instances where the RTST has provided remote (offsite) assistance. These have included: review of documents, circulating models, guidelines and templates.

Initiatives undertaken by the RTST are generally guided by standards and guidelines that already exist. This has made the facilitation of support more efficient and effective in some areas, including: plans review and development, CDM legislation and policy, exercise evaluation, and ICT assessments and enhancements.



RTST IN ACTION





1. Antigua and Barbuda - Regional Urban Search and Rescue Instructor, Abdias Samuels, (standing) provides guidance to participants as they practice how to move safely over rubble.

2. Claudine Roberts, RTST Community Disaster Planning Specialist ready for training in the fields.

3. (First Row Left) RTST Team Leader, Brigadier General (Retired) Earl Arthurs with Participants and instructors at the Basic Land Search and Rescue (LSAR) training course for instructors in Suriname.

4. St Kitts/Nevis – Donna Pierre, RTST Mitigation and Preparedness Specialist (Front Row, Second Right) with participants at the Tsunami Working Group Meeting in Nevis.

5. St Kitts/Nevis – Claudine Roberts, RTST Community Disaster Planning Specialist (Right) looks on as a Community Volunteers learn how to use a fire hose as part of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training.

6. St. Vincent and the Grenadines - Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training – Volunteers practice carrying an injured person.

7. Suriname - Basic Land Search and Rescue (LSAR) Training Course – Learning the art of Rappelling.

8. Basic Land Search and Rescue (LSAR) Training Course for Instructors - Learning the art of Rappelling.



A Snap Shot of Benefits to Participating States

Key to the success of the RTST interventions is the evidence of sustainability in the Participating States. A few of these are detailed below:



1. ANTIGUA & BARBUDA:

Successfully conducted two (2) training courses in Urban Search & Rescue Light Level which benefitted from RTST coordination. The course also utilized equipment, kit and training materials provided by the RTST. 60 persons from the military, police and fire departments completed the training and they were fully utilized during Exercise TRADEWINDS, which was held in Antigua and Barbuda during June 2014.



2 BAHAMAS:

An assessment of the ICT infrastructure at NEMA was conducted by the ICT Support Specialist and a report with key recommendations was submitted. As a direct result, the RTST provided follow up funding to assist in the erection of a Telecommunications Mast.



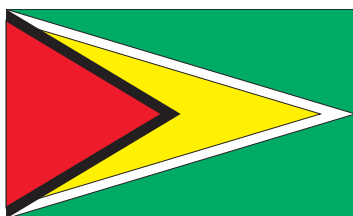
3. BARBADOS:

Trained 20 Emergency Telecommunications Operators on the Basic Emergency Telecommunications Course utilizing their three (3) Local Facilitators. These facilitators were mentored by the RTST Consultant during two (2) previous workshops. Additionally, training materials developed by the RTST, including a Draft Emergency Telecommunications Manual for Barbados, were also utilised.



4. DOMINICA:

Delivered Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training in March, 2014 using facilitators and supervisors who were trained and mentored by the RTST in August/September 2013. Kit, equipment and training materials provided previously during two RTST interventions were also utilized. 55 volunteers are now trained and equipped for emergency response within their communities.



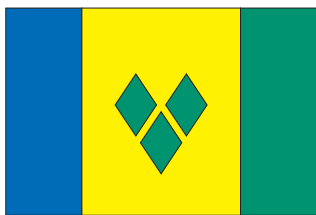
5. GUYANA:

Successfully conducted Exercise Flood Gate in November 2013 - a national disaster response exercise. The RTST provided guidance for the exercise planning, evaluated the exercise and submitted an evaluation report with recommendations.



6. ST. KITTS AND NEVIS:

Established a Tsunami Working Group in March 2014 and developed their Tsunami Protocols with support from the RTST. They were able to participate in CARIBWAVE 2014 later in March. Nevis conducted CERT training and executed an exercise for over 100 community volunteers utilizing the RTST/CDEMA training materials, facilitators trained by CDEMA and guidance from the RTST.



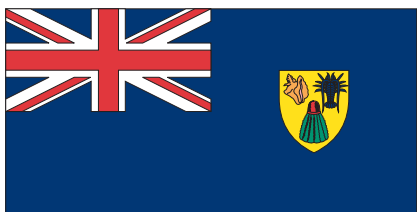
7. ST VINCENT & THE GRENADINES:

An assessment of the ICT infrastructure at NEMO was conducted by the ICT Support Specialist and a report with key recommendations was submitted. As a result, an ICT Officer was appointed for one year, in the first instance, to manage the ICT assets in NEMO.



8. SURINAME:

Has established a National Search and Rescue Working Group which is chaired by the National Coordination Center for Disaster Relief (NCCR). The Working Group was instrumental in the establishment, this year, of the Land Search & Rescue Centre. With the support from the RTST, Suriname was able to conduct a Basic LSAR training Course utilizing local instructors.



9. TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS:

Completed two CERT Training interventions using Training Materials developed by the RTST and a regional facilitator trained by CDEMA.

Strengthening Risk Management Capabilities in National Disaster Offices

When CDERA transitioned to CDEMA one of the key changes was the inclusion of Disaster Loss Reduction into its mandate. This called for more focused interventions that addressed components residing within the Risk Management framework – namely Mitigation and Preparedness. Participating States received technical assistance with either the overall Disaster Risk Reduction programming areas or specific activities.

Two key areas that received support from the Mitigation and Preparedness Specialist are the technical reviews of Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Policies and support for the adaptation of the model CDM Legislation. These two instruments are regarded as critical in setting the stage for greater acceptance and sustainability of a more integrated approach to Risk Management. As such, a number of Participating States utilised this facility, made possible to them via targeted funding through the CDM Harmonization Implementation Programme (HIP), to develop and implement both Policy and Legislation.

Other supporting activities included the development and review of plans to ensure the existence of standards which can be re-visited and tested credibly for progress or challenges. These were inclusive of National Emergency Management Plans, Sector Specific Response Plans and Hazard Specific Plans. Further, there was also technical assistance provided to developing Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures that can guide effective operations in times of emergencies.

Additionally, given that there are synergies among the various components or areas within Disaster Risk Management, Mitigation and Preparedness activities often linked with Community Disaster Preparedness missions; and, at times, with Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Countries receiving technical assistance in this area include: Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, St. Kitts & Nevis and Turks & Caicos Islands.

Funding and Future Interventions

RTST interventions have amounted to over US \$400,000. This has been supported through the Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under the Comprehensive Disaster Management Harmonised Implementation Programme Phase 1 (CDM HIP). This pool of funds has contributed to the administration of the mechanism, including payment of salaries and travel expenses of the Team. DFAT's contribution to the RTST spanned the period December 2012-August 2014.

Interventions have also been facilitated through the United States Agency for International Development/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), the Enhancing Resilience to Reduce Vulnerability in the Caribbean (ERC) Project funded by the Italian Civil Protection Department and activities being implemented through the Country Directed Fund of the CDM-HIP. In addition to DFAT, CDM HIP has been financially supported through international partners such as the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Government of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD).

The RTST has opened the door to a new and innovative way for CDEMA to provide the kind of technical support that PSs have been requesting for over ten years. It has shown that dedicated country-support facilitated through the RTST has allowed for the provision of better predictability, access and reliability for support to countries for activities within their work programs.

Sustaining this mechanism is important to the CDEMA Coordinating Unit as they prepare to drive the implementation of the 2014-2024 CDM Strategy, which begins in September, 2014.

RTST MEMBERS



EMERGENCY OPERATIONS SPECIALIST & TEAM LEADER

Brigadier (Retired) Earl Arthurs, Emergency Operations Specialist (Belize National)

BG (R) Earl Arthurs is a Disaster Management Specialist working with the CDEMA for nine years. His responsibilities include contingency planning and exercises; and providing front line disaster response to support CDEMA's eighteen (18) Participating States. Further he provides technical assistance, guidance and direction on response, emergency operations and recovery issues to the CDEMA PS and the CDEMA CU. General Arthurs is a former Chief of Staff of the Belize Defence Force and National Disaster Coordinator for Belize. He has been working with the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) and acts as a liaison between CDEMA the Regional Security System, United States Southern Command and the disciplined forces in the region. In the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake in 2010, BG Arthurs was deployed there as the CARICOM Special Coordinator for the regional response. BG Arthurs also has the responsibility to lead and coordinate the activities of the RTST.



MITIGATION & PREPAREDNESS SPECIALIST

Donna M. Pierre (Trinidad and Tobago National)

Ms Donna M. Pierre joined the team on October 21, 2013. Her qualifications include a MBA as well as a MSc (Sociology) from the University of the West Indies. She also holds certificates in Disaster Risk Management, Project Management, Logistics Management and Shelter Management and has attended numerous other disaster management courses. Her experience includes stints with ODPM Trinidad & Tobago, and Civil Defence Commission in Guyana and as a consultant on a number of disaster risk reduction projects in the region. Ms Pierre focuses on strengthening of the preparedness and mitigation components of national programmes. This has included consideration of Disaster Risk Management and climate change issues and critical, core disaster mitigation and preparedness priorities in support of the establishment of the CDM national programme in Participating States.



COMMUNITY DISASTER PLANNING SPECIALIST

Mrs Claudine Roberts (Dominica National)

In April 2013, Mrs. Claudine Roberts, a veteran in community work, joined the RTST. She has over seventeen years experience as a Community Worker with the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development in Dominica and has also been providing training to communities nationally and regionally in several areas, including Disaster Management.

As the Community Disaster Planning Specialist for the RTST, Mrs. Roberts liaises and maintains a close working relationship with National Disaster Offices and associated Government departments in CDEMA PS, to enhance the national infrastructure for building community resilience. She also liaises with civil society and other stakeholders at the regional level to strengthen linkages with national mechanisms as appropriate.



INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SPECIALIST

Mr. Atiba Morris (Trinidad and Tobago National)

Mr. Atiba Morris has over eight years of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) experience. He has spent five years in the field of Information Technology and three years in Telecommunications Technology, including voice and data solutions. Moreover, he is experienced in the area of network administration which encapsulates server-side technology, email management, IT security and storage.

Mr. Morris provides leadership to the CDEMA CU in the area of internal LAN Management and the expansion of Information and Communication Technologies to manage the Comprehensive Disaster Management process throughout the CDEMA System. His responsibilities also include leadership in the elaboration and implementation of the ICT policy for the CDEMA CU, ICT assessments and recommendations for improving ICT capability levels of Participating States and facilitating training on equipment usage.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING SPECIALIST

Ms. Gayle Drakes (Barbados National)

Ms Gayle Drakes qualifications include a M Sc in Natural Resource and Environmental Management (Climate Change) and a B Sc in Chemistry, both from the UWI, Cave Hill. She is also a trained facilitator in Results Based Management and Disaster Risk Reduction.

She has over ten years experience in education and training and more than five years in project management. During her engagement with CDEMA, over the last four years, she has functioned as the CU's internal Country Focal Point for the Southern Sub-Region and provided direct support to the Education and Civil Society Sector Sub-Committees of the CDM Coordination & Harmonization Council. These have provided her with a good perspective on the needs and priorities of CDEMA Participating States.

As Education and Training Specialist, Ms Drakes will be responsible for the coordination, design and implementation of CDM education and training programmes in support of capacity building within Participating States and the Coordinating Unit. She will also collaborate with other members of the RTST and development partners in promoting standards and competencies for Disaster Risk Reduction training in the CDEMA.

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