



Operationalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission

A concept paper for procurement of
funding for the first four years of
operation

Prepared for the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC)

By

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Executive summary

Background

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has been pursuing the Caribbean Sea Initiative (CSI) since 1998 through the promotion of the UN Resolution *'Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations'*.

Under the CSI the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was established in 2008 to promote and oversee the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea. Since then the CSC has been working towards developing appropriate structure and arrangements for its work. These aspects of the CSC are now well developed and have been adopted by the CSC.

Regional stakeholders at the 2010 *'Expert Consultation on the Operationalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission'* provided guidance on how to proceed with regard to the following key areas for the CSC:

- Regional ocean governance architecture and the role of the CSC
- The science-policy interface of the CSC
- The information system to support the interface.

Participants concluded that the proposed structure and operation of the CSC could provide considerable added-value to the current ocean governance arrangements in the Wider Caribbean Region and that they were willing take part in the process of building the CSC.

The operationalisation of the CSC will be approached through a first phase of four years duration with a focus on living marine resources of the Wider Caribbean Region. This includes linkages with productive sectors such as fisheries and tourism, and consideration of the threats posed by climate change.

Three major action areas needed to operationalise the CSC

The establishment of the CSC Secretariat is a critical first step in operationalising the mechanism. The minimum requirement is seen as a Coordinator, a Data and Information Officer, and a Secretary.

The data and information function is a foundational component of the CSC. It will need a coordinator/developer for the network and the platform that would serve as a means of access to information.

The science-policy process is the core function of the CSC that engages the Sub-Commissions, the Commission and the ACS Council in ocean governance. To establish and operation this process the focus will be on (1) engaging policy makers to determine key areas of interest for information and advice, and (2) meeting this demand for information and advice through the data and information network and the review and advisory function of the Sub-Commissions.

Project timeline

The project timeline below is based on the key functions and outputs that the project proposes to establish and deliver.

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Establish operate Secretariat				
Engage staff	■			
Establish office	■			
Operate Secretariat	■	■	■	■
Establish operate data/information system				
Develop data/information platform	■			
Engage partners	■	■	■	■
Develop metadata base and linkages	■	■	■	■
Operate/improve system		■	■	■
Develop/operate science policy interface				
Determine policy advice needs (consultation)	■			
Prepare information (review and advisory)		■	■	■
Deliver advice information			■	■
Obtain/incorporate feedback			■	■

The implementation schedule for the operationalisation of the CSC

Cost

The minimum projected cost of the establishment of the CSC process described above is US\$1.5 M for an initial Phase of four years. This includes the establishment and operation of the Secretariat, the establishment of the information system and the operation of the Sub-commissions. This is the core funding that is needed in order to become functional and around which further support can be developed.

Background

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has been pursuing the Caribbean Sea Initiative (CSI) since 1998 through the promotion of the UN Resolution '*Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations*' at the UN General Assembly. An outcome of this process was the establishment of the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) in 2008 as a body to promote and oversee the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea. Since its establishment, the CSC has been working towards developing appropriate structure and arrangements for its work. These aspects of the CSC are now well developed and have been adopted by the CSC.

The most recent advance in the process of operationalisation of the CSC was the 'Expert Consultation on the Operationalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission' held in July 2010ⁱ. At the Consultation which brought together most of the regional stakeholdersⁱⁱ:

- Information was shared on the plans for and status of 'Operationalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission';
- Feedback was obtained on the feasibility of the proposals and ideas for improvement of the plan;
- Consensus was built on how the partners can work together to achieve the overall goal of ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean Region.

The Consultation addressed three topics that are key for the CSC:

- Regional ocean governance architecture and the role of the CSC
- The science-policy interface of the CSC
- The information system to support the interface.

Consultation participants offered a great number of ideas and recommendations that will be taken up in implementation. Ultimately, their conclusion was that the proposed structure and operation of the CSC could provide considerable added-value to the current ocean governance arrangements in the Wider Caribbean Region. Participants indicated their willingness and the willingness of their organizations to take part in the process of building the CSC.

The CSC comprises national representatives and expert members. It reports directly to the ACS Council of Ministers. Its operation is supported by three Sub-commissions: technical and scientific, governance, and legal. Their key function is to acquire and synthesize information relevant to ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean Region (ACS region). The current challenge is to develop and operationalise the mechanism by which (1) the Sub-commissions will be able to fulfill their function, and (2) the Commission will review the information provided, transform it into advice for the ACS Council and facilitate feedback from the Council through the Sub-commissions to stakeholders in the region.

As currently understood the overall mechanism would have the following characteristics:

- It would make best use of the full range of information and expertise available in the region by creating an effective network.
- It would allow for communication and information flows in two directions (1) upwards from information sources through synthesis mechanism to policy makers and (2) downwards, the reverse direction, for feedback and queries.
- It would be a regular and transparent process.

The operationalisation of the CSC is envisaged as being initiated through a first phase of four years duration with a focus on living marine resources of the Wider Caribbean Regionⁱⁱⁱ. This includes their linkages with productive sectors such as fisheries and tourism, and consideration of the threats posed by climate change. This concept paper outlines the process needed to operationalise the CSC and its Sub-commissions. It puts the process in the form of a project to facilitate implementation and acquisition of funding.

The CSC in Ocean Governance in the Wider Caribbean Region

The CSC in the Regional Governance Framework

The CSC is being developed to play a key role in an overall regional ocean governance framework. The framework is based on nested policy cycles at multiple levels with linkages among them (the LME Governance Framework^{iv}) as outlined in the 2008 ACS Report to the UN S-G^v and Figure 1. The ACS CSC is envisaged as functioning as the top level regional policy cycle in Figure 1. Details of the CSC policy cycle are shown in Figure 2. This arrangement has been incorporated into the structure of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Project, subcomponents of which are aimed at supporting the development of this mechanism^{vi}.

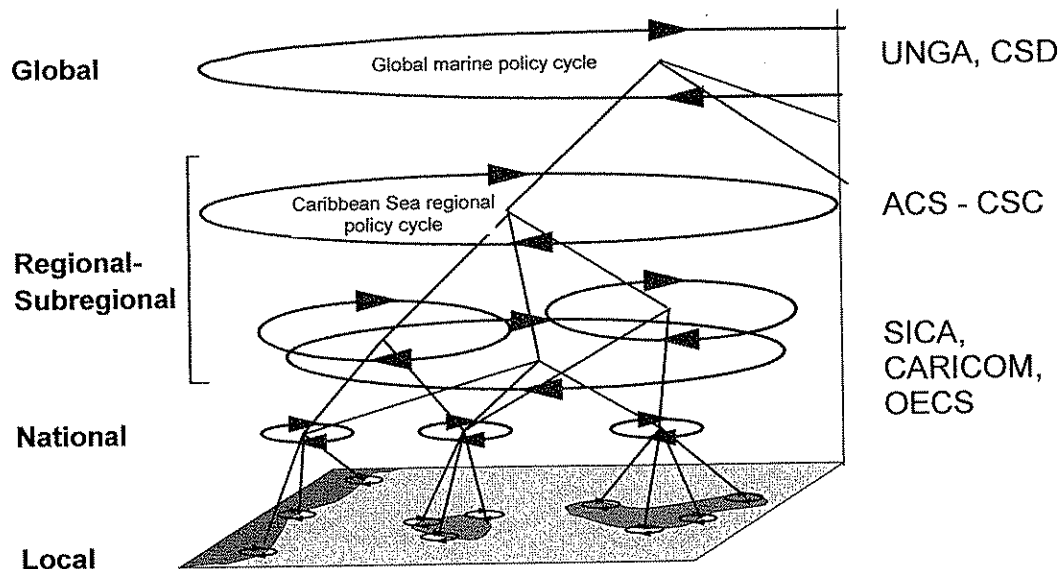


Figure 1. Illustration of the concept of a multi-scale governance framework for Caribbean ocean governance showing the position of the CSC as a regional policy cycle. There are vertical and horizontal linkages among the different policy cycles (the multi-level linkages do not necessarily imply a controlling function).

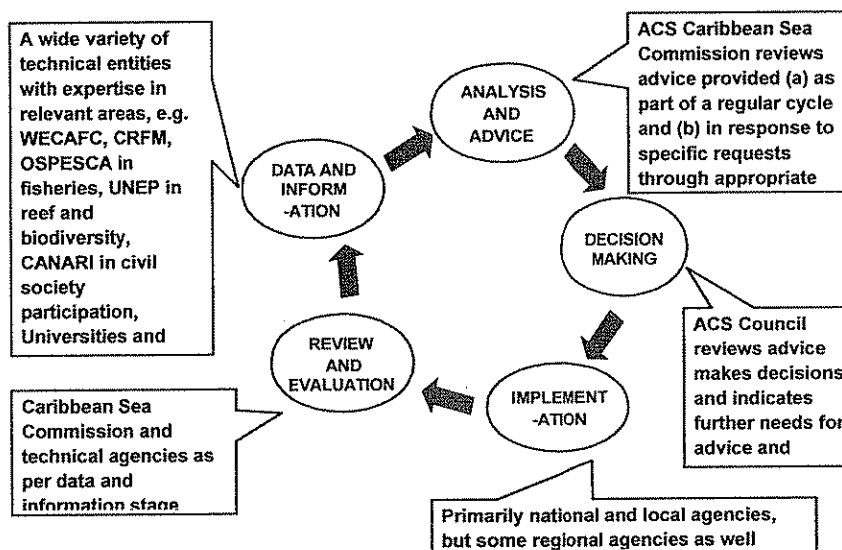


Figure 2. The stakeholders in the regional level policy cycle formed by the CSC and ACS

The data and information aspect of the CSC

The structure and function of the 'Data and Information' stage of the policy cycle has been further elaborated. It is seen as consisting of a regional network of data and information gatherers and analyzers. These partners would provide access to their data and information through a central portal where adequate metadata would be located to allow users to know what was available. The COIN Atlantic system^{vii} is an example of an appropriate model for the Wider Caribbean. A diagrammatic representation of the proposed COIN Caribbean structure is shown in Figure 3.

The data and information providers in Figure 3 are also key partners in providing the expertise needed for analysis and interpretation. The value of a 'distributed' data and information system such as the one depicted is that each partner is responsible for acquiring and maintaining their own data. A partner may allow full access to their data or may set limitations on what it can be used for, the level of analysis of the data prior to access, etc. There is wide recognition in this region that many technical agencies have been conducting research and monitoring exercises leading to large quantities of good data and information, but that the policy impacts of these have been low. Therefore, it is expected that most will be willing partners who will also contribute expertise to analysis and synthesis. The establishment of the regular ocean reporting and advisory process for the Wider Caribbean that is envisaged under the CSC is timely given the current UNGA emphasis on the establishment of a global Regular Process for reporting on the oceans. The adoption in November 2009 by the GA of the recommendations of the Group of Experts for the "Assessment of Assessments" signals that this will be a priority activity in coming years^{viii}. The CSC could benefit from linking the establishment of its own regional mechanism to the global process and contributing to it.

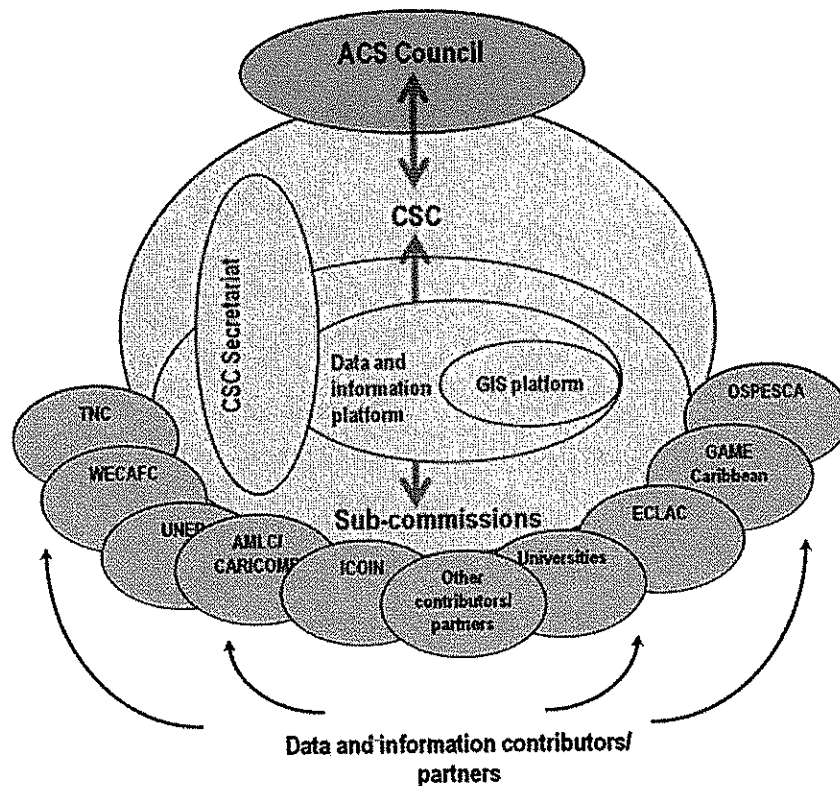


Figure 3. The proposed structure of the data and information component of the CSC

Actions required for establishment of the CSC

Establishment and operation of the CSC secretariat

The establishment of the CSC Secretariat with appropriate personnel and facilities is a critical first step in operationalising the mechanism. The minimum requirement is seen as a Coordinator, a Data and Information Officer, and a Secretary. The Coordinator would act as Secretary to the CSC and its three Sub-Commissions with responsibility for scheduling activities in collaboration with the Commission and Sub-Commission Chairs, maintaining communications among these bodies and with partners, and overseeing the operation of the secretariat. The Coordinator would be responsible for ensuring that the science-policy interface process is functional, timely and relevant to the needs of CSC members. The Data and Information Officer would be responsible for the technical implementation of the information system in collaboration with the Sub-Commission Chairs, members and partners.

Establishment and operation of information network within secretariat

The data and information function of the CSC is a key component. It will need a coordinator/developer for the network and the platform that would serve as a means of access to information. The CLME Project (2009-2013) will play a role in getting this function established with the support of the UNESCO-IOC. However, there is the need for capacity at the CSC to work alongside the CLME Project during this

period with the view that the Caribbean Sea Commission would take up full responsibility for this function afterwards.

Establishment of the network would be a focused initial subproject that would require external technical support as well as resources. The first step would be to establish the structure and data and information sharing protocols. The next step would be to engage partners in contributing their data and information to the network. The system would be web-based with varying levels of access ranging from open to fully restricted pending request, depending on the conditions set by the partners. The establishment of the network would go hand in hand with the development of a CSC website that would include other information about the CSC.

Establishment and operation of Sub-commissions

During this first phase of operationalisation, the Sub-commissions would focus on two activities. The first activity would be to engage the CSC, and through it the Council, to determine key areas of interest for the regular reporting process to focus upon. This dialogue could be supported by proposals derived from the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) of the CLME Project, which identified critical technical and governance issues for living marine resources in the WCR.

The second activity would be to develop the first one or two regular reports to the CSC and to work with the CSC to provide the policy advice that would be based upon these reports.

In the process of developing these reports, the Sub-commissions would also:

- Determine the frequency of reporting that would be most appropriate to the ACS/CSC policy cycle, and
- Develop a process for addressing special (one-off) requests for advice from the CSC/Council.

The activities in this phase would use the information network as it was developing and would serve to refine, test and improve it.

The work of the three Sub-commissions would be closely coordinated to ensure that the information and advice going from them to the SCS/Council would be fully integrated and internally consistent. To this end, it is expected that Sub-commission chairs will participate in the activities of other Sub-commissions and the Budget Committee.

Operation of CSC

In order for the provision of information and advice from the Sub-commissions to the CSC to be timely and effective, the operation of the CSC should be on a regular cycle that provides adequate lead time for preparation of inputs. It will also require that the CSC meet at least once, probably twice a year and that there be adequate funding for the meeting to be fully attended by all members.

The timing of CSC meetings, their format and the functioning of the linkages between the Sub-commissions and the CSC proper are aspects of the mechanism that will be developed and regularized in the first four-year phase.

Sustainability

Ultimately, the CSC must be supported by ACS Member Countries and Observer countries with an interest in ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean. In order for this to happen, the CSC will have to demonstrate that it adds sufficient value to current ocean governance arrangement to be worth supporting. For this reason the approach being taken is an initial, projectised, four-year period in which the CSC can begin to demonstrate its value. Four years may not be quite enough time to quantifiably demonstrate this potential value, but it should be enough time for countries to assess the value of a second period of support, possibly with external assistance, en route to it becoming fully supported by the region.

Project timeline

The project timeline in Figure 4 below is based on the key functions and outputs that the project proposes to establish and deliver.

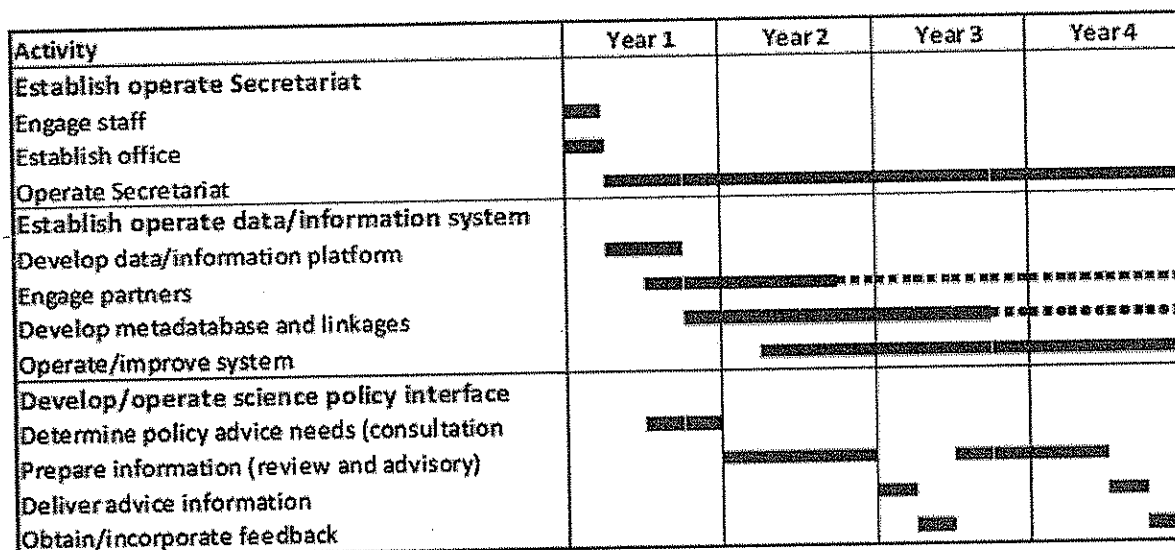


Figure 4. The implementation schedule for the operationalisation of the CSC

Budget

The minimum projected cost of the establishment of the CSC process described above is shown in Table 1 for an initial Phase of four years. The costs covered include the establishment and operation of the Secretariat, the establishment of the information system and the operation of the Sub-commissions. This is the core funding that is needed in order to become functional and around which further support can be developed.

Table 1: Projected cost in US\$ of establishing and operating the CSC data and information mechanism for an initial four year period.

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Establish operate Secretariat					
Executive Secretary	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	320,000
Secretary	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	160,000
Information/communications Officer	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	280,000
General operating costs	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	48,000
Equipment/furnishings	30,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	36,000
Establish operate data network	80,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	110,000
Travel	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	32,000
Subtotal	320,000	222,000	222,000	222,000	986,000
Sub- commission meetings					
<u>Technical/scientific</u>					
Meetings	25,400	25,400	25,400	25,400	101,600
Technical inputs	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000
<u>Governance/communications</u>					-
Meetings	25,400	25,400	25,400	25,400	101,600
Technical inputs	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000
<u>Legal</u>					-
Meetings	25,400	25,400	25,400	25,400	101,600
Technical inputs	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000
Subtotal	106,200	106,200	106,200	106,200	424,800
CSC meetings					-
Technical participation	20,400	20,400	20,400	20,400	81,600
Overall total	446,600	348,600	348,600	348,600	1,492,400
Cofinancing inputs					
Sub-Commission inputs (members time)					
Technical	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	320,000
Governance/communications	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	176,000
Legal	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	128,000
CLME Commitment	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	120,000
Partners providing data/information	>500,000	>500,000	>500,000	>500,000	>2,000,000
Subtotal	>686,000	>686,000	>686,000	>686,000	>2,744,000

Explanatory notes

ⁱ ACS/CERMES-UWI. 2010. Report of the Expert Consultation on the Operationalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission: building a science-policy interface for ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean. University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, July 7th – 9th, 2010. CERMES Technical Report No. 33, 84 pp

ⁱⁱ The 54 participants attending the Consultation were from a wide range of countries and organisations. Overall, 30 regional organisations or organisations operating in the region were represented. These included: **Intergovernmental organisations** [Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA), OECS Environment and Sustainable Development Unit, Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA); **United Nations Organisations** (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Maritime Organisation (IMO), UNESCO-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) IOCARIBE, United Nations Environment Programme, Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP CEP RCU)); **NGOs** (Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean (AMLC), Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Carmabi Foundation, Conservation International, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Panos Caribbean, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)); **Regional Projects** (ACP Fish II Programme, GEF Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Project, GEF Programa Golfo de Honduras, GEF Integrated Assessment and Management of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem, GEF Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management Programme (IWCAM)); and **Universities** (Universidad de la Habana, Universidad de Oriente, Venezuela, University of South Florida, University of the West Indies, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago Campuses). Experts from the Black Sea and Baltic Sea Commissions as well as extra-regional institutions (Dalhousie University, Atlantic Coastal Zone Information Steering Committee (ACZISC) also provided inputs.

ⁱⁱⁱ This focus has been chosen because of the support that can be obtained from the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Project (2009-2012). This project is expected to have a second phase that will overlap with the latter part of the proposed period of the project to operationalise the CSC.

^{iv} Fanning, L., R. Mahon, P. McConney, J. Angulo, F. Burrows, B. Chakalall, D. Gil, M. Haughton, S. Heileman, S. Martinez, L. Ostine, A. Oviedo, S. Parsons, T. Phillips, C. Santizo Arroya, B. Simmons, C. Toro. 2007. A large marine ecosystem governance framework. *Marine Policy* 31: 434–443.

^v ACS 2008. Report to the United Nations Secretary-General 'Towards the Sustainable Development of the Caribbean Sea for Present and Future Generations, and Synthesis of Issues and Challenges Surrounding the Caribbean Sea Initiative

^{vi} Mahon, R., L. Fanning, P. McConney and C. Toro. 2008. Governance for Caribbean marine resources: seeking a path. *Proc. Gulf & Caribb. Fish. Instit.*, 60: 3-7.

^{vii} Butler, M.J.A., P.R. Boudreau, C. LeBlanc and K. Baldwin. 2011. 20 Spatial Data Infrastructures in Support of Ecosystem Based Management and Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries in the Caribbean. Pp. 297-307. In: Fanning L., R. Mahon and P. McConney [eds]. Towards Marine Ecosystem-based Management in the Wider Caribbean. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam

See also abstract in: Fanning L., R. Mahon and P. McConney. 2009. Marine Ecosystem-Based Management in the Caribbean: an essential component of Principled Ocean Governance. Report of Caribbean Regional Symposium, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, December 10-12, 2008. CERMES Technical Report No. 17, 44 pp

^{viii} The GA endorsed the recommendations adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole for the **'Regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects'**. The recommendations propose a framework for the Regular Process; describe its first cycle and a way forward. It requests the Secretary-General to convene an informal meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole from 30 August to 3 September 2010 to further consider and make recommendations to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on the modalities for the implementation of the regular process, including the key features, institutional arrangements and financing, and to specify the objective and scope of its first cycle, key questions to be answered and primary target audiences, to ensure that assessments are relevant for decision-makers, as well as on the terms of reference for the voluntary trust fund and the scholarship fund (see also UNGA A/64/347 for Sixty-fourth session Item 78 (a) of the provisional agenda Oceans and the law of the sea -- Report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to recommend a course of action to the General Assembly on the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects - Letter dated 10 September 2009 from the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole addressed to the President of the General Assembly)

The GA requested the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of Sea to provide support for the regular process from existing resources or resources from the voluntary trust fund, in cooperation, as appropriate, with relevant United Nations specialized agencies and programmes. There is no specific reference to UNEP and IOC in terms of the regular process but there are opportunities up to the informal meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole from 30 August to 3 September 2010 to seek the support of member states in that regard.

The final report of the Group of Experts including a chapter on the Wider Caribbean by Mahon R and E. Escobar, was published in September 2009 as:

UNEP and IOC-UNESCO. 2009. [eds]. An Assessment of Assessments, Findings of the Group of Experts. Start-up Phase of a Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment including Socio-economic Aspects. Progress Press Ltd., Malta. 880 pp.