

## BRIEFING NOTE

### Information for Decision-making for Sustainable Development

One of the key aspects to achieving sustainable development is open access to sufficiently reliable and accurate data. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have long expressed a concern regarding the lack of readily available data and information on the environment and the human impact on it, and the challenge this provides in charting a path to development which is sustainable. There have been many efforts to address this challenge, including the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development Indicators Programme, the recent United Nations Statistics Department project on *"Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation and Dissemination of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the Caribbean region,"* and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) work in the field of environmental information management. Countries in the Caribbean still require support in creating mechanisms for the long-term management of sustainable development and environment information and in defining ways to harness this information for decision-making purposes.

As a step towards addressing the issue, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to act as the Field Managing Institution for a small project to be implemented in the Caribbean entitled **"Capacity-Building in Creating Information Management Systems to Improve Decision-making for Sustainable Development for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)"**.

The project aims to: (i) identify and assess regional and country needs in information management systems for sustainable development; (ii) develop capacity at the national level to handle and manage data, including to encourage the use and creation of integrated data management systems through providing access and training to available tools and methodologies; (iii) train personnel both in the use of these systems and in identifying effective approaches for handling the multilateral environmental agency reporting process and (iv) create a regional electronic site for accessing information on information management systems and techniques. The project will be executed from November 2002 - October 2003.

It is envisioned that the following outputs will be achieved:

- A pilot network of national, regional, and possibly local institutions involved in information management in the Caribbean region;
- Resource persons trained as information managers within the region that will have the capacity to train information managers themselves at the regional and national levels;
- Training materials on information management systems for training of human resources accessible through SIDSNET connected to regional networks and UN-system sites;
- A forum of exchange for experiences among regional and national information systems' managers; and;
- A final report on implementation, including an assessment and evaluation of the projects.

The project will build upon the work that was carried out by the UNSD in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat and CARICOM Member States on *"Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation and Dissemination of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the Caribbean region"* and UNEP's work in the field of environmental information management.

Thus far, three assessment missions to the region have been completed. Amongst the further activities envisioned will be a resource persons' meeting to assess and agree on priority training needs, the identification of best practices and appropriate information management tools, the implementation of a training course, and the establishment of a website to address information management for sustainable development.

Links have been established with the CARICOM Secretariat and other organizations in the region in further defining the scope of activities and the focus of the project. We are building partnerships with a number of organizations including the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Programme (FAO), the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA). Four pilot countries to be involved in the project have been identified - Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia.

### **Timetable of Main Activities**

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|---|-----------------|
| Assessment and Establishment of Baseline                        | Dec- March 2003 |
| Resource Persons Meeting in St. Lucia                           | May 2003        |
| Launch of IDSD website  | May 2003        |
| Identification of Mechanisms and Establishment of Pilot Network | June/July 2003  |
| Development of Training Materials                               | August 2003     |
| Regional Training Workshop                                      | September 2003  |
| Equipment Installation and National Training                    | October 2003    |

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### **For more information:**

Visit the IDSD website at: <http://www.oas.org/usde/idsd/>.

Or contact:

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