

THE STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME





Caribbean Environment Programme
United Nations Environment Programme

The Strategy for the Development of the Caribbean Environment Programme

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The Strategy for the Development of the Caribbean Environment Programme

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

1. The strategy for the development of the Caribbean Environment Programme responds to the request of the Fourth Intergovernmental and First Contracting Parties Meeting convened in Guadeloupe in October 1987. It has been prepared following an intensive review of the most serious environmental problems affecting the region's marine and coastal resources (Regional Overview of Environmental Problems and Priorities Affecting the Coastal and Marine Resources of the Wider Caribbean)¹. It is also responsive to the findings of the in-depth evaluation of the Programme (The Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme: Evaluation of its Development and Achievements [1976-1987])².

The Regional Context

2. In much of the developing world, economic growth is a major priority and the chief concern of the States and Territories of the Wider Caribbean region. Current economic activity in the region focuses on the expansion of tourism, agriculture and extractive industries. The desired acceleration in long-term economic growth can only be achieved and maintained through a process that is based on the principles of sustainable development. Maximizing economic growth on a sustainable basis necessitates that the costs resulting from adverse environmental impacts be minimized through the rigorous integration of environmental and developmental planning and management.
3. The adverse environmental consequences of ill-conceived development projects are of growing regional importance. Global phenomena such as the anticipated climatic changes, toxic waste disposal and deforestation, as well as marine pollution, coastal erosion, species depletion and pollution caused by accidents are of special concern to the region at large and underlines the need for more rigorous evaluation of development projects prior to the granting of funding approval. As the economies of the States and Territories of the region are largely based on marine and coastal resources, this concern should result in an increased allocation of funds from funding agencies for the effective management of these resources which are necessary to revive growth within the region.
4. At the regional level, the key problems threatening marine and coastal resources have been identified in the document "Regional Overview of Environmental Problems and Priorities Affecting the Coastal and Marine Resources of the Wider Caribbean". Given the cultural, political and linguistic diversity of the region and its pressing need for economic development,

¹ This document has been published as CEP Technical Report No. 2.

² This document has been published as No. 109 in UNEP's Regional Seas Reports and Studies Series, as well as CEP Technical Report No. 1

the successful implementation of an environmental programme requires the establishment of institutional arrangements suitably adapted to regional needs.

5. The problems of the region cannot be solved by any one national institution, regional organization or international body. The Caribbean Environment Programme as a multilateral initiative, is based on a co-operative approach involving governments, academic institutions, international and non-governmental organizations promoting sound management principles and it constitutes an appropriate framework which will allow for the development of co-ordinated responses to the regional problems.

II. GOAL, PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

6. The long-term goal of the Caribbean Environment Programme is to achieve sustainable development of marine and coastal resources in the Wider Caribbean Region through effective integrated management that allows for increased economic growth.
7. In order to achieve the goal stated above, the strategy proposes that the Caribbean Environment Programme incorporates the following principles

Mutual Technical Assistance

The Programme relies on the active participation of existing institutions, programmes and expertise at the national and regional levels in determining programme priorities, planning and implementation. As such, regional co-operation is a key instrument in the implementation of the Programme.

Strengthening the Environmental Policy and Legislative Framework

The Programme assists governments in the formulation of appropriate policies, regulations and standards for the management of marine and coastal resources at the national and regional levels.

Encouraging Integrated Resource Management

The Programme assists governments in the establishment of mechanisms that will ensure a co-ordinated and integrated approach for the planning and management of marine and coastal resources.

Institutional Strengthening

The Programme supports and encourages the strengthening of national and regional agencies responsible for the management of marine and coastal resources, as well as academic and non-governmental organizations.

Standardization of Approaches and Methodologies

The Programme supports and encourages the development and dissemination of standardized methodologies for resource assessment, enhancement and utilization appropriate to the needs and conditions of the participating States and Territories. It also endorses the application of evaluation procedures to projects of a regional or sub-regional concern in order to assess environmental, social and economic costs and benefits.

Ensuring Public Participation

The Programme promotes active participation of all sectors of society in the management of marine and coastal resources at the community, national and regional levels.

Encouraging Policy-Oriented Research

The Programme encourages basic and applied research that supports environmental policy needs and decision-making and makes policy-makers aware of existing scientific knowledge.

Exchange of Relevant Information

The Programme accesses national, regional and international sources of information; sorts, organizes and distributes relevant information to the region's users on a timely basis; assists in the strengthening of information management capabilities of environmental agencies; and increases communication among the principal actors in the region's environmental management efforts.

Human Resources Development

The Programme develops the capabilities and skills required to identify, analyze and resolve issues relevant to the region's marine and coastal resources.

Increasing Technology Transfer

The Programme recognizes the growing inter dependence within the region and with other regions of the world and focuses on the need to share and jointly develop most appropriate technologies to solve common problems, as well as to participate in global environmental management efforts.

Attracting Adequate Financial Resources

The Programme seeks to ensure a sound financial base for environmental management activities by attracting and allocating appropriate funding.

Joint Management of Transboundary Resources

The Programme establishes and strengthens mechanisms for the co-operative management of living and non-living marine and coastal transboundary resources.

8. The strategy will aim to develop mechanisms designed to ensure the achievement of the following general objectives: (i) sustainability of the resource base; (ii) equitable distribution of benefits from resource utilization; (iii) preservation of environmental quality and protection of human health; (iv) mitigation of natural and technological hazards; (v) maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem productivity; (vi) maintenance of habitat protection and biological diversity; (vii) assessing the environmental impact of urban growth; (viii) preservation and development of cultural integrity; (ix) strengthened regional co-operation; and (x) participation of the region in global environmental management efforts.
9. Given the articulated needs of the States and Territories of the region and in order to orient the Caribbean Environment Programme towards the achievement of the long-term goal and general objectives, bearing in mind the principles stated above, the strategy must immediately address the following specific objectives:
 - To provide integrated planning mechanisms at the national and regional levels that will allow for the rational utilization of marine and coastal resources;
 - To protect marine and coastal ecosystems and species requiring special attention;
 - To strengthen effective national capabilities for information management and exchange systems among neighbouring countries;
 - To control and abate degradation of marine and coastal resources; and
 - To increase and improve training, educational and public awareness activities geared to the achievement of the strategy's goals and objectives.
10. These objectives will be supported by the effective and efficient utilization of the various mechanisms established by the Caribbean Environment Programme which are described in paragraphs 32-43 of this document.
11. The strategy is inherently flexible, able to absorb new priorities and adjust to the results of new findings. It seeks to assist with the stimulation, co-ordination and consolidation of existing national and regional initiatives and provides the framework for building regional consensus that will ensure effective management of the region's marine and coastal resources resulting in ecological balance and greater socio-economic equity, both of which are essential

to sustainable development. The objectives of the strategy are to be re-evaluated on a biennial basis and its mechanisms for implementation are to be continually supervised by the governments of the region.

III. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

12. In the short-term (1990-1995), in order to attain its goal and objectives, the strategy will develop regionally co-ordinated comprehensive programmes in the following major areas:

- Integrated Planning and Institutional Development for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources;
- Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA);
 - Information Systems for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources (CEPNET);
 - Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution (CEPPOL); and

Education, Training and Public Awareness for the Appropriate Management of Marine and Coastal Resources.

13. These mutually reinforcing programmes which together constitute the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme respond to the objectives of the strategy and incorporate the principles stated above. They are to be revised in keeping with the priorities identified on a biennial basis.

14. Implementation of the Programme's activities relies on the participation of a wide range of organizations, each of whose contribution is vital to the success of this important regional initiative. Participating organizations include those drawn from the following categories:

- National environmental and resource management agencies;
- United Nations organizations;
- Other international and regional organizations;
- Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies;
- Academic and other scientific institutions;
- Professional and technical organizations;

- Private sector organizations including foundations and corporate participants; and
 - Non-governmental organizations.
15. It is to be noted that the strengthening of organizational participation has begun with the development of specific joint programmes, such as the regional programme for the assessment and control of marine pollution (CEPPOL) in co-operation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

Integrated Planning and Institutional Development for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources

16. The achievement of the objectives of the strategy relies on strong co-ordinating mechanisms at both the national and regional levels with multi-disciplinary approaches, which will allow for the development of the required policies and legislation leading to the resolution of conflicting uses of marine and coastal resources.
17. Projects and activities of this programme are to be developed in order to achieve the objective of strengthening the capabilities of national agencies responsible for the management of marine and coastal resources, as well as regional organizations to enable them to manage these resources in an integrated way by:
- formulating appropriate policies and legal measures including the development of appropriate regional arrangements under the Cartagena Convention;
 - integrating environmental management into the development planning process;
 - developing the appropriate integrated approaches and responses to the impact of global climatic changes;
 - undertaking environmental impact assessments; and
 - elaborating specific management plans for the development of coastal resources.
18. In the short term (1990-1995), the major outputs of a regional programme in this area are expected to be the existence of national institutions and policies reflecting a coherent integrated approach for the effective management of marine and coastal resources in at least half of the States and Territories participating in the Caribbean Environment Programme and an appropriate understanding of and preparation for the impact of global climatic changes in the region.

Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW)

19. The appropriate identification of critical habitats and species requiring special management regimes is essential for the sustainable development of marine and coastal resources. The economic well-being of the region, in particular tourism and fisheries, is directly linked to this process.
20. Projects and activities of this programme are to be implemented in order to achieve the following objectives:
 - The development of a comprehensive regional programme for the research, assessment and management of protected areas and wildlife in the Wider Caribbean, as a major instrument required for the implementation of the objectives of the Protocol on SPAW; and
 - The development of specific management plans for economically and ecologically important species.
21. In the short term (1990-95) the major outputs of a regional programme in this area are expected to be:
 - A significant increase in, and improved management of, national protected areas and species in the region, including the development of biosphere reserves, where appropriate;
 - A strong regional capability for the co-ordination of information exchange, training and technical assistance in support of national efforts; and
 - Specific regional, as well as national management plans developed for endangered, threatened or vulnerable species such as sea turtles, the West Indian manatee and the black coral.

Information Systems for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources (CEPNET)

22. The effective transfer, exchange and training in the use of relevant information and expertise are central to the process of building institutional and managerial capabilities required for the integrated management of marine and coastal resources.
23. Projects and activities of this programme are to be developed in order to fulfil the following objectives:
 - To strengthen existing networking mechanisms which allow for the provision of information required by decision-makers;
 - To assist the CEPPOL Programme in the dissemination of information on sources, levels, trends and effects of marine pollution in the region as an additional component of the

scientific basis upon which the formulation of proposals for preventive and remedial action can be based; and

- To strengthen the regional and national capabilities to handle data relevant to the integrated management of coastal resources, including geographic information and other decision-support systems, as well as on appropriate technologies for the protection and development of these resources.
24. In the short term (1990-95) the major outputs of a regional programme in this area are expected to be an open, decentralized network which provides the means for increased information exchange and communication between all actors involved in the integrated management of coastal resources as well as stronger national capabilities for the management of environmental information.

Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution (CEPPOL)

25. Pollution affecting the marine and coastal resources of the region poses an increasing threat to the integrity of these resources. The transboundary nature of pollution necessitates a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach for its assessment and effective control.
26. The control and abatement of marine pollution provides the best opportunity and challenge for regional co-operation among all of the Wider Caribbean nations. As marine pollution is increasingly threatening the resource base required for economic development, its substantial mitigation, therefore, constitutes a regional priority at the highest level. During the 1988-1989 biennium, efforts have resulted in the formulation of a comprehensive regionally co-ordinated programme (CEPPOL) jointly developed with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO. This programme is expected to substantially enhance regional co-operation in this area.
27. Projects and activities of this programme are to be developed in order to satisfy the following objectives:
- To organize and carry out a regionally co-ordinated marine pollution monitoring and research programme concentrating on contaminants and pollutants affecting the quality of the marine and coastal environment, as well as human health in the Wider Caribbean Region;
 - To strengthen the capabilities of national institutions allowing for their participation in regional and national efforts in order to implement marine pollution monitoring and research activities; and

To develop pollution control programmes at the national and regional levels aimed at the establishment of water quality and effluent standards, measures to control domestic, industrial and agricultural wastes and debris, waste water treatment-/ technologies, contingency planning, as well as the construction of the required infrastructure.

28. In the short term (1990-95) the major outputs of this regional programme are expected to be:
- The identification of the sources, levels, trends and effects of the major contaminants and pollutants affecting the quality of the marine and coastal environment, as well as the assessment of the impact on human health in the region, all of which will constitute an essential basis for the development and implementation of appropriate control and abatement responses;
 - Specific standards and guidelines and concrete measures applicable in the various national contexts in order to bring about a substantial reduction in industrial and agrochemical pollution, as well as the disposal of solid wastes;
 - Specific investment plans, where required, for sewage treatment plants in coastal cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants in the Wider Caribbean, as well as the provision of appropriate outfalls and/or treatment plants, where appropriate, for all towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants;
 - A regional co-operation programme to improve the safety of maritime navigation and to substantially reduce the risk from the transport of dangerous toxic substances which are likely to affect the coastal areas or induce marine pollution;
 - Specific investment plans for the establishment of reception facilities for ballast waters and other oily residues and ship-generated garbage received from tankers and ships in ports of the Wider Caribbean;
 - An evaluation of the regional problems of solid waste disposal on land which may lead to pollution of oceans and coasts by garbage and other substances; and
 - A regional Protocol for land-based sources of pollution, as well as additional Protocols as identified by the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention at their biennial meetings on issues such as the dumping of wastes and pollution from sea-bed activities.

Education, Training and Public Awareness for the Appropriate Management of Marine and Coastal Resources

29. Effective environmental management depends on a high level of public awareness and involvement, and on the availability of appropriate skills to respond to problems and issues in a timely and efficient manner. At present, training requirements are not fully met by existing institutions and programmes and there is a need to develop the research, technical and managerial capability of Caribbean States and Territories to address environmental issues adequately. There are insufficient opportunities for public participation and involvement. The public constituency for environmental management must be developed and strengthened.
30. Projects and activities of this regional programme are to be developed in order to achieve the following objectives:

- To transform and improve educational systems for the integration of a consistent and positive behaviour towards the environment, and in particular, an understanding of the value and relevance of marine and coastal resources;
 - To strengthen training programmes at the national and regional levels, aiming at the improvement of technical and managerial skills of decision-makers responsible for the management of marine and coastal resources; and
 - To support the public awareness efforts of the media, community-based and non-governmental organizations geared towards the economic sectors and the general public for a better understanding of and a positive interaction with marine and coastal resources.
31. In the short term (1990-95) the major outputs expected from this regional programme are expected to be:
- National policies and plans for the inclusion of integrated environmental approaches in the educational systems of all countries of the Wider Caribbean;
 - An integrated regional system of educational institutions at the tertiary level providing the expertise required for the appropriate management of marine and coastal resources; and
 - A regionally-based capability to generate information and to produce materials for media and non-governmental organizations working towards sustainable development of marine and coastal resources.

IV. MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

32. Implementation of the strategy relies on the effective and efficient utilization of the mechanisms established for the Caribbean Environment Programme. These mechanisms, which were established by the governments of the region in 1981 and further developed at the biennial Intergovernmental Meetings with the valuable catalytic assistance of the United Nations Environment Programme, are now to be fully utilized in the implementation of the strategy.
33. The Convention and its Protocols are the instruments providing the legal framework for the design and implementation of the Programme, hence it is essential that the States of the region ratify or accede to the Convention in order to provide the maximum support to the Programme. The Action Plan constitutes the project component of the Programme. Both the Action Plan and the Convention rely on the following mechanisms: The Intergovernmental and Contracting Parties Meetings
34. The Intergovernmental and Contracting Parties Meetings provide the overall authority to determine the Programme's content, review its progress, determine its course and oversee financial and institutional arrangements. Once all the countries participating in the Programme

have ratified or acceded to the Convention, the Intergovernmental Meetings shall be convened as meetings of the Contracting Parties.

35. These meetings provide the forum for the Ministers responsible for the management of marine and coastal resources to meet on a biennial basis to review regional priorities, exchange valuable information and strengthen the team required for the sustained development of these resources.
36. An essential requirement for the strengthening of the Caribbean Environment Programme is the consolidation of this Intergovernmental forum, which should include the active involvement of all participating countries and related academic, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations of the region. Increased participation of all relevant sectors, such as tourism, fisheries and other economic sectors is also to be encouraged. It is, therefore, essential to broaden the base of the forum to include all sectors vital to the achievement of sustainable development of marine and coastal resources of the region.

The Monitoring Committee

37. The Monitoring Committee which meets on a yearly basis, is responsible for supervising the development of the Programme, as well as providing overall policy direction and guidance to the Regional Co-ordinating Unit (RCU) in the period between Intergovernmental and Contracting Parties Meetings. This mechanism allows for a more direct participation by the governments of the region in the implementation of the Programme. Additionally, it allows for more direct contacts of a technical nature with the experts involved in the Caribbean Environment Programme's projects.

The Regional Co-ordinating Unit (RCU)

38. Programme development, project co-ordination and administration are the main functions of the Regional Co-ordinating Unit. These functions are essential for the coherent and effective co-ordination of the Programme. Through the exercise of these functions, the RCU co-ordinates implementation of the Programme, provides information to the participating governments on the overall progress of the Programme and ensures that funds are being expended in a manner consistent with decisions approved at the Intergovernmental and Contracting Parties Meetings.
39. The role of the Regional Co-ordinating Unit is central to the effective implementation of the strategy. In light of the many institutions and agencies involved in the Programme, it is essential that the RCU be capable of co-ordinating the activities of a large and growing Programme.

The Focal Points

40. The implementation of the strategy requires a combined co-ordinating effort on the part of the focal points of the Caribbean Environment Programme at the national level, other

international and regional organizations and the Regional Co-ordinating Unit. The national focal points through mechanisms such as a national committee are to co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy with all sectors involved in the management of marine and coastal resources. The effective co-ordination seeks to reduce the duplication of efforts and to take full advantage of existing and proposed regional, sub-regional and national initiatives. This process requires the establishment of functional networks through which this co-ordination can be achieved.

The Caribbean Trust Fund and Other Contributions to the Programme

41. The scarcity of financial resources constitutes a major constraint impeding the appropriate management of marine and coastal resources. A substantial increase in capital flows are essential for the strategy to be effective in sustainable development of the marine and coastal resources of the Wider Caribbean. The strategy, therefore, seeks to increase the allocation of funds for the implementation of the projects identified above at both the national and regional levels.
42. The Caribbean Trust Fund, established in 1981 by the Governments of the region, clearly demonstrates the commitment and level of importance that these governments attach to this Programme, and is the basic funding source to support the common costs and priority activities of the Programme.
43. The contributions that have been agreed to by governments for the Caribbean Trust Fund allow the Programme to exercise a catalytic function in attracting financing from sources such as: (1) the Environment Fund of UNEP; (2) other international, UN and non-UN, bilateral and non-governmental organizations for the benefit of the countries of the Wider Caribbean region; and (3) additional contributions from governments.