

Conclusions and recommendations

The participants in the first Steering Committee Meeting of the Central America Flash Flood Guidance System (CAFFG), representatives of the 7 countries participating in the project in their capacity as experts in meteorological and/or hydrological forecasting, having examined the technical characteristics of the System, the history and current status of the CAFFG project, and discussed the various aspects related to how to improve its use in the Region, have agreed on the following:

- The CAFFG has provided a number of forecasting tools that have contributed to reducing the loss of life and suffering as well as economic losses in the region.
- The utility of the CAFFG has been increasing progressively, as new versions have been incorporating technological advances.
- However, CAFFG products are not being used optimally in some of the countries, among other reasons due to staff turnover, lack of clarity in the commitments assumed, and lack of knowledge regarding the potential of the System.
- To ensure the sustainability of the CAFFG and raise its status to a regional level, it is necessary to reach agreements on the commitments that the various countries and participating organizations are going to assume, and these agreements should be documented. Due to this, the participants propose that the Steering Committee be the Central American Regional Committee for Water Resources (CRRH), supported by a technical implementation committee composed of the national focal points and their alternates, for which, the proposal will be raised to the CRRH for confirmation.
- Participants will make arrangements upon their return to their respective countries so that their Permanent Representative (or a higher authority) sends a letter of commitment for the CAFFG project to the Secretary General of WMO, designating a focal point and alternate (an operational meteorologist and an operational hydrologist) for all the technical activities related to the project, as well as the institution acting as the National Centre for the CAFFG.
- As the performance of the system improves significantly as more information is available, participants commit to arrange that a spatially distributed reasonable number of their telemetry precipitation stations will report their data in a CSV format in near real time to the Regional Centre, if possible starting before the end of May 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Countries should carefully select their candidates (an operational meteorologist and an operational hydrologist) for the technical training associated with the Flash Flood Hydrometeorologist Training Program, to begin in the near future, and take appropriate action to ensure their proper dedication to the CAFFG, once they have successfully completed it.
- Countries should undertake related project activities, such as conducting periodical verification of system products to increase understanding of System performance in their country, and share such results with the Regional Centre.
- As for the Regional Centre, the participants agreed to continue the current arrangement, i.e. the Costa Rican IMN as the lead responsible for the Regional Centre

and the Environmental Observatory of El Salvador as the alternate responsible, with the long-term objective, and in the knowledge of the current technical limitations with the technology, that the two institutions maintain two mirror versions of the system, for reasons of redundancy. The distribution of responsibilities of the CAFFG Regional Centre between the two institutions will be documented in the Tripartite Cooperation Agreement to be signed with WMO.

- In view of the current situation, a priority activity of the Regional Centre should be the validation of regional simulations of precipitation from the WRF model, to identify persistent biases and proceed with the necessary improvements.

- After being informed of the objectives of the Severe Weather Forecasting Demonstration Project (SWFDP), it is considered that there is interest in starting the implementation process in Central America. To be able to make a decision based on complete information, it is suggested to hold a clarification meeting with support from WMO.