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GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRES AND REGIONAL ACTIVITY NETWORKS FOR THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides guidance on the establishment and operation of Regional Activity Centres (RAC's) and Regional Activity Networks (RAN's) under the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention). The document is directed toward the directors of RAC's and institutions comprising the RAN's, Cartagena Convention Parties and other relevant organizations responsible for RAC's and RAN's (existing or proposed) and the Secretariat of the Caribbean Environment Programme of UNEP. The document should also provide useful guidance to all Contracting Parties to assist in the evaluation of the administration and implementation of existing RAC's and RAN's and to evaluate new RAC and RAN proposals as they arise.
2. This document is a result of the discussions and deliberations of the Member Governments of the Caribbean Environment Programme during the Thirteenth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee and Special Bureau of the Contracting Parties, San Jose, 9-13 July 2001 (Thirteenth Mon Com), and the Tenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Seventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Montego Bay 7-11 May 2002 (Tenth IGM) and 28 September – 2 October 2000 (Eleventh IGM). In response to recommendation 10 (d) of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee and Special Bureau of the Contracting Parties, San Jose, 9-13 July 2001 (Thirteenth Mon Com), the secretariat, with the assistance of interested parties, undertook to revise the 1992 Concept Paper for Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks (document UNEP(OCA)/CAR WG.10/3). A revised Concept Paper was then presented to the Tenth IGM as the *Concept Paper for Establishing and Implementing Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks for the Caribbean Environment Programme* (UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.22/9). This document therefore, supersedes and replaces documents UNEP(OCA)/CAR WG.10/3 and UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.22/9. This concept paper was further revised and presented to the Eleventh IGM as 'GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRES AND REGIONAL ACTIVITY NETWORKS FOR THE CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME'.

II. BACKGROUND

3. The Caribbean Environment Programme, one of UNEP's Regional Seas Programmes, recognizes the integrated nature of the coastal and marine resources as well as the interdependence of the countries of the Wider Caribbean Region. The ecological realities of the marine and coastal environment are such that the management issues to be addressed transcend national boundaries. Cooperation at the regional level, therefore, is critical to the successful implementation of the activities of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and for the Convention for the Protection and

Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention). In light of this, a regional management framework was developed through the Caribbean Environment Programme in the form of a Regional Coordinating Unit for the Caribbean (CAR/RCU) established in 1986.

4. Since 1986, CAR/RCU, as secretariat to the CEP (including the Cartagena Convention and Protocols), has been developing work plans and budgets for the CEP and its subprogrammes as well as coordinating the implementation of the projects and activities in the work plan as approved by the CEP Member Governments. The secretariat has been staffed and operated with the human and financial resources provided through the funds of the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF), established in 1981. Nonetheless, with additional human and financial capital, additional projects could be coordinated, therefore expanding the capability of the CEP overall to produce results for the Member Governments.
5. Consistent with UNEP's catalytic role, and with a view towards expanding the human and financial capacity of the CEP, some of the technical responsibilities for project coordination or implementation can be delegated to institutions within the region, whose technical and managerial capabilities could be utilized for project development, fund-raising, and implementation. Given that the results of the Action Plan and Cartagena Convention are largely dependent upon strong coordination mechanisms at the national and regional levels, such an alternative could prove desirable since it could result in a strengthening of the institutional capabilities, and coordinating mechanisms of both national and regional institutions.
6. Some regional institutions have already been involved in coordinating or implementing the activities of the CEP. The quality of work undertaken by regional institutions attests to their potential to assist in the implementation of activities of CEP. However, these efforts have been largely on a project-by-project basis, without the benefit of an integrated and continuous involvement in the strategic planning of the CEP. The overall impact of these efforts has therefore been less than may otherwise result from an integrated, regionally coordinated and strategic approach. Therefore, a RAC, when properly structured, financed and administered, can serve to augment the work of CAR/RCU and provide additional benefit to the Contracting Parties through additional technical and financial assistance.
7. Prior to the Tenth IGM in May 2002, there were already two existing RAC's for CEP. At the Sixth IGM in 1992, the Government of France proposed to host the first RAC of the CEP for the SPAW Protocol on the island of Guadeloupe (SPAW/RAC). The Sixth IGM accepted this proposal, pending an agreement with CEP that would detail the specific arrangements. Following several years of discussions and negotiation on an agreement with CAR/RCU, the SPWW/RAC was formally established in 2000. The Government of France has funded the basic operating budget of the SPAW/RAC. The funding however rarely covers project costs, which must be borne by other contributions. At the end of 2005, a national association entitled "Caribbean Sea Plan" comprising a wide range of local stakeholders was created to transform the Regional Activity Centre, hitherto

attached the French Administration, into an autonomous body. The Secretariat of the CAR/RCU as well as the Secretariat of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme may attend Meetings of the Bureau of this Association. However, while contact between the SPAW/RAC and CAR/RCU takes place on a semi-regular basis, there is no formal mechanism that establishes a relationship either with the SPAW Contracting Parties or with the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the SPAW Protocol.

8. In 1994, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) proposed to establish a center for oil spill control and contingency planning in Curacao, under the umbrella of CEP. Operating as an informal RAC since 1995, the oil spill center (Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Centre – REMPEITC-Carib) was modeled after a RAC in the Mediterranean on the same subject. From 1995 to 2001, REMPEITC-Carib operated in Curacao under an agreement between the IMO, the United States Coast Guard, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles. As that agreement was set to expire in 2001, the Ninth IGM (February 2000) accepted a proposal from the Government of the Netherlands Antilles to establish and formalize a RAC under the CEP-RAC/REMPEITC-Carib – under the coordination of UNEP-CAR/RCU and the IMO. The same decision of the Ninth IGM, also established the membership of a Steering Committee for the RAC. The Steering Committee is independent of the secretariat yet has within its membership, members of the secretariat and CEP Member Governments.
9. A RAC/REMPEITC-Carib Steering Committee was established in 2001. At the first meeting, the Steering Committee established rules of procedure and financial rules. Though the Oil Spills Protocol has no Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, as with the SPAW and LBS Protocols, the Steering Committee provides a clear mechanism to coordinate the work of the RAC as well as to liaise directly with the CEO intergovernmental meetings.
10. In accordance with Decision IX, of the Tenth IGM, 7-11 May 2002, two RAC's were established to support the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities. These were established within the existing institutions of the *Centro de Ingenieria y Manejo Ambiental de Bahias y Costas* (CIMAB) in Cuba and the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) in Trinidad and Tobago.
11. The Second Meeting of the Interim Scientific Technical and Advisory Committee (ISTAC) to the LBS Protocol decided to establish a Steering Committee for the LBS RACS and agreed on its composition, terms of reference and reporting requirements.

III. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A. Establishment of RAC's

12. It is expected that RAC's will be established using the following framework. Nonetheless, the Parties should review the establishment of each RAC to determine whether this framework is appropriate in particular cases.

- a. A decision to establish a RAC is taken by the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention (the “Supervising Body”). This decision should indicate the scope of the RAC, as well as any other limitations or mandates that the Supervising Body wishes to impose. The decisions should also authorize CAR/RCU to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the appropriate host government. The Parties to the Cartagena Convention may, through decision, delegate their Supervisory Body role to the relevant STAC, ISTAC, or Steering Committee although decisions of technical committees remain subject to Party approval.
- b. CAR/RCU should negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the host government or appropriate organization that is consistent, first, with the terms of the authorizing decision, and second, in so far as they do not conflict with the authorizing decision, the legal, financial, administrative, and other requirements found in this Guidelines paper. Although the MOU may vary from RAC to RAC, in general the MOU should specify the nature and type of contribution being offered by the host government, the administrative relationship between the RAC and CAR/RCU, the mechanisms for transfer of funding, the nature of staffing and funding of staff, and provide for privileges and immunities for international staff. This MOU should be submitted to the Supervising Body for information.
- c. The RAC should propose any terms of reference, guidelines, or rules of procedure necessary for the effective operation of the RAC. The terms of reference should include financial, reporting, and oversight provisions consistent with those found in this Guidelines Paper and the authorizing decision. Any material proposed should be submitted to CAR/RCU for transmission to the Supervising Body for approval.

B. Establishment of RAN’s

13. Any RAC may form a RAN with the approval of the Supervising Body. The RAC should invite relevant institutions to form the RAN, and participate as partners in active implementation of relevant projects.

C. Work plans, Budgets, Substantive Reporting and Oversight

14. In consultation with CAR/RCU, each RAC will prepare a biannual work plan and budget for the approval of the RAC’s Supervising Body using a prescribed UNEP format. This work plan and budget must be submitted to CAR/RCU for submission to the Supervising Body at least three months before the Supervising Body’s next meeting. In advance of this meeting, CAR/RCU will review the work plan and budget to recommend whether the Supervising Body should give its approval. The Supervising Body will have the opportunity to provide comments on the work plan prior to approval.

15. Each RAC will submit to the CAR/RCU half-yearly progress reports following the prescribed UNEP format for this purpose. Upon completion of an activity, the RAC will submit a final report using the prescribed UNEP format.
16. The RAC will submit to the RCU (three) copies of all substantive documents in draft form for approval by the Parties prior to their publication in final form by the RAC.

D. Finances and Financial Reporting:

17. **Generally.** RAC's and RAN's will not be funded by the Caribbean Trust Fund (except when funds are being provided by donors, expressly for the RAC, using the CTF as a means of transfer). Any institution wishing to participate in a RAN or to become a RAC must be willing to do so at their own expense. Moreover, because a RAC must be financially self-sustaining, any proposed RAC institution must have a demonstrated ability to raise the necessary funds to finance its operations as a RAC and to attract donor funding for project implementation. Meetings of the RAC can take place within an existing Intergovernmental Meeting, Meeting of the Contracting Parties, Monitoring Committee, or Bureau Meeting, but additional meetings should be funded by the RAC host government or other donors as part of project funds.
18. **Finances on Establishment.** When a RAC is established, an initial investment (in cash and kind) should be provided by the host government to establish the RAC and to serve to attract funding from other donors, including multilateral and bilateral sources, for the implementation of projects. This investment should accord with the terms outlined in Annex I. Under no circumstances should funds of the CTF be used to establish or maintain the administrative costs of a RAC. If a RAC requires additional funding to establish itself as a RAC, it should identify its own donors and apply for funding. CAR/RCU would be expected to endorse an appropriate RAC request to a donor and support its application. Costs should not be incurred by UNEP-CAR/RCU as a result of the establishment and operation of the RAC (e.g., CAR/RCU travel expenses to meet with the RAC). These costs should be offset by an extraordinary contribution to the CTF by the host government into a budget line reserved for this purpose.
19. **Recurring Expenses.** The RAC or host government will provide the recurring operating costs of the RAC. However, it is not envisioned that the RAC or host government will provide funding directly for project implementation. Funding for project implementation will be obtained from various donors including international financial institutions, bilateral partners, regional and international development agencies, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Foundations, Non Governmental Organizations and the private sector. Therefore, the RAC, once it has identified projects in accordance with its goals and mandate, should be prepared on its own initiative to develop projects, and solicit and apply for project funding from potential donors. The RAC should not rely on the CAR/RCU to source project funding. Not only does this assist in building new donor relationships for the RAC, but avoids double overhead costs associated with passing funds through the administration of two institutions – CAR/RCU and the RAC.

20. ***Financial Reporting.*** In addition to the submission of biannual work plans and budgets, the RAC will submit to the Chief, Fund Programme Management branch at UNEP Headquarters and to the Coordinator of the RCU, quarterly project expenditure accounts following UNEP's format for this purpose.
21. ***Final Expenditure Statements.*** Within 60 days of the completion of all activities, the RAC will submit to UNEP-CAR/RCU a detailed final expenditure statement in accordance with the project budget certified by a chartered accountant paid under the RAC contribution. Should the cost of the activity be less than that of the cost stated in the statement, the difference will be reimbursed or reinvested in the continuation of the activity or other related activities in accordance with the terms of the MOU and/or any donor agreements and approvals. Any cost overrun (expenditure in excess of the amount budgeted in each budget sub-line) shall be met by the RAC.
22. ***RAN Finances.*** Each member of the RAN will be responsible for the costs incurred by participating in the network, such as communication costs, staffing and costs incurred by the implementation of specific activities assigned to a member of the RAN by the RAC. The RAC can provide financial and technical support to a member of the RAN for the implementation of an activity.

E. Administrative:

23. Critical to the effective and efficient functioning of the RAC will be its relationship to the Convention or its Protocols. Though it may vary from RAC to RAC and no one arrangement may fit all situations, this relationship must be clearly defined in the decision of the Parties and through the terms of reference elaborated subsequent to a decision. The administrative relationship must clearly show linkages to the Convention or a Protocol to ensure active participation and oversight such that the RAC would not be operating on its own, but under the direction of and on behalf of the Contracting Parties¹.
24. The relevant organization or host government of the RAC may establish the RAC within any institutional structure that has the physical, scientific and technical capabilities. Additional, instruction in the host country may be selected to provide additional technical and scientific support to the RAC.
25. The relevant organization or host government will provide office space, staffing, material, equipment and will ensure the provision of funding for the operating costs of the RAC in accordance with the terms of the relevant MOU. Annex I contains details of the type of in-kind contribution expected from the host government.

¹ For the existing SPAW/RAC, this relationship has not yet been defined (other than generally through its MOU with secretariat for its establishment). There is no body such as a Steering Committee for the SPAW/RAC, nor is its relationship established with the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) of the SPAW Protocol. On the other hand, RAC/REMPEITC-Carib, while there is no STAC for the Oil Spills Protocol, the Ninth IGM /6th MOP clearly established a Steering Committee to oversee and provide guidance to the RAC (Annex II contains the proposed basic scheme for administration of the RAC)

26. With respect to national staffing, the RAC personnel will be attached to the institution(s) hosting the RAC, in accordance with the organization or relevant national legislation of the host government. International staff can be recruited directly for the RAC by the UN, by an international or regional organization or through government secondments in accordance with the laws and regulations of the host government. The RAC host government will ensure that international staff of the RAC is accorded the relevant privileges and immunities by the host Government.
27. With respect to administrative communications, the following will apply:
- communications on technical matters related to specific activities should be directly between the RAC and the relevant designated national authorities, focal points, participating institutions and members of the RAN. Information of these communications should be forwarded to the RCU in its half-yearly progress reports.
 - the only official channel of communication on policy matters between the Contracting Parties or the CEP national and technical focal points and the secretariat (UNEP-CAR/RCU), should be through the RCU. Each RAC will maintain its own administration for personnel, procurement, travel, etc. Donor funding passing through the CTF to RAC's shall be through a UNEP project document, subcontract, memorandum/letter of agreement or other formal mechanism approved by UNEP.
28. Matters concerning personnel should also be clearly defined. In the case of a Type A RAC, personnel will be selected and hired by UNEP. For the Type B and C RAC's, the host government, or regional institution, would select a RAC Coordinator in consultation with UNEP-CAR/RCU. The RAC director would in turn, select the technical staff. In all cases the selection and hiring process should be specified in the terms of reference and agreement signed between the RAC and UNEP-CAR/RCU.

Relationship to Other Organizations

29. Each RAC is expected to coordinate and collaborate with the other RAC's of the Convention and its Protocols. Such collaboration should be based, in particular on the exchange of experiences regarding working methods and organization toward the continuing improvement of the RAC system. To achieve that goal it is recommended that the Directors of the different RAC's hold consultations during the Meetings of the Contracting Parties held by the UNEP-CAR/RCU, as well as secure strong communication and interaction.
30. In addition to the legal, financial and administrative arrangements UNEP-CAR/RCU, the RAC's and RAN's should also initiate and maintain a working relationship with other regional institutions with mandates from other intergovernmental processes in the region (e.g., CARICOM, OECS and other global initiatives such as the sub regional centres for the Basel Convention).

IV. REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRES AND REGIONAL ACTIVITY NETWORKS

31. RAC's and RAN's represent an institutional framework of technical cooperation consisting of regional and national institutions selected for the purpose of coordinating the implementation of activities in support of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols in a systematic manner.

Definition of Regional Activity Centre (RAC)

32. A RAC is a financially independent, regional or national institution, which has been designated by the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention to carry out specific technical functions and activities in support of the Convention and its Protocols or any future protocols. The objective of the RAC is to strengthen the delivery of activities in support of the Convention and its Protocols through decentralizing the work and by the addition of human and financial resources from a member country, another UN or international organization or other donors.

Definition of Regional Activity Network (RAN)

33. A RAN is a network or regional technical institutions (including national, intergovernmental, non-governmental and academic and scientific organizations) that provide input, peer review, and expertise through the relevant RAC, in a specific technical area and to increase the level and depth of cooperation and sharing of expertise in the region. Institutions within the RAN, must be well known in their area of expertise and be willing to provide advice and input to the RAC free of charge. Even under a contractual arrangement with CAR/RCU, any institution within the RAN would provide services on an "at-cost" basis. Additionally, RAN institutions would serve as an ongoing, consultative group in their respective area of expertise. Where RAN's exist, they would be coordinated by the RAC in their respective technical area.

V. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Enhancement and Expansion of UNEP-CAR/RCU Capacity

34. UNEP-CAR/RCU is the primary institution for the coordination of the Cartagena Convention, its protocols, and related activities. The resources available for the operations and activities of the CEP are the contributions to the CTF and those additional contributions and grants obtained in the course of project development and implementation. RAC's should be established to enhance the technical capacity of UNEP-CAR/RCU, assist in mobilizing additional financial resources, promoting the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its protocols, and supporting the CEP in general.

Institutional Strengthening

35. It is expected that the overall administrative and technical capabilities of participating institutions will be strengthened and that RAC's and RAN's will provide an effective mechanism for establishing follow-up action.

Regional Cooperation

36. The establishment of RAC's and RAN's will strengthen regional cooperation and will also facilitate the exchange of information and technical expertise required for implementing project activities.

Participation

37. The basic prerequisite for the success of RAC's and RAN's is the active participation of key institutions (in the case of a RAC), or a wide range of institutions (in the case of RAN's), from the Wider Caribbean Region, each of whose contribution is vital to the successful implementation of activities to fulfill the Convention and/or its Protocols. Though the Governments designated UNEP as the secretariat of the Cartagena Convention and CEP, coordination and implementation of activities should not be the sole responsibility of UNEP. Each Contracting Party should take responsibility for implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. RAC's and RAN's, therefore give the Contracting Parties an opportunity to get more involved with the first hand implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols and to simultaneously increase programme delivery for the CEP as a whole.

Financial Sustainability

38. RAC's must be financially self-sustaining. This does not mean that the host country of the RAC cover all operation costs, however the RAC must outline adequate financial strategies to generate the necessary resources for its operations and that are consistent with the objectives of the Cartagena Convention and its relevant protocols. A RAC should not be funded by the CTF. *[Resources from the Caribbean Trust Fund may be provided to RACs under exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the financial authority of the CTF.]*

VI. TYPES OF RAC's

39. RAC's can be of three types:

TYPE A: UN REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. This is a regional/international UN organization, with competency in watershed management, and/or marine and coastal environmental protection and development, which offers its services to the Contracting Parties.

TYPE B: NON-UN ORGANIZATIONS. This is a new or existing regional institution (e.g., regional academic, **[non-governmental]** or regional intergovernmental institution), with competency in watershed management and/or marine and coastal environmental protection and development, that offers its services to the Contracting Parties.

TYPE C: NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH A REGIONAL FOCUS. This RAC is a national institution (new or existing) that is established with a regional focus (or has evolved to have a regional focus) and, which given their technical capabilities and expertise in one or more areas related to the Convention and its Protocols, offers to serve as a RAC for the Contracting Parties.

VII. FUNCTIONS OF THE RAC's AND RAN's

40. The RAC's will provide the overall supervision, technical guidance and administrative oversight for the implementation of specific and selected activities to fulfill the Convention and/or its Protocols, as developed, approved, and assigned by the intergovernmental meeting, meeting of the Contracting Parties or other relevant supervisory body for the RAC (e.g., a Steering Committee or Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee) through UNEP-CAR/RCU. Specifically, the RAC's will:

- (a) Supervise and coordinate the implementation of specific project activities (approved by the Supervising Body) in consultation with CAR/RCU;
- (b) Provide administrative input related to the implementation of the project activities;
- (c) Ensure the harmonious and mutually reinforcing involvement of the institutions participating in the RAN, where a respective RAN exists;
- (d) Assist in the identification of institutions and experts required for programme implementation and the development of agreements and sub-contracts for project implementation with participating institutions or individuals;
- (e) Provide assistance to and advise CAR/RCU on specific technical matters and programme development through coordination with the RAN;
- (f) Exchange information with CAR/RCU and institutions within the network;
- (g) Provide technical assistance, training and research inputs to the Regional Programmes; and
- (h) Assist with fundraising for specific activities, to fulfill the goals of the Convention and/or its Protocols, to be implemented by the RAC and as requested by its respective Supervisory Body.

41. RAC's will be utilized to coordinate the technical aspects and financial of project implementation only. The political and policy aspects of project development and implementation, will be coordinated by UNEP-CAR/RCU. UNEP-CAR/RCU will provide direct programmatic supervision of RAC activities unless other arrangements are made by decision of the Contracting Parties.

VIII. CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF RAC's

A. Necessity for a RAC

42. A RAC may be constituted in the Wider Caribbean Region when the circumstances necessitate the inception of the RAC.

B. Degree of Interest and Commitment in Hosting a RAC, as well as to CEP and the Cartagena Convention

43. A high level of interest and governmental commitment is essential for RAC's to achieve their objectives. Given that the process involved in coordinating project implementation will require a substantial national commitment -- including human and financial resources (in cash and in kind, see Annex I) -- it is important that the host country demonstrate this commitment to the RAC as an institution and to the CEP and Cartagena Convention as a whole.

C. Capacity to Perform the Function of a RAC

Institutional Capacity

44. **Policy Orientation:** The institution must have a recognized policy orientation that results in organizational objectives, which are consistent with those of the Cartagena Convention, and its Protocols. Additionally, the policy orientation should encourage cooperative linkages with other institutions.
45. **Organizational Structure:** With respect to the execution of its various functions, it is important that the organizational structure be sufficiently flexible to enable the institution to fully adapt to its roles as a RAC.
46. **Human and Physical Resources:** The institution must be endowed with the sufficient human resources having the requisite technical, administrative, and managerial expertise. Additionally, the institution must possess or be able to access office space, equipment and other physical resources required to carryout the activities of the RAC.

Technical Capacity

47. The institution must have expertise in the fields of project coordination as well as relevant technical or academic expertise in the particular subject area enabling it to offer specialized assistance to the implementation process and to other countries.

Leadership Capacity

48. The institution must be able to provide an overall positive influence as well as foster the cooperation of participating institutions. Additionally, it is desirable that the institutions be recognized by the members of the RAN (if it exists) as a leader in its sphere of activity.

Management Capacity

49. The institution must have expertise in the use of strategic planning tools, budget tracking and financial reporting. It must also possess efficient management systems in particular oriented to short, medium and long term goals. These systems should be in accordance with established practices and procedures.

Geographic Distribution

50. The selection of a RAC must be such that the distribution of the centres allow for maximum representation of all the cultural and geographical sub-regions within the Wider Caribbean.

Language Distribution

51. The RAC's should be selected so as to ensure that the three official languages of the Convention are represented. Care should be taken to ensure that the RAC's have personnel who have a good working knowledge of these languages (Spanish, English and French). Working knowledge of Dutch would also be considered an asset.

Financial Means

52. A RAC should be economically viable and financially self-sustaining. Additionally, the proposed institutions should have a demonstrated ability to raise the necessary funds from various sources including multilateral, bilateral and national sources to finance its operations as a RAC and to attract donor funding for project implementation.

IX. ACTIVITIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED OR COORDINATED BY THE RAC's

53. Generally speaking, CAR/RCU as its name implies, is the institutional arrangement to coordinate implementation of cooperative activities agreed upon by the meetings of Contracting Parties and as such should not necessarily have the resources (neither human

nor financial) to implement activities itself. Rather, CAR/RCU has a more catalytic role and coordinates implementation by working with supporting or collaborating institutions. A RAC on the other hand, as a technical institution, should have the capacity to implement projects using its own staff and facilities and should, in most cases not have to subcontract its activities to others. As such, several possible options exist with respect to the structure of a RAC. Any one of the following options may be selected depending on the RAC, the needs of the Convention and its Protocols, and a decision of the Parties:

- (a) A single RAC coordinating the implementation of most of the technical activities of a Protocol or related program under the Convention;
 - (b) A single RAC coordinating the implementation of several technical activities under a Protocol or related program under the Convention;
 - (c) Multiple RAC's coordinating the implementation of multiple activities under a single Protocol or related program under the Convention.
54. In determining which of the above-mentioned options would be most feasible when structuring the relationship between RAC's and the Convention or its Protocols, the following must be considered:
- (a) The human and physical resource base of the RAC will determine the number and types of activities that it can effectively implement. It must therefore be ensured that the RAC coordinates no more than the number of activities it is capable of coordinating. Should this number be exceeded, the proper implementation of activities cannot be guaranteed.
 - (b) The level and nature of the specialization of a RAC will determine the types of activities that it can implement. Where a RAC is highly specialized then its ability to coordinate the implementation of activities will be limited to those which fit into the RAC's area of specialization. At the same time, a RAC that is highly specialized may serve functions that are not available within CAR/RCU or other regional institutions.
 - (c) The size, nature and budget of the CAR/RCU overall may determine the number of RAC's that can be effectively managed. Where the work plan for a specific protocol (or its supporting subprogramme) is large in terms of the number and size of activities, a single RAC may be unable to coordinate the implementation of the activities. It may therefore be necessary to utilize multiple RAC's. Additionally, where the nature of the work plan for a specific protocol (or its supporting subprogramme) is such that its activities are highly varied, multiple RAC's may be needed to provide the specialized inputs that may be required by the different activities.
 - (d) CEP has four subprogrammes: Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution – AMEP; Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife – SPAW; Environmental Information Systems – CEPNET; and Education, Training and Awareness – ETA. Similarly, the Cartagena Convention has three Protocols: Oil Spills, SPAW and Land-based Sources of Pollution. A RAC should serve the Cartagena Convention and/or its Protocols, taking note of the subprogrammes utilized to fulfill the Convention/Protocol goals. As not all CEP Member

Governments are Contracting Parties to the Convention or all its Protocols, it is important to designate which Protocol and subprogramme a RAC is serving.

55. The RAC will assist at the scientific and technical levels with the coordination of the implementation of specific activities in support of the Convention and its Protocols as approved by the Contracting Parties.
56. The scientific and technical support to be provided to the RCU by the RAC for the coordination of the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols will include for example the following objectives:
 - (a) To establish the RAN's, which will function with the RAC and maintain regular contacts with national and regional agencies and institutions; related to the relevant scientific and technical aspects;
 - (b) To compile, update and disseminate data, reports and expertise in an appropriate form to the States and Territories of the region, as well as to relevant partner organizations participating in the Programme and members of the RAN;
 - (c) To facilitate the provision of technical and scientific assistance (expertise, consultancies) to governments, institutions and members of the RAN on request;
 - (d) To assist CAR/RCU with development and the identification of potential sources of funding to ensure the achievement of Convention/Protocol objectives;
 - (e) To collect information on state-of-the-art technology required for the implementation of activities and to make this information available to governments, institutions and members of the RAN on request;
 - (f) To foster scientific and technical cooperation with UN specialized agencies, intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations;
 - (g) To promote the implementation of specific activities individually or jointly in cooperation with UN Specialized agencies, intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations;
 - (h) To promote accessibility to data sources and cooperation on research and monitoring needs of regional concern on aspects relevant to the RAC's purview.

57. In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the RAC may assist with the following functions in conjunction with the RCU:
- (a) Maintain communication with the Contracting Parties with regard to its relevant activities;
 - (b) Ensure the harmonious and effective participation of all members of the RAN in the implementation of its activities, which is crucial to the development of cooperation among Contracting Parties and the scientific, technical, and management success of the activities;
 - (c) Cooperate, as far as possible, with the other United Nations agencies and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations for the successful implementation of the Convention and its Protocols;
 - (d) Organize follow up meetings, workshop/seminars and field missions including training and information activities (courses, seminars, etc.), to the accomplishment of the objectives of the activities assigned to the RAC by the RCU; and
 - (e) Undertake in collaboration with the RCU all other measures necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Convention and its Protocols.
58. The RAC will provide assistance with the implementation of specific activities relevant to the field of expertise of the RAC. These activities will be assigned to the RAC by the UNEP-CAR/RCU as approved by the Contracting Parties.
59. As appropriate, the RAC will respect the current regulations of the United Nations System, particularly those relating to UNEP, governing the organization itself as well as the operational procedures of the RAC.

X. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OF A RAC

60. RAC's must have an appropriate organization designed for the efficient fulfillment of its duties. It is recommendable an organizational structure with the following characteristics:
- (a) Directors Office: Directors duties
 - (b) Assistant to the Director: Responsible for the secretarial duties, including personal assistance and administrative support to the Director, as well as matters related to the personnel of the RAC, liaising with other Organizations
 - (c) Library and Documentation Unit: Responsible for the organization and processing of the documentation, dissemination of information, and assists the Director in carrying out information-related programmes of activities.
 - (d) Finance Unit: Responsible for the financial and administrative affairs of the RAC

- (e) Technical Units: Responsible for development and implementation of national and sub regional systems, programs and projects related the different working areas, providing technical assistance and advice to the coastal States, planning and organizing training activities, drafting and editing RAC's documents, as well as advising the Director on the policy issues regarding to the activities of the RAC.

XI. SUMMARY

- 61. RAC's, when properly established, funded, administered and operated, may provide an opportunity to expand the services provided by CAR/RCU through the addition of human and financial resources in a particular area of specialization. Additionally, a RAC may fill a technical void in an important area not sufficiently covered by the secretariat.
- 62. Nonetheless, as noted above in the presentation of the functions of a RAC and the selection criteria, a RAC proposal must be clearly presented by the host government and carefully considered by the Contracting Parties to ensure:
 - (a) Complementarity to the work of the secretariat;
 - (b) Beneficial results and outputs to the Contracting Parties; and
 - (c) Financial self-sustainability.
- 62. With the concept of RAC's and RAN's contained in this document, concerning their establishment and operation, it is hoped that the Meetings of the Contracting Parties will be better informed and prepared to make decisions regarding both the management of existing RAC's and the establishment of future RAC's.

ANNEX I

REQUIRED IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT

The Regional Activity Centres will rely on existing national institutions. Their material and human resources, will in accordance with the need, be made available to the RAC as soon as it is established.

The RAC, as far as possible will begin its activities with the following human and material resources:

1. LOCATION, FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL

- 1.1 The main location for the RAC activities will be in the principal institution selected by the host government to serve as the RAC.
- 1.2 This institution should be furnished and equipped with telephones, fax machine, photocopying machines, computers with standard software, printers and electronic mail.
- 1.3 In addition, the following should be available as appropriate:
 - (a) Similar equipment and material at all institutions supporting the RAC; and
 - (b) Scientific laboratories, documentation centres and hospitality facilities for visiting scientists, and students.
- 1.4 The following facilities at the RAC or at its supporting institutions are desirable:

Information System

- (a) Geographical information systems;
- (b) High speed internet and the possibility of an intranet;
- (c) Capability to manage large files and data bases, transfer data electronically, create CD-ROMs, etc.
- (d) Project manager system
- (e) Strategic planning tools, budget tracking and financial reporting, and management systems
- (f) Scanning capacity for documents

Facilities

- (a) Documentation centre and virtual library
- (b) Amphitheatre or meeting room for at least 30 to 50 people, with appropriate communications and audio-visual equipment.
- (c) Webpage with access to other RAC's or RAN's, or related institutions and organizations

Other equipment

- (a) Video equipment
- (b) Photo equipment
- (c) Slide projector
- (d) Computer projector
- (e) Overhead projector

Scientific Laboratories

- (a) As applicable: laboratories for marine biology, marine pollution, atmospheric sciences, geology-sedimentology, chemistry, statistics, sanitary engineer, environmental engineer, physical planning, environmental impact assessment, coastal zone management.

Facilities for visiting scientists and students

- (a) Temporary accommodation at the RAC or at its supporting institutions; and
- (b) Cafeteria/canteen at the RAC, its supporting institutions, or in a nearby community.

2. PERSONNEL

2.1. Full-time permanent Project staff

- (a) 1 RAC Coordinator responsible for overall coordination of assigned programme activities and for day to day supervision of RAC functions as described in this document; and
- (b) 1 Secretary

2.2 Part-time Staff

Permanent Staff

- (a) 1 Administrator/Fund and personnel manager;
- (b) 1 Assistant Administrator
- (c) 2-3 Lectures/Researchers in the programme area of the RAC; and
- (d) 1 computer programmer/database expert.

Support staff

Staff responsible for administrative and financial management, including the accountant and the general manager of the institution hosting the RAC.

- (a) 1 Engineer responsible for the Geographic Information System;
and
- (b) 1 Assistant (data processing, computer-aided design)

2.2. Non-Permanent Project Staff

Additional Lectures/Researchers/Secondments from the host and supporting institutions.

ANNEX II

Financial Management

The Administrator, under the overall supervision of the RAC Coordinator:

- (a) will take the necessary steps to ensure that proper accounts are maintained in keeping with the requirements of the RAC and CAR/RCU;
- (b) will authorize disbursements, subject to receipt of *pro forma* invoices, and/order invoices within the limits of available resources;
- (c) will ensure that no additional expenses are incurred until all previous obligations have been satisfied;
- (d) will ensure that funds are expended in keeping with the approved budget; and
- (e) will be responsible for negotiating, with the national Bank, an agreement concerning the transfer of currency.

UNEP:

- (a) will take appropriate action on the questions raised in the progress reports and administrative and financial reports made by the RAC Administrator.