



Media Systems – Enhancing delivery, improving awareness, protecting lives

Voluntary Cooperation Programme – assistance with media systems

Through UK VCP, more than 40 developing countries have been provided with mini-Media Systems that enable the National Met. Service (NMS) to prepare their own television broadcasts and forecasts for newspapers and websites. In addition, VCP has also provided support in terms of the continuing need for spares and maintenance for these systems as well as ongoing training for weather presenters and technical support staff.

Media systems are an important element for public weather services in developing countries, with benefits including disaster warning, public awareness and education, national ownership of the information, use of appropriate culture and language, and - significantly - visibility of the NMS in national government. In some cases this enhanced visibility has led to additional funding through sponsorship of the broadcast.

In April 2009, Dave Robinson, Met Office's Media Designer, travelled to Guyana to assist in getting weather broadcasts on TV in Guyana for the very first time.

As the Met Office's Media Designer, Dave has been creating and designing weather forecasts for 20 years. His work can be seen every day on GMTV, ITV and Channel 4.

Dave joined the VCP team four years ago to help developing countries design superior graphics for their own weather forecasts. He's currently introducing many of them to new design software based on the same programme used by the Met Office — WeatherEye.

"It's a complicated programme, but with a simple user interface," Dave explains. "The idea is that, by introducing professional quality and locally based visuals, the forecast will connect better with its viewers and get more people tuning in, which could ultimately improve the country's productivity."

Nowhere is this more apparent than Guyana, South America. As a country with low-lying coastal regions, high tides and storms have a direct and often disastrous effect on the population in Guyana. However, getting a national weather broadcast on TV has proven difficult — until now.

In late April, Dave arrived in Guyana to introduce the country's Hydrometeorological Office to WeatherEye and train the Hydromet staff to produce TV weather broadcasts. The second stage involved training staff from Hydromet and NCN, the state national television network, to present, for the first time in Guyana, their brand new TV weather forecasts.



The results have been impressive. It's taken a lot of enthusiasm and hard work to get the new WeatherEye TV broadcasts up and running in just three weeks.

"They've gone down a storm. It's big news in Guyana," says Dave, "one stranger came and shook my hand in the airport as I was leaving because he recognised my face from my television interview about the programme launch. He was very excited about what we'd been doing. Our work as part of the VCP has made a big difference to the people of Guyana and will continue to do so in the months and years to come."