

THE BARBADOS METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE

A PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING (Draft) by David G. Brooks

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Change of Ministry in Charge and other matters

The Barbados Meteorological Service (BMS) – sometimes referred to as the Met Office (MO) - should be removed from under the direct control of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and put under the Ministry of Defence & Security (MoDS), which normally is part of the Prime Minister's (PM's) portfolio. There should still be direct liaison with The Ministry of Agriculture, The Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and of course general communications with other related ministries as deemed necessary, namely the Ministry of Innovation Science and Smart Technology and also the Business/Commercial ministries as they are made up at any one time, however being under the purview of the Minister in Charge of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment should cover all other bases.

There should also be some consideration to having the Met Office operate as Business Entity that can generate some revenue from its operations and/or products, but I would not suggest making that jump just yet unless there is STRICT oversight and proper rules (laws), procedures and processes put in place to ensure its continual operation and optimum standards, including complete transparency and accountability.

Therefore going with the initial change in mentioned, either the Minister of Defence & Security (i.e. PM) will take charge of the overseeing of the Met Office directly, or maybe more practically this charge could be given to a Minister of State within the Prime Minister's Office, but the ultimate responsibility and accountability lies with the Minister of Defence & Security – i.e. the PM (normally, as mentioned).

The reason for this proposed change is that while the weather has a direct impact of agriculture and fisheries on a periodic basis, which is important and thus the recommended and continued direct liaison with the MoA, it (the weather) has much farther reaching consequences to the society and the general infrastructure of the country, which if impacted in a major way would require action from the Defence & Security departments of Government. Subsequently, there would be financial and economical fallout too, so it makes sense to put the Met Office in this forefront aspect so that it may be allowed the opportunity for an increased budget which could mitigate against serious financial problems down the line should disaster occur.

Inclusion of a Management Council/Board to oversee the Met Office

The Met Office should be overseen by a Council (**Met Office Council - MOC**), not unlike a board of Directors, but more like a **Guidance/Advisory/Governance Council** that would consist of representatives from a diverse group of persons from related or concerned organisations (private, public, NGO, etc.) that make up an overall representation of the WHOLE society, community and citizens of Barbados, as may be possible.

The Met Office Council's (MOC) role, responsibility and mandate will be to ...

To provide advice and assistance to the Minister in charge for:

1. Setting objectives and policy within in the Met Office, including its responsibilities to the Public;
2. Approving strategy and plans for achieving these objectives;
3. Public Relations and basic education for the public on weather issues and data;
4. Raise external awareness of the Met Office, their work, and to build beneficial external relationships;
5. Provision for on-demand weather press/media production, with emphasis on Audio/Video settings;
6. Create and maintain an Internet presence at ALL times, with up-to-date information, imagery, etc.
7. Keep abreast with changes in technology or at least an annual general review, well prior to June;

8. Review of Met Office annual performance including interim reviews as deemed necessary;
9. Be able to call Internal Enquiries as deemed necessary;
10. Be PROACTIVE in all of the above endeavours and any other relevant issues on the public's behalf.
11. Provide and facilitate Sub-Committee functions as prescribed, consider and act upon reports from such sub-committees, whose appointment are outlined further on (under Sub-Committees).
12. Provide general guidance in all Meteorological matters involving Barbados and any of its regional and international responsibilities, none the least these days the effects of Climate Change which has a diverse genesis and involve non-metrological (non-scientific) factors, thus an ability for wide "conversation or dialogue" with everyone.

MOC Structure

Chaired by the Minister in Charge (MoDS), or his designate chosen from either a Minister of State within the Prime Minister's Office, the Defence & Security Permanent Secretary or his/her Deputy, the remainder of the MOC will consist of persons chosen from within the following Ministries or Organisations:

Note: A Deputy Chairman will be chosen from the organisations or members below, but shall exclude any Met Office personnel for the purpose of transparency, accountability and mainly impartiality. Also, said Deputy shall chair meetings in the absence of the Chairman.

- Director of the Met Office (or his/her Deputy)
- One Senior Met Office Forecaster, other than the Director or Deputy.
- Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology
- Department of Emergency Management
- Ministry of Information
- Barbados Private Sector Association (Private Sector)
- Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association Representative (Hotel/Tourism Sector)
- **Minimum of four (4) persons; maximum of six (6) persons** appointed by the Minister in Charge, after consultation with and/or chosen from among, but not limited to the:
 - Local Fishing, Boating (Domestic, Commercial & Game Fishing), Farming or Livestock communities;
 - Local Insurance Corporate community;
 - Local community that has experience in general in relevant matters & technologies ^{Note 2}.
 - The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, or his/her appointed designate from a sitting member of the Opposition (House or Senate)

This will ensure a minimum of Twelve (12) and a maximum of Fourteen (14) persons from both the operational

- Utility Services Representatives ^{Note 1} (Invited, as needed for direct input and consultation) – Electrical Power (BL&P); Water (BWA), Natural Gas (NPC), Communications (C&W/LIME, Digicel, TeleBarbados, etc.) – Note most of these and others will be covered under DEM, including civilian assistance and communications, but a representative should nominated from each.
- Other invited guest(s) as may be deemed necessary and/or providing beneficial advise or recommendations, as per the MOC's mandate or prudently otherwise. Occasionally The Principal (or a Senior Designate) of the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology and/or Caribbean Meteorology Organisation (CMO) and/or World Meteorology Organisation (WMO) representative would also be welcome.

*Note 1 Any such Utility (Guest) Reps. **must** be included in any meeting just prior to the commencement of the Hurricane Season (Jun.-Nov.), which would normally be the Second*

Quarter (Q2) meeting of the MOC, if that is not possible then a special pre-season (i.e. pre-June) meeting must be convened to hear their concerns and/or recommendations. It is also strongly recommended that they be included in a post-season meeting (Q4) and any Special/Emergency meetings during hurricane season or any serious events making impact.

Note 2: This can be any citizen or resident who is aptly qualified and/or experienced in that they have reasonable insight into matters on weather, be it amateur or otherwise, so that they can offer a balanced opinion in conjunction with those of the professional side within the service itself.

Recommended Quorum for the MOC should be at least eight (8) council members.

Recommended Minimum Meetings per year should be four (4), with one scheduled each quarter, and with the two (2) additional meetings, one (1) just before the Hurricane Season (no later than the end of April) and one (1) just after (no later than the end of December/January). There should be provision for Special/Emergency meetings to be provided for when needed or called by members of the MOC.

All Council Members should have full access, upon request, at any time to the BMS facilities at Grantley Adams International Airport (GAIA) and to the Doppler radar site at Castle Grant in St. Joseph and any other sites. This will ensure full transparency and state of readiness at all times.

Sub-Committee(s):

There should be at least two (2) functioning Sub-Committees under the MOC as follows:

Metrological and Technology Committee

(These do not have include members of the MOC unless specifically mentioned)

Chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the MOC or voted from within the MOC (all eligible), and

- Two (2) BMS Forecasters – One (1) General and/or Radar Specialist and One (1) Hurricane Specialist.
- Representative from the Department of Emergency Management (DEM).
- Representative from Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH).
- Information Technology Specialist with appropriate experience (database and/or imagery).
- Representative from the Ministry of Innovation Science and Smart Technology.

Public Relations and Community Committee

(These do not have include members of the MOC unless specifically mentioned)

Chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the MOC or voted from within the MOC (all eligible), and

- One (1) BMS Forecasters – from General or Radar Specialist or Hurricane Specialist.
- Representative from the Ministry of Information or Govt Information Service.
- Representative from either the Barbados Private Sector or Hotel and Tourism Associations.
- Representative from the Ministry of International Transport.
- Representative from the Ministry of Transport, Works & Maintenance.
- Representative from Barbados Citizens Radio Association.

These sub-committees will be tasked by the main MOC and should meet no less than four (4) times per year, or more frequently as events may dictate.