

Building a Natural-Hazard-Resilient High-Quality Seismic Network: How WI Network Sustained Hurricanes Maria and Irma

Jean-Marie Saurel, Jordane Corbeau, Sébastien Deroussi, Tristan Didier, Arnaud Lemarchand, Séverine Moune, Lloyd Lynch, Anne-Marie Lejeune, Roberto Moretti, Jean-Christophe Komorowski

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Corresponding Author:	Jean-Marie SAUREL Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris Paris, Île-de-France FRANCE
Corresponding Author Secondary Information:	
Corresponding Author's Institution:	Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris
Corresponding Author's Secondary Institution:	
First Author:	Jean-Marie SAUREL
First Author Secondary Information:	
Order of Authors:	Jean-Marie SAUREL
	Jordane Corbeau
	Sébastien Deroussi
	Tristan Didier
	Arnaud Lemarchand
	Séverine Moune
	Lloyd Lynch
	Anne-Marie Lejeune
	Roberto Moretti
	Jean-Christophe Komorowski
Order of Authors Secondary Information:	
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	Head of French Résif seismic network
	Dan McNamara USGS
	Network capabilities assessment for ICG-CARIBE-EWS Network design and optimisation Data quality assessment
	Javier Quinteros GFZ
	EIDA member, data center manager, shared data services and FDSN data transmission protocol standards
Opposed Reviewers:	

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Building a natural-hazard resilient high-quality seismic network : how WI network sustained hurricanes Maria and Irma

5 JM. Saurel¹, J. Corbeau^{1,3}, S. Deroussi^{1,2}, T. Didier^{1,2}, A. Lemarchand¹, S. Moune^{1,2}, L. Lynch⁴,

- 6 AM. Lejeune^{1,3}, R. Moretti^{1,2}, JC. Komorowski¹
- 7
- 8 1. Université de Paris, Institut de physique du globe de Paris, CNRS, 75238 Paris, France
- 9 2. Observatoire volcanologique et sismologique de Guadeloupe, Institut de physique du globe de Paris,
- 10 97113, Gourbeyre, Guadeloupe, France
- 11 3. Observatoire volcanologique et sismologique de Martinique, Institut de physique du globe de Paris,
- 12 97250, Saint-Pierre, Martinique, France
- 13 4. Seismic Research Center, The University of the West Indies, Gordon Street, St Augustine, Trinidad,
- 14 Trinidad and Tobago
- 15 Corresponding author : Jean-Marie Saurel, <u>saurel@ipgp.fr</u>.

16 **Abstract**

17 Between 2008 and 2014, IPGP (Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris) and UWI-SRC (University of 18 the West Indies, Seismic Research Centre) designed and built a regional seismic network across the 19 Lesser Antilles. One of the goals of the network is to provide real-time seismic data to the tsunami 20 warning centers in the framework of the ICG-CARIBE-EWS (Intergovernmental Coordination Group 21 working toward the establishment of a tsunami and other coastal hazards Early Warning System for the 22 Caribbean and adjacent regions, McNamara et al, 2016). In an area prone to hurricanes, earthquakes, 23 tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, we choose different techniques and technologies to ensure our co-24 operated network could survive and keep providing data in case of major natural hazards. The 25 Nanometrics VSAT technology is at the heart of the system. It allows duplicated data collection at the 26 three observatories (Trinidad, Martinique and Guadeloupe, Anglade et al, 2015). 27 In 2017, the network design and implementation were put to test with Saffir-Simpson category 5 28 hurricanes Irma and Maria that went, respectively, through the North and Central portion of the Lesser 29 Antilles, mainly impacting the sites operated by volcanological and seismological observatories of 30 IPGP in Martinique (OVSM) and in Guadeloupe (OVSG). Our concepts proved to be valid with a 31 major data shortage of less than 12h and only two stations having sustained heavy damages. 32 In this paper, we review the strength and weaknesses of the initial design and discuss various step 33 forward that can be taken in order to enhance even more the ability of our co-operated network to 34 provide timely real-time seismic data to tsunami warning center under any circumstances.

35

Geographic context

37 The Lesser Antilles active subduction zone spreads across 1000km from Trinidad in the South to Virgin 38 Islands in the North (figure 1). The American plate moves toward Caribbean plate at a relative slow 39 rate around 2cm/year (Symithe et al, 2017). This slow converging movement has still generated two major thrust earthquakes that killed several hundred people and destroyed two main cities in the 40 41 nineteenth century. The 1839 M 8.0 and the 1843 M 8.5 earthquakes (e.g., Bernard and Lambert, 1988; 42 Feuillet et al., 2011; Hough, 2013) respectively destroyed Fort Royal (now Fort de France) and Pointe à 43 Pitre, economic centers of Martinique and Guadeloupe at the time. The 1843 event also triggered a 44 small tsunami with evidence found in Antigua (Bernard and Lambert, 1988). The 850 km long Lesser 45 Antilles is a chain of volcanic islands formed as the result of this subduction below the Caribbean plate since at least about 40 Millions years. Since 1600 C.E. and European settlement, the region has 46 47 produced at least 34 eruptions from its 21 active volcanoes located on 11 islands, from the Grenadines 48 (South) to Saba (North) (Lyndsay et al., 2005). The Lesser Antilles region is known for the most deadly 49 volcanic eruption in the world since 1600 C.E. when Montagne Pelée killed directly about 29 000 50 persons in 1902 (Witham, 2005), totally destroying the towns of Saint-Pierre and Morne Rouge in Martinique. Between July 1976 and March 1977, the non-magmatic and phreatic eruptions of La 51 52 Soufrière de Guadeloupe forced the evacuation of about 74 000 people of out of the southern part of 53 Basse-Terre island for as much as 4 to 6 months (Feuillard et al., 1983; Komorowski et al., 2005: 54 Hincks et al., 2014). More recently, the ongoing eruption of Soufriere Hills that began in 1995 has 55 severely impacted the island of Montserrat, killing 19 people in 1997 (Wadge et al., 2014) and sent ash plumes in the region that brought to a complete stop of the airline traffic in February 2010 (Cadelis et 56 al., 2013). Brown et al. (2015) have shown that the Lesser Antilles is the region in the world that is the 57 58 most exposed to volcanic hazards if we rank by the proportion of its total population that live within

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59 30km of an active dangerous volcano. As a tropical area, the Lesser Antilles also face a yearly 60 hurricane season which exposes the islands to heavy rains, winds, waves and storm surges. Between 61 1965 and 2019, 77 named tropical cyclones made their way in the Lesser Antilles. Statistically, a 62 tropical cyclone has then approached the islands at less than 100km every 5 years for the northern islands of Saint-Martin/Sint-Maarten and Saint-Barthélémy, 8 years for Guadeloupe and 10 years for 63 64 Martinique (MétéoFrance, personal communication). There is however a lot of year to year variation in the number of tropical cyclones and just a few of them have had some severe impact on the islands. 65 During the same time-period, 13 major hurricanes (category 3 and above) happened. Since the 66 beginning of hurricanes records in the region in 1851, several hurricanes have marked memories in the 67 68 French West Indies. In 1963, Edith went over Dominica, heavily impacting the island and both Martinique and Guadeloupe. In Guadeloupe, Cleo in 1964 and Hugo in 1989 remain in the inhabitants 69 70 memory for the devastation and death they spread over the archipelago, but Luis and Marylin in 1995 and Lenny in 1999 also caused considerable damages. In Martinique, the heavy rains of Dorothy in 71 72 1970 spread devastation on the island and more recently, Dean in 2007, the closest hurricane from 73 Martinique ever recorded, damaged most of the Martinique IPGP observatory seismic network. Finally, 74 2017 hurricane season was one of the most actives with two category 5 hurricanes crossing the islands 75 3 weeks apart.

The Lesser Antilles regional and volcanic activity is monitored by the Seismic Research Center of the University of the West Indies (UWI-SRC) established in Trinidad and by Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris (IPGP) through its two observatories in the France's overseas departments of Martinique and Guadeloupe (OVSM and OVSG). Netherland Antilles islands of Saba and Sint-Eustatius volcanic activity is monitored by Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (KNMI). UWI-SRC is in charge of the volcano monitoring in Montserrat (through the Montserrat Volcano Observatory - MVO) and in all the independent English speaking islands from Trinidad up to Barbuda and also monitor the
area regional seismicity since the 1953 (Dondin et al, 2019). OVSM-IPGP and OVSG-IPGP are
respectively in charge of Montagne Pelée (since 1902) and Soufrière de Guadeloupe (since 1950)
volcanoes monitoring and, since the 1980's, of the regional seismicity monitoring in the central portion
of the Lesser Antilles.

87

88 Station, network and data distribution designs

89 Beginning with analog telemetry network of short-period stations around the volcanoes, the 3 90 Caribbean observatories (OVSM-IPGP, OVSG-IPGP and UWI-SRC) followed the evolving 91 technologies, with digital telemetry starting to be deployed in the 2000's. In 2004, in the aftermath of 92 the December 26th Sumatra/Andaman earthquake and tsunami, UNESCO orchestrated activities in 93 identified tsunami threatened basins to establish Early Warning Tsunami Warning Systems (EW-TWS). In the Caribbean, it fostered collaboration between existing seismic monitoring network under the 94 95 umbrella of the International Coordination Group for a Caribbean Tsunami and other coastal hazard 96 Early Warning System (ICG-CARIBE EWS) to share real-time high quality broadband seismic data to 97 the Tsunami Service Providers (TSP) in charge of the area (McNamara 2015). In 2008, following the 98 first 5 stations (TR FDSN network code) installed two years earlier by UWI-SRC (Dondin et al, 2019), 99 UWI-SRC and IPGP partnered to install and co-operate an extended seismic network (WI FDSN network code) at the scale of the Lesser Antilles subduction zone (figure 1). 100 101 To deal with the various natural hazards, the WI network uses redundant systems at several levels 102 (transmission, station power, instruments). In an area prone to earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic 103 eruptions and hurricanes, land telecommunication networks cannot be considered reliable. To securely

cover the full 1000km span of the Antilles, Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) satellite technology
was chosen. Each one of the 3 observatories is equipped with a satellite hub to receive directly from the
satellite link data from all the stations of the network (figure 2a). On each one of the 6 satellite
frequencies used, the master hub operation is secured by the two other hubs configured in slave and
backup mode which can take over the scheduling of the stations transmissions, should the master hub
fail.

We took care to install the WI stations outside of the main volcanic risk area on each island. Since 110 111 Lesser Antilles volcanoes are mostly andesitic ones, characterized by the likely emission of ash clouds 112 over large area (Michaud-Dubuy et al, 2019), the stations are equipped with independent double solar 113 power systems and each one is rated to withstand station operation during at least 10 days without sun. 114 This allows the operator to clean the solar panels in case of ash fallout. Moreover, special care was 115 taken to install high-end broadband and accelerometer sensors in insulated underground vaults to 116 provide high quality data (Anglade et al, 2015) for any earthquake in the Caribbean region. Hurricane being the most frequent hazard for the network, one of the VSAT reception hub and 4 117 118 stations were equipped with hurricane-resistant radome to form a reinforced minimal core-network that

119 can still operate under hurricane winds up to 120kt (Anglade et al, 2015).

120 Because the local observatories Internet bandwidth are limited, WI network data is made available to

121 TSP only by IPGP data center in Paris which can handle virtually unlimited connections. Centralized

122 WI data comes preferably from Martinique or Guadeloupe observatories, depending on the stations (the

123 other observatory acting as a back-up). Trinidad observatory is considered as a last resort solution

124 should Martinique and Guadeloupe observatories be out of service at the same time. WI stations,

125 operated by IPGP or UWI-SRC are openly distributed in real-time from IPGP datacenter. TR stations

126 operated by UWI-SRC are distributed in real-time to warning centers from UWI-SRC facilities in

- 127 Trinidad. TR and WI real-time data are also shared among the 3 observatories and locally used by each
- 128 one for the routine earthquake processing. Archived WI data are made available to the scientific
- 129 community after validation through IPGP, RESIF and IRIS data centers.

130 Network resilience through the 2017 hurricane season

In 2017, an exceptionally active hurricane season impacted the Lesser Antilles (on September 8th, three hurricanes were visible on a single Caribbean satellite image : Katia, Irma and Jose). Irma was the firstever Saffir-Simpson category 5 hurricane to cross the Antilles since the beginning of the records in the region in 1851, followed 3 days after by Jose that avoided the islands, turning Northward at the last moment. 3 weeks later, the Antilles were struck in the middle by Maria, which grew explosively in less than 24h from a category 1 to a category 5 when it crossed the arc in Dominica (figure 1).

137 On September 1st, hurricane Irma was already a Major Hurricane and we knew it would cross the

138 northern tip of the Lesser Antilles. On September 4th, the NOAA NHC (National Oceanic and

- 139 Atmospheric Administration, National Hurricane Center) raised the alert level to a warning with
- 140 sustained winds expected up to 150kt (Cangialosi et al, 2018). Two of the WI network stations were on

141 its predicted path : ANBD in Antigua and SBLM in Saint-Barthélémy (figure 1). On September 5th,

142 around 20:00 UTC, Irma heavy rains struck Guadeloupe and blurred the Guadeloupe stations

143 transmission during a few hours (figure 3c). The 6th of September, between 00:00 and 05:00 UTC, Irma

144 center passed 70km away of Antigua stations, at the time of its intensity peak (lowest pressure) with

sustained winds estimated above 50kt on Antigua, generating a noise peak at the station above the swell

- 146 induced rising noise (figure 3a). This station was equipped with a radome and did not suffer any
- 147 damage and only minor real-time data flow outages during the heavy rains. A few hours later, at 08:07
- 148 UTC, 130kt wind gusts were recorded on Saint-Barthélémy weather station (173kt unofficial

observation of wind gusts were reported, Cangialosi et al, 2018), Irma eye wall made landfall on the
island just before 09:00 UTC. SBLM station stopped responding and recording data just minutes
earlier, at 08:04 UTC. Later onsite examination showed that all the surface equipments (VSAT antenna,
solar panels, batteries) were thrown away by the winds (figure 1). The vaults and instrument stayed
safe without any damage. None of the other installations (stations, hubs, servers) of the WI network
were impacted by Irma.

3 weeks later, on September 17th, hurricane Maria, still a tropical storm the day before, rapidly grew up 155 to category 4 as it approached the islands of Martinique, Dominica and Guadeloupe (figure 1). Several 156 157 stations of the WI network and two of the reception hubs were threatened by its winds and rains. 158 Northern Martinique was the first impacted land. As the heavy rains screened out any VSAT 159 transmission from the island and started infiltrating the 1936 observatory building, forcing the shutdown of its servers for 24 hours, Martinique stations data collection was quickly manually re-160 routed to the Guadeloupe reception hub on September 18th at 16:00 UTC (figure 3d). The hurricane 161 162 then quickly turned North while reinforcing to a category 5 and crossed Dominica from South-East to North-West (Pasch et al, 2019), destroying the DSLB station surface equipments (the station 163 164 transmission was already down for a few months after a modem failure). In the night of September 19th, the eve of Maria was at the closest of Guadeloupe archipelago (10km away from Les Saintes islands, 165 TDBA station, figure 1). All data transmissions stopped at 02:20 UTC, when the observatory and the 166 reception hub suffered heavy damages that rendered all its facilities non-operational for 3 days. Data 167 collection of all the network was routed back to Martinique hub after the restart of their servers on 168 September 19th, at 14:00 UTC (figure 3d). While an initial goal of the WI network was to ensure 169 170 possible WI data collection from Trinidad in case of Martinique and Guadeloupe observatories failure, this was unfortunately not yet operational at the time it was needed during Maria hurricane. Several 171

early modem failures on Trinidad hub and some loose coordination with IPGP after the end of the 172 funding projects made the emergency software setup prepared in Paris to collect the data from UWI-173 SRC servers just before Maria arrival (figure 2a) useless. On September 19th, at 18:14 UTC, 12 out of 174 175 the 15 WI stations recorded in real-time the 7.1 earthquake that occurred in Puebla, Mexico. Despite 176 the still rough sea and subsequent high micro-seismic pick noise level (figure 3b), the signal to noise ratios (SNR) at 10s, on horizontal or vertical channels, ranged from 3 to 30 depending on the station 177 178 (minimum SNR was 10 at 20s and 30s), which is still a decent level for real-time data processing. In comparison, the SNR at 10s was 5 times higher in June 22, for the 6.8 earthquake offshore Puerto San 179 José, Guatemala (SNR at 10s from 15 to 200). In the end, while being directly impacted, the WI 180 181 seismic network only had a maximum of 12 hours of real-time data shortage due to the passage of the 182 most devastating hurricanes that hit the area since 1989.

183 The radome protected core network proved efficient as, even ANBD station and Martinique hub 184 exposed to >50kt Irma and Maria winds did not suffer any damage. The ability to receive the data in different hubs spanning the whole subduction zone also proved very efficient in limiting the real-time 185 data flow shortage for early warning services. Unfortunately, some delays in securing funding to repair 186 187 modems hub in Trinidad prevented to take full advantage of the resilient network design. After those 188 two major hurricanes, only 3 stations were damaged, requiring moderate to heavy maintenance: SBLM and DSLB stations whose surface equipment were destroyed by the direct hit of the hurricanes, and 189 DHS whose seismic vault was drowned by Maria heavy rains and the seismometer damaged. 190

191 **Discussion**

192 The Irma and Maria hurricanes showed us two main weaknesses in our system : the need for manual 193 reconfiguration to take full benefit of the redundant Nanometrics Libra II system and the critical role of 194 SBLM station to constrain Northern Antilles seismicity.

During the year it took to secure funding, order and install the replacement equipment in SBLM, this station proved to be a key point for the monitoring of the Northern part of the Lesser Antilles, where the small number of islands only allows a sparse network (figure 1). As the radome in Antigua and on Martinique stations and hub proved its effectiveness, SBLM station, given its importance for the Northern Lesser Antilles coverage, was re-installed with a radome that should withstand strong hurricanes that are expected to be more frequent with global warming (Knutson et al, 2019).

201 Even if Paris is obviously a safe place to collect and globally distribute the real-time data of the 202 network, the data routing still needs some manual actions. Furthermore, there is no people on duty in 203 IPGP Paris. This could be overcome by installing automatic re-routing solutions based on keepalived 204 automatic IP fail-over software solution (figure 2b). Data would be preferentially routed from 205 Martinique or Guadeloupe observatories. If both IPGP hubs fail, the second keepalived stage then falls 206 back to Trinidad hub. To keep the system flexible and avoid putting all the bandwidth stress on a single 207 observatory, the routing is made on a station by station basis. This automated system is still pending implementation on IPGP servers, which are currently being moved on a new cluster infrastructure. 208 209 The hurricanes heavy rains flooded DHS vault and damaged the broadband seismometer despite the

- 210 drainage system included during the construction and the CASIS shielding (Anglade et al, 2015).
- 211 Today, this could be solved by using a 5 to 10m deep post-hole installation with watertight specific
- sensor, which is also proved to have huge benefits on the station noise level (Vergne et al, 2019).

213 **Conclusions**

214 Designing and running a monitoring network in a natural hazard rich area always lead to compromises 215 and choices between initial investment, station sitting, station performance, maintenance cost and the 216 probability of impacting hazards. Although worst-case scenarios were considered when we decided to 217 install a monitoring network that has to last for the next 25 years, their very small probability of occurrence suggested a very small likelihood that we would never confront design concepts with the 218 219 harsh reality. In 2017, Irma and Maria category 5 hurricanes, while throwing devastation on the Lesser 220 Antilles, also provided us a unique opportunity to learn from exposing our design and networks to a 221 real-life test by identifying and overcoming their weaknesses. The WI network, co-operated between three observatories and 2 research institutions from 2 different countries, proved the benefits of the key 222 223 initial concepts with less than 12 hours of total real-time data shutdown. Except for one station wiped 224 out by Irma winds, all continuous data were recovered and less than 24 hours after Maria, 80% of the 225 network recorded good signals during the 2017 Mw7.1 Puebla (Mexico) earthquake. With SBLM 226 station upgrade and the future automatic data routing implementation, the ability of the network to 227 transmit high quality, timely, real-time data for early warning, monitoring and research and risk reduction in the region has been reinforced. 228

The next important step to improve the Lesser Antilles seismic monitoring and tsunami early warning will be the installation of permanent sea-bottom cabled observatories, something that we have begun to work on in the Mayotte volcano-seismic crisis context in 2020.

232 Data and Resources

- 233 Real-time data statistics were taken from IRIS-DMC data archive and all WI
- 234 (https://doi.org/10.18715/antilles.WI) stations validated and real-time data are available from IPGP
- 235 Data Center (<u>http://volobsis.ipgp.fr</u>) and RESIF national Data Center (<u>http://seismology.resif.fr</u>).
- 236 Seismic noise amplitudes were computed with Thomas Lecocq's SeismoRMS code
- 237 (https://github.com/ThomasLecocq/SeismoRMS).
- 238 DEM used for the map is a compilation of GEBCO 2020 Grid, Shom 2018 Homonim Project and

239 NASA STRM.

- 240 Hurricanes statistics for French Islands were collected by MétéoFrance Antilles/Guyane and discussed
- 241 with Thierry Jimonet and Jean-Noël Degrace.
- 242 Keepalive software is a free software available from <u>https://www.keepalived.org</u>.

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- 300

301 Author mailing list

- JM. Saurel : <u>saurel@ipgp.fr</u>, Université de Paris, Institut de physique du globe de Paris, CNRS, 75238
 Paris, France
- 304 J. Corbeau : <u>corbeau@ipgp.fr</u>, Observatoire volcanologique et sismologique de Martinique, Institut de
- 305 physique du globe de Paris, 97250, Saint-Pierre, Martinique, France
- 306 S. Deroussi : <u>deroussi@ipgp.fr</u>, Observatoire volcanologique et sismologique de Guadeloupe, Institut
- 307 de physique du globe de Paris, 97113, Gourbeyre, Guadeloupe, France
- 308 T. Didier : <u>didier@ipgp.fr</u>, Observatoire volcanologique et sismologique de Guadeloupe, Institut de
- 309 physique du globe de Paris, 97113, Gourbeyre, Guadeloupe, France
- 310 A. Lemarchand : <u>arnaudl@ipgp.fr</u>, Université de Paris, Institut de physique du globe de Paris, CNRS,
- 311 75238 Paris, France

- 312 S. Moune : <u>moune@ipgp.fr</u>, Observatoire volcanologique et sismologique de Guadeloupe, Institut de
- 313 physique du globe de Paris, 97113, Gourbeyre, Guadeloupe, France
- 314 L. Lynch : <u>lloyd.lynch@sta.uwi.edu</u>, Seismic Research Center, The University of the West Indies,
- 315 Gordon Street, St Augustine, Trinidad, Trinidad and Tobago
- 316 AM. Lejeune : <u>anne-marie.lejeune@sorbonne-universite.fr</u>, Observatoire volcanologique et
- 317 sismologique de Martinique, Institut de physique du globe de Paris, 97250, Saint-Pierre, Martinique,
- 318 France
- 319 R. Moretti : moretti@ipgp.fr, Observatoire volcanologique et sismologique de Guadeloupe, Institut de
- 320 physique du globe de Paris, 97113, Gourbeyre, Guadeloupe, France
- 321 JC. Komorowski : <u>komorow@ipgp.fr</u>, Université de Paris, Institut de physique du globe de Paris,
- 322 CNRS, 75238 Paris, France

323 Figure captions

324 **Figure 1**

- 325 Irma and Maria hurricane tracks across the WI network. Irma eye track passed right over SBLM
- 326 station. Maria grew explosively in less than 12h from a category 3 to a category 5 as it passed
- 327 Martinique. Hurricane tracks from NOAA reports. Lesser Antilles bathymetry from GEBCO 2020 Grid
- and Shom 2018 Homonim project. Land DEM from NASA SRTM. The photo inset show SBLM
- 329 station as it was before and after Irma hurricane passage. Fences, solar panels and VSAT antenna have
- been thrown away by the winds.
- **331 Figure 2**

332 Real-time data flow from one station up to the early warning centers. Depending on the station, the default route comes either from OVSM or OVSG. OVS-1 is the default IPGP hub reception point, 333 OVS-2 is the backup one. Data flow in 2017 in (a) which required manual re-configuration of the data 334 335 collection in IPGP. The data collection is switched from OVS-1 to OVS-2 and ultimately to SRC. 336 Proposition of an improved data flow with automatic re-routing mechanisms in (b) : we propose to use 337 keepalived code in failover mode in a two stages configuration. Default route from OVS-1 simply pass 338 through a single keepalived instance. Backup route of the first stage comes from the second stage, 339 preferably from the backup IPGP hub (OVS-2) or from the SRC. As soon as the default IPGP hub OVS-1 becomes live again, the data are automatically switched to it by the first stage. 340

Figure 3

342 Seismic noise amplitude in the 0.1 - 1.0Hz range during Irma (a) and Maria (b) hurricanes. TDBA 343 (Terre de Bas, south of Guadeloupe) show the highest noise level during both hurricanes as it sits in the 344 middle of Les Saintes channel, sensitive to swell. In (a), ANBD (Antigua) peaks during Irma eve passage close to the station, the second high noise period is caused by José hurricane 3 days after Irma. 345 In (b), all the stations are impacted almost equally as Maria hurricane cross all the islands. The real-346 347 time data availability during the hurricane passage is shown in (c) and (d), corresponding to the yellow frames in (a) and (b). In (c), the red square highlights the real-time data dropout during the heavy rain 348 associated with Irma in Guadeloupe. In (d), the red square shows the 1 hour time necessary to switch 349 350 from Martinique to Guadeloupe hub data collection. The grey frame in (b) and the corresponding blank 351 space correspond to the time needed to switch back to Martinique hub after Guadeloupe observatory 352 damages by Maria.

353

354 Figures



Figure 1 : Irma and Maria hurricane tracks across the WI network. Irma eye track passed right over SBLM station. Maria grew explosively in less than 12h from a category 3 to a category 5 as it passed Martinique. Hurricane tracks from NOAA reports. Lesser Antilles bathymetry from GEBCO 2020 Grid and Shom 2018 Homonim project. Land DEM from NASA SRTM. The photo inset show SBLM station as it was before and after Irma hurricane passage. Fences, solar panels and VSAT antenna have been thrown away by the winds.

a. Real-time data flow with manual route switching







Figure 2: Real-time data flow from one station up to the early warning centers. Depending on the station, the default route comes either from OVSM or OVSG. OVS-1 is the default IPGP hub reception point, OVS-2 is the backup one. Data flow in 2017 in (a) which required manual re-configuration of the data collection in IPGP. The data collection is switched from OVS-1 to OVS-2 and ultimately to SRC. Proposition of an improved data flow with automatic re-routing mechanisms in (b) : we propose to use keepalived code in failover mode in a two stages configuration. Default route from OVS-1 simply pass through a single keepalived instance. Backup route of the first stage comes from the second stage, preferably from the backup IPGP hub (OVS-2) or from the SRC. As soon as the default IPGP hub OVS-1 becomes live again, the data are automatically switched to it by the first stage.



Figure 3 : Seismic noise amplitude in the 0.1 - 1.0Hz range during Irma (a) and Maria (b) hurricanes. TDBA (Terre de Bas, south of Guadeloupe) show the highest noise level during both hurricanes as it sits in the middle of Les Saintes channel, sensitive to swell. In (a), ANBD (Antigua) peaks during Irma eye passage close to the station, the second high noise period is caused by José hurricane 3 days after Irma. In (b), all the stations are impacted almost equally as Maria hurricane cross all the islands. The real-time data availability during the hurricane passage is shown in (c) and (d), corresponding to the yellow frames in (a) and (b). In (c), the red square highlights the real-time data dropout during the heavy rain associated with Irma in Guadeloupe. In (d), the red square shows the 1 hour time necessary to switch from Martinique to Guadeloupe hub data collection. The grey frame in (b) and the corresponding blank space correspond to the time needed to switch back to Martinique hub after Guadeloupe observatory damages by Maria.

High resolution figure 1



High resolution figure 2

a. Real-time data flow with manual route switching



b. Real-time data flow proposal with automatic routing



