

Role of CIMH in centralized data management

Kailas Narayan and Judy Padmore related that the CIMH was established in 1967 by a UNDP project for the training of meteorologists from CARICOM. Management of the institute was subsequently handed over to its 16 CARICOM countries. In 1982, based on the determination of needs of CARICOM countries, training in hydrology was added through another UNDP project. CIMH trains technicians at two levels: eight-month technical course and the eighteen-month certificate program.

In terms of data storage, the first attempt to assemble regional data in hydrology was for a publication of data from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). A recurring problem of data collection in the region, which hampers its centralized collection, is the high occurrence of equipment washout, due to storms and floods. Through a British Development Division project, five countries, one of which was Grenada, received the Hydata software. This software proved to be problematic as it was cumbersome. The system still exists at CIMH, however it is not reliable.

In its mandate, CIMH has an arrangement that all member countries are to supply them with data for storage, with individual countries able to apply restrictions to access. This arrangement was mainly intended as a back-up system. Countries must come to the realization that data are valuable, and that the value is even higher than the cost. CIMH also provides the service of data processing for countries that do not have a service or the resources to process their own data.

He ended by stating that CARIWIN is installing equipment to generate data in Grenada. The major recommendation for the success of this water information system is that one agency be named responsible for the equipment, for collecting the data and for processing the data. This will require continued maintenance of the equipment after the life of the project.