

Informational Primer

Geographic Scope:	12 English-Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago
Support Area:	Transparency/MRV
Project Duration:	Establishing a new permanent regional institution, first 5 years funding secured (through July 2023)
Implementing Partners:	Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI) [Project lead] UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre, St. George's University, Grenada (STG-RCC) UNDP/UNEP Global Support Programme (GSP) Windward Isles Research and Education Foundation (WINDREF)
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Summary:

- Under the Paris Agreement, countries will be required to submit detailed data and supporting information every two years as a Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). To achieve this, countries are working to rapidly develop comprehensive climate measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems.
- The establishment of MRV systems provides an additional challenge for small Caribbean nations because systems for climate change transparency are prone to economies of scale.
- The Caribbean Cooperative MRV Hub ("MRV Hub") is a new regional institution designed to support Member Countries in their efforts to: improve MRV systems, build Paris Agreement reporting capabilities, and enhance their domestic evidence-based policymaking. A key design innovation of the MRV Hub is that it will function as a true learning and mentoring cooperative.

Supported by:



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- The MRV Hub is funded for five years of collaborative work, mentoring, and tool development. The only contribution expected from countries is expert time and commitment to building this new empowering regional institution.
- To achieve its mission, activities of the MRV Hub include multi-country working sessions, bilateral mentoring trips, training sessions, fellows and interns, tool and guidance development, and strengthening data management systems. The MRV Hub is flexibly designed to adapt to evolving country needs for climate transparency.

What is climate change MRV?

Climate change measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) is a broad term for systems that support collection, management, analysis, use, and assurance of climate change-related data. Together, this suite of activities, components, and infrastructure (see table below) comprises the “MRV system.”

Table 1. Pieces of the MRV system

MRV Activities	MRV Infrastructure
Building institutionalized processes	Trained experts, scientific knowledge, sectoral expertise, operational and process plans, educational systems
Collecting data and supporting information	Legal, regulatory, and data collection and sharing frameworks
Analyzing data	Data and information management tools (e.g., databases), decision support tools
Documenting and reporting	Technical standards (rules, codes), reporting formats & requirements
Conducting independent reviews of information reported by others	Organizational and management processes, including resources

For UNFCCC reporting, MRV for greenhouse gases (GHGs) is the most advanced. This information is reported in national GHG emission and removal inventories. As the Paris Agreement elaborates, there are also enhanced transparency requirements for mitigation actions, adaptation, and support (e.g., climate finance).

In addition to streamlined national reporting to the UNFCCC, there are numerous domestic benefits to a functional MRV system. It enables evidence-based policymaking

and implementation for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Improved transparency will unlock additional climate finance, especially results-based climate finance.

What are country transparency needs under the Paris Agreement?

The Paris Agreement uses the term “transparency” to refer to MRV systems and processes (decision 1/CP.21, p.98). These two terms can be used interchangeably.

Transparency is at the heart of the Paris Agreement. By sharing detailed information on progress made, countries accelerate higher ambition from one another, steering the world towards the collective aim of limiting global warming to 1.5 C over pre-industrial temperatures by 2100. Transparency provides an opportunity for Caribbean nations to continue the leadership they have demonstrated in the negotiations.

To achieve this, the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement involves greater detail and frequency of reporting. In the past, developing countries have struggled to report every 4 years; the ETF requires reporting every two years, providing at minimum a complete inventory of greenhouse gases and tracking key indicators for NDC progress. The ETF involves higher methodological standards than developing countries have faced previously. For most developing countries, this entails a shift from discrete project funding for a specific UNFCCC national communication or other submission, to developing nationally-embedded data monitoring and reporting programs.

What is the Caribbean Cooperative MRV Hub?

The Caribbean Cooperative MRV Hub (“the MRV Hub”) is a new regional institution to support national climate change data systems in 12 English-speaking Caribbean countries. These systems will support Paris Agreement reporting and evidence-based climate policymaking.

Through cooperative activities (outlined below), the MRV Hub will enhance national MRV systems, and support ETF reporting of GHG inventories, NDC progress tracking, mitigation assessment (including projections and scenarios), and data management tools. By improving technical capacity, the MRV Hub aims to: prepare Caribbean countries for Paris Agreement reporting, improve country access to climate finance, enhance national data systems (making reporting less burdensome and faster for countries), enable domestic (non-reporting) uses of data, improve data quality and analysis, and train and specialize country experts. By regionally-pooling expert capacities and institutional arrangements, the MRV Hub will function as a true learning and mentoring cooperative and produce high-quality national climate reporting outputs.

Structure:

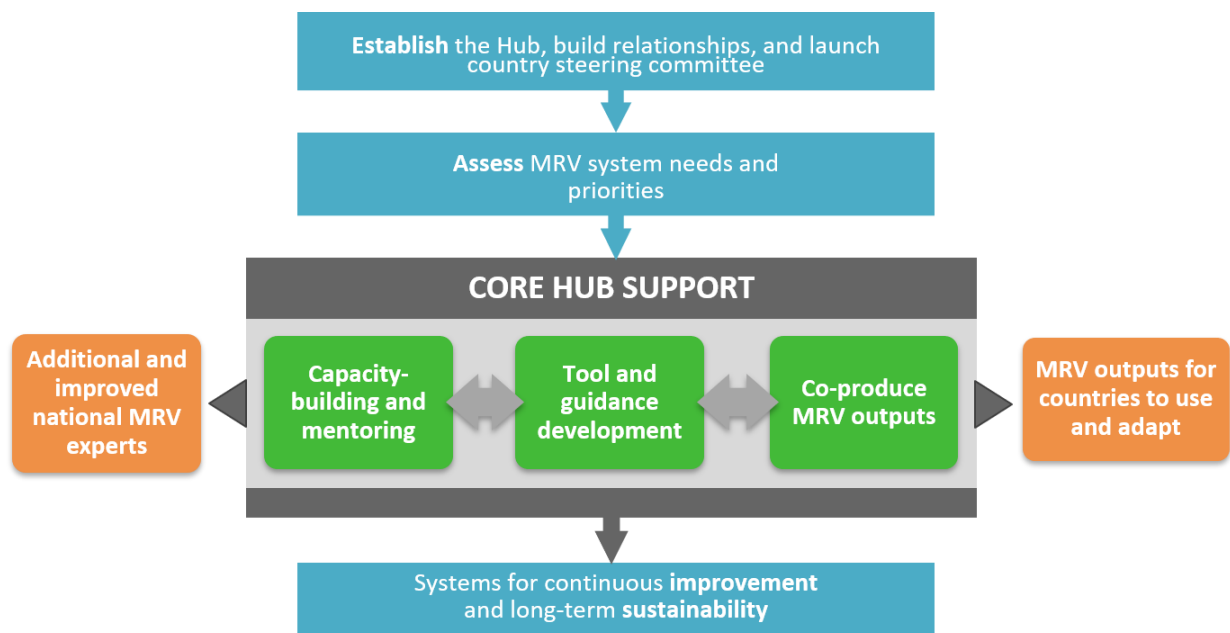
The MRV Hub is a partnership between the GHG Management Institute (technical partner/prime), the UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre for the Caribbean, and the

Windward Isles Research and Education Foundation (“WINDREF,” our regional anchor). UNDP/UN Environment Global Support Programme is an additional supporting partner. The MRV Hub is funded for five years through the International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The MRV Hub office and working space are physically based at St. George’s University (SGU), in St. George’s, Grenada. The MRV Hub will be directed by a Steering Committee and feature an Annual Meeting of all participating countries. Additional mechanisms for country ownership are outlined below.

Goals:

The mission of the MRV Hub will be achieved through six intermediate goals:

- Goal 1. Establish the MRV Hub as a permanent institution in the region
- Goal 2. Assess country needs and priorities and build into workplan of the MRV Hub
- Goal 3. Increase human capacity of Caribbean technical MRV and mitigation experts
- Goal 4. Conduct MRV Hub working sessions and share transparent and complete GHG data and documentation
- Goal 5. Develop and disseminate tools and guidance and promote use by countries
- Goal 6. Create a generalized sustainability and replicability MRV Hub package and actively present to other countries and regions with similar conditions



Activities:

Multi-country working sessions

Country experts and Hub staff will meet for multi-country “working sessions” at the MRV Hub, conducting collaborative work on specific sectors and subjects. The working sessions will address shared capacity needs and priorities identified across several countries. During these working sessions, experts will draft outputs to submit to participating countries that can be used in national reporting, planning, and policy-making. For example, a working session could focus on energy-sector projections and monitoring plans for tracking NDC targets, involving participation by five countries who have identified this as a priority.

Bilateral mentoring trips

The MRV Hub experts will conduct rapid-response trips to participating countries to address country-specific technical issues. This will allow the MRV Hub to address acute, individual country transparency needs through technical assistance and mentoring. For example, if one country needs specific support related to their forest classification system, this need could be addressed through a mentoring trip, in which the MRV Hub will enlist one or two relevant experts to provide support. These trips will also allow Hub staff and expertise to meet with numerous country stakeholders at once.

Training Caribbean experts

The MRV Hub will train Caribbean country experts in fundamental MRV system operations, sectoral analysis, data management, GHG emission inventory development, and ETF reporting needs. Training will be provided through in-person training workshops, learning-by-doing and practicum workshops, mentoring (in-person and remote), and GHGMI’s online course portfolio. Available online courses are focused on the 2006 IPCC Guidelines and MRV systems in all sectors.

Tools and guidance development

The MRV Hub will develop interactive tools and guidance documents, based on identified country needs and priorities. These tools could take the form of calculation spreadsheets, data collection templates and protocols, procedural manuals, or guidance materials. These tools will be sector-specific and support efficiencies and standardization in data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Databases and information management systems

Many countries have identified digital databases and information management systems as a key priority in developing their MRV systems. A data portal for storage and archiving maintained by the MRV Hub to securely manage national data will create continuity and greatly improve both efficiency and analysis quality for those member countries that wish to use a shared system. The MRV Hub will support countries with country-specific databases and other ICT/digital tools for “next generation” transparency.

Fellowship and internship program

The MRV Hub will host paid fellowships and internships for Caribbean country practitioners. The fellowship program will allow Caribbean country experts to pursue applied research topics or hone their skills as trainers. The internship program will allow young practitioners and current students to develop their transparency expertise.

2019 Workplan:

During the 2019 calendar year, the MRV Hub will:

- *Convene a Hub launch meeting, inviting participation by 12 countries (completed)*
- Assess MRV status in 12 countries
- Conclude MOUs with 12 countries
- Conduct site visits for 12 countries
- Host 3 multi-country working sessions, focused initially on fundamental capacity (e.g., 2006 IPCC Guidelines)
- Develop 2 transparency tools
- Provide continuous remote mentorship and technical assistance (as requested)
- Coordinate with other regional and country projects to find synergies and efficiencies for countries
- Establish the MRV Hub Steering Committee and convene 2 meetings for it

Country participation:

The 12 English-speaking Caribbean countries invited to participate in the MRV Hub are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. These countries can become Member Countries of the MRV Hub by entering into an MOU with the GHG Management Institute.



Innovative model for technical work:

This project's central innovation is the MRV Hub model of regionally pooling institutional arrangements and human expertise in a multi-country cooperative model to enhance climate change transparency systems and reporting outcomes.

This will create economies of scale to develop more and better country experts, enhanced climate data systems, efficient reporting outcomes, and stronger climate change management approaches for reduced cost and time.

Country-owned and tailored to national priorities:

The MRV Hub is designed as a country-driven technical assistance and institution building project. Participating countries will select the technical work they wish to conduct through the MRV Hub. Distinct mechanisms to ensure country ownership are programmed into the structure of the MRV Hub. These include Memoranda of Understanding, a steering committee, voluntary participation in capacity-building activities, country-designated focal points, and an all-country annual meeting. These mechanisms will allow countries to guide the direction of the MRV Hub, ensure the nationally-appropriate participation of experts, and guarantee that Hub outputs truly address country needs.

The work performed through the MRV Hub will be driven by national strategies and policy goals. National priorities will be determined through rigorous needs and priorities assessments in consultation with country stakeholders.



Empowering national experts:

The work of the MRV Hub will be carried out first and foremost by national experts, with support by regional and international experts. Country-nominated national experts and mentors will co-develop institutional arrangements, prepare national data, estimate emissions, develop projections, and draft content for policymaking and international reporting.

The MRV Hub will not diminish the critical role of national technical experts. Rather, the MRV Hub will expand the number and increase the specialization of these experts. As a regional cooperative, the MRV Hub will provide expert training, mentoring, and institutional support to further enhance country technical work. The MRV Hub will help to “fill in the gaps” where needed and empower national experts to expand and improve their MRV outputs.

Expertise available:

Through the network of the participating partners, the MRV Hub brings international and regional expertise in all activities, components, and sectors. Sectoral expertise includes electricity, transport, industrial processes, agriculture, forestry and land-use, waste, as well as adaptation and climate finance. In addition to sector-specific carbon accounting expertise, the available disciplinary expertise of Hub mentors includes engineering, economics, policy analysis, pedagogy, and digital information management systems, among other areas. Many experts in the MRV Hub mentor network established the MRV systems in operation in their home countries.

Gender-responsive:

The MRV Hub is committed to integrating the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (decision 3/CP.23) into its activities. The MRV Hub will track gender balance, increase gender parity in its activities, empower female MRV experts, and remove barriers to women's participation in climate change MRV activities. The MRV Hub will apply the Gender Responsive National Communications Toolkit, developed by the UNDP Gender Team and the UNDP/UNEP Global Support Programme.

Sustainability and up-scaling:

The MRV Hub will be structured for long-term sustainability beyond the duration of the project, including processes for iterative improvement. As a cost-effective, regional approach to cooperatively prepare data and reporting, the MRV Hub will be documented in an MRV Hub Framework so that countries may continue Hub operations, if they so choose, beyond the five-year project timeline.

This project is part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI). The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) supports this initiative on the basis of a decision adopted by the German Bundestag.