(SLIDE 1)

Morning Everyone.

And thanks to Open Data Watch and IDB for allowing us to present on our proposed project which is called CaribData: developing an ecosystem for Caribbean data-driven resilience.

My name is Ian Hambleton – I'm Professor of Statistics at UWI. My background is mostly in health statistics, and I also run an online data collection Infrastructure across the University. I'll be responsible for the infrastructure and data aspects of our project. And I'm joined by Dr Selvi Jeyaseelan, who is a Research and Project Consultant, and will be responsible for project operations and training.

So we're University Researchers based in the Caribbean, and for more than 25 years now we have been collecting and using Caribbean data to generate evidence for the region.

And we're going to split our presentation into two halves – which are essentially the WHY and the HOW for this project.


(SLIDE 2)

And broadly, using The UWI as our host - as we'll be building a set of resources to enable and champion Caribbean data sharing and data re-use

This ecosystem will include:

- an online infrastructure to enable easy data sharing,
- centralized training, support, and analytics to help increase the regional capacity in data handling,
- and a virtual Caribbean centre to showcase data and champion data re-use.

And Selvi will go into each of these aspects a little later.


(SLIDE 3)

But first – why do we think our project can be important for the region.

So the data industry is moving fast.

Most of us can remember when handling of data used to be a simple affair. Collect it, clean it, use it, store it.

The move towards handling 'big data' – large volumes and varieties of data, collected quickly – is one reason why data handling is becoming more complicated. Data collection is now mostly online. It is sometimes automated, and the associated data cleaning requires us to understand different subject matters and specialist software.

Just as important, data handling infrastructures must now conform to fast-changing regulatory environments, which dictate (among other things) minimal standards of security and participant confidentiality.

And countries across the Caribbean are updating their Data Protection Laws.

A goal of our project is to help Caribbean data professionals keep up with best practice data handling.

(SLIDE 4)

I'm sure that each of you at some point will have received data from someone that was less than perfect.

And it's not too dramatic I think to say that data prepared without best-practice data handling is regularly hard to use, time-consuming to correct, and sometimes unusable.

In my field of health research, it has been estimated that 85 percent of research funding is avoidably wasted. And an important reason for this wastage is inadequate data handling.

For data to be useful in the long term it must be accurate, and the data must be well documented and easily available.

Data that does not meet these basic criteria is stored at institutions across the world, creating what we might call 'data graveyards'. And these graveyards use resources that might be better spent elsewhere.

So another goal of our project is to reduce data wastage across the Caribbean.


(SLIDE 5)

Data availability and accessibility in the Caribbean is limited

Open Data Watch are so important in monitoring the extent of Open Data globally and we're hearing about the Openness score today and next week. So I want to offer you a different example of data accessibility across the Caribbean

The World Bank produces a range of Statistical Indicators, including the availability of data to track the SDGs.


(SLIDE 6)

And here is a graphic of SDG data availability. Each row is a world subregion, and the dots represent the percentage of the SDGs indictors for which data was reported in 2019 as a dark dot and in 2010 as a light dot.

SDG data availability was at 34% for the Caribbean in 2019, down from 38% in 2010. This compares to 57 percent globally in 2019, up from 51% in 2010.

So the Caribbean is struggling a bit to report on the SDGs, but these scores do not necessarily mean that data does not exist.

So a goal of our project is to increase data accessibility across the Caribbean.


(SLIDE 7)

Across the Caribbean, international collaborations are common, with the resulting data often collected and stored using overseas data infrastructures. This is great if it creates high quality data and stores that data securely.

Often though, we hear of examples where data are hosted overseas without a full understanding of long-term data access or the implications for data stewardship. And we see this as a very important risk in the creation of long-term data resources for the region.

And so a goal of our project is to offer a local best-practice data infrastructure to give the region

greater control of its generated data resources, and ensure data-sovereignty for the longer term.

Now, we will never force this infrastructure on those that don't need it – but it will be a robust regional option for those who are interested.


And let me now hand over to Dr Selvi to offer a little more project detail.