

Jamaica to share Metadata Management Experiences at Eastern Caribbean Geospatial Workshop

The Ministry of Housing, Environment and Water, National Spatial Data Management Division has been invited to participate in the Eastern Caribbean Open Source Geospatial Data Sharing and Management Workshop being hosted by the Government of Grenada from October 6-7, 2011.

The objective of this workshop is to determine the availability of national and regional geospatial data to support evidence based decision making to increase climate resilience and reduce risks related to adverse effects of climate change in the Eastern Caribbean.

The National Spatial Data Management Division (NSDMD) has responsibility for managing Jamaica's national spatial data infrastructure, and has been invited as a regional speaker to share its experiences in the preparation of its geospatial metadata policy, inclusive of the lessons learnt, achievements, applications and collaborative efforts. Jamaica will be represented by Ms Terri-Ann Campbell, GIS Analyst at the Forestry Department, formerly of the NSDMD where she was responsible for the metadata management.

In 2006 Jamaica's Cabinet approved geospatial metadata guidelines and guiding principles. A special metadata harvesting project co-funded under the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure small grant programme was implemented in five (5) Government of Jamaica (GOJ) entities. In furtherance of metadata management, technical workshops have been conducted and the NSDMD has been engendering a culture of metadata management. Metadata is "data about data" and is a summary document providing information as to who collected and who distributes data, what is the subject, when the data was collected, where it was collected, why it was collected, how it was collected, and how much it cost, among other things.

Metadata facilitates effective and efficient management of data resources; the maintenance of the integrity of the data in terms of stating the accuracy, reliability, and how it can be used. It allows for data discovery, meaning information is not lost when employees leave the organization and entities do not forget how the data was captured or processed. Most importantly, metadata aids in the reduction in the cost and time spent on acquiring data. For additional information, visit the Land Information Council of Jamaica (LICJ) website at www.licj.org.jm .

Approximately twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) participants from the OECS countries are slated to participate in this two (2) day workshop. Jamaica has the enviable record of having a government body, the National Spatial Data Management Division, that is charged with national GIS responsibilities and the Land Information Council of Jamaica which becomes twenty (20) years in 2012, which is made up of both public and private entities that share the common vision of providing and making accessible geospatial data to facilitate informed decision making in all spheres of our lives.

Jamaica has achieved a number of significant milestones in the creation of its GIS infrastructure in the areas of policy development, data creation, human resource development and best practices, which are now being recognized and hope to be emulated by other jurisdictions across the Caribbean.