



Caribbean Delegation at DEF2023

Trip Report

Decentralised Energy Canada - CanExport Program Canada-Caribbean Microgrid Trade Accelerator 2023/24

Trip Overview

Caribbean Program Participation at the Decentralised Energy Forum (DEF) in Lake Louise, Alberta November 6-7, 2023

A review of the event program illustrates the Caribbean presence in the content. Three Caribbean participants were supported by the CanExport funding for airfare and per diems. Other Caribbean representatives in attendance at the Forum were from the University of Calgary, IRIS Environmental, and EQUUS REA. The three CanExport-supported attendees were featured in panel sessions and actively participated in the networking sessions. They took advantage of opportunities during the scheduled Question and Answer interactions at the conclusion of each session to query Canadian corporate and non-corporate expertise on their experiences and, in turn, sharing examples of Caribbean initiatives. These interactions often focused on lessons learned by the Canadian experts and how these might be applied in both the nation states of the Caribbean and the region. Further, such interactions engendered many follow-on discussions between Canadians and Caribbeans during the informal meal sections, other Forum events and activities (such as hikes on the Lake Louise trails and in-house mixers) designed to foster discussion, and finally, during many spontaneous post-dinner conversions.

More specifically, Caribbean representatives took their place alongside Canadian counterparts in jointly presenting in three of the scheduled sessions: Sustaining Innovation, Energy Resilience, and Investing in Sustainability. To [watch these session recordings go to:](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNQGIB-4TCA_qKrC2p2ui3I2YvQD-3w5w&si=4flVGCzpxTyN08Rf)
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNQGIB-4TCA_qKrC2p2ui3I2YvQD-3w5w&si=4flVGCzpxTyN08Rf

The Sustaining Innovation session focused on how technology developers and prosumers collaborate to enable energy security, reliability, and affordability. The Caribbean presence informed Forum delegates of successes and challenges in such collaborations and the varying extent of such initiatives in nation states and broadly across the Caribbean region. The session explored the challenges facing technology developers in communicating their sustainability value propositions more effectively. It was noted by example that sustainable tourism in the Caribbean was a workable, and successful vector for innovation through collaborative programs and projects for technology developers and prosumers.



The session on Energy Reliance discussed the diverse range of challenges to program and project managers faced by the uniqueness of communities working to improve reliance. Inherent in the make-up of the session panel was the comparison of such challenges met in Caribbean communities and similar challenges met in Canada's north, as articulated by a Canadian First Nation's Grand Chief and the Caribbean representative on the panel.

The Caribbean presence on the panel for the Investing in Sustainability session found common ground with the other three panelists each representing (provincial, a municipal and corporate) Alberta entities pursuing sustainable solutions. The importance of a clear and transparent regulatory regime for sustainable investment to realise the opportunities afforded by decentralised energy was a given as was the (policy and corporate) pull occasioned by a declaration of targets for attaining net zero. There was an Alberta-Caribbean divergence noted regarding the much higher kilowatt per hour cost of energy in the south where most nation states currently rely on imported fossil fuels. In and of itself, this is an economic imperative that Caribbeans are highly motivated to address.

As a final comment it should be noted that all sessions, activities and events, and more informal gatherings were held in a manner that ensured the participation of all Forum participants. This was a goal of Forum organisers and was enabled by the choice of a venue that could accommodate large groupings. No break-out sessions were employed thereby avoiding the time and effort that would be needed by having to return to caucus to inform all delegates, Caribbean and Canadian, of individual panel findings and conclusions.

Caribbean Participants Feedback

Ted Vogel, Caribbean Association for Sustainable Tourism

Thank you again for the invitation to participate in the DEC conference in Lake Louise, this past month. The forum was well run, had some superb presenters and, offered not only offered a better understanding of how DEC and Caribbean energy matters converge, but how they can potentially collaborate, in the near future. The simple, overwhelming impetus for better remote and small grid power solutions and the lead that some entities in Canada are taking can 100% add to opportunities and options for my efforts in the Caribbean and will aid my work with CAST and the Rocky Mountain Institute.

Specifically, the connection to Frederick Morency with Schnieder, Han Stegeman, Head of Grid Innovation at TenneT in the Netherlands and Keith Cleland, Founder and CEO of Aqua-Cell Energy are of great interest to me in looking at resources to bring to Caribbean projects. Also discussions with GLG have started regarding ESG for greening Caribbean resource industry using a portfolio of renewable energy resources.



I am looking forward to continuing working together and I hope we can gather a good response to the Microgrid Trade Mission to the Caribbean in March 2024.

Loreto Duffy-Mayers, Private Financing Advisory Network (PFAN)

I was delighted to accept the invitation from Anouk Kendall President of DEC, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for almost 20 years, during which time we have always kept in touch. Apart from being honored to be invited to participate in a panel on “Sustaining Innovation”, the opportunity to visit the beautiful Lake Louise was an added bonus!

The forum was one of the best organized I have attended and was packed with valuable information and networking opportunities. I also had the pleasure of meeting three of Canada’s leading indigenous leaders: Stephen Kakfwi, former premier of the Northwest Territories and Desmond Bull, Grand Chief of the Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations, and Marie Wilson, former commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). I was extremely impressed by the tremendous relationship that DEC has built with Indigenous leaders.

I gained valuable insight into new technologies i.e., virtual power plants and saltwater flow batteries. I was particularly impressed by the presentation by Aqua-Cell Energy and intend to follow up with Keith Cleland with a view to introducing his product to the Caribbean. I have also had follow-up conversations with my co-panelist Nancy Foran, President & Founder of ESG Partners with a view to collaborating on projects in the Caribbean.

It was a tremendously successful forum, and I learnt a lot, not only about new technologies but new ways of thinking! As Anouk Kendall said in her opening remarks “We don’t know what we don’t know. Many are not yet aware of the deep and rapid transformation our energy systems are undergoing.” This is particularly true of the Caribbean, and we need more opportunities like the DEC Energy Forum to learn what we don’t know!!

Owen Lewis, RMI

The Decentralised Energy Forum 2023 Program November 6 and 7 was two days of uplifting engagement of the recent past, current, and future initiatives, technology, and knowledge transfer at the Fairmont Hotel Lake Louise, Canada.

The forum was structured holistically, starting with “The Rise of Prosumers” and Virtual Power Plants, linked by Energy Resilience, and ending with The Power of Data and Investing in Sustainability to name a few of the presentations. Presenters from industry, government, not-for-profit, academia, and entrepreneurs shared their experiences and knowledge of various paths to decentralized energy. Woven into both days' presentations was the Game Change Pitch Competition that allowed new technology entrepreneurs to pitch to potential investors.



The forum attendance of about one hundred and twenty allowed for productive networking, all geared towards continuing the energy transition for which decentralised energy is a critical element. I met many valuable business connections including Jonathan Blundy, Royal Society Research Professor in the Department of Earth Sciences at University of Oxford which we are now working with on critical minerals and geothermal development in Montserrat. The first follow up meeting with Oxford University RESET Project happened November 28, 2023 where I was invited to present an overview of the Montserrat Energy Landscape. I was able to further develop RMI's relationship with Global Affairs Canada. In addition, Government of Canada Clean Technologies, Renewable Energy has been exploring possible funding of a Montserrat solar PV project.

The Decentralised Energy Forum 2023 Program is my stand-out forum in recent memory; continue the great work, and I look forward to the 2024 program.

Event Footage

See [DEC YouTube Channel – Decentralised Energy Forum 2203 Playlist](#)

Event Feedback

See Evaluation Report PDF