

# Sharing Innovative Experiences

VOLUME 2

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Special Unit for Technical  
Cooperation among  
Developing Countries

Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) is a means of building communication and of promoting wider and more effective cooperation among developing countries. It is a vital force for initiating, designing, organizing and promoting co-operation among developing countries so that they can create, acquire, adapt, transfer and pool knowledge and experience for their mutual benefit and for achieving national and collective self-reliance.



The Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), based in Barbados was set up in 1980 by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as an intergovernmental agency to assist countries in building capacities in the areas of public administration and public sector reform. It fulfills its mandate through collaboration with international organizations, governments and civil society in the Caribbean.

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**Sharing Innovative Experiences**  
**Examples of Successful Initiatives in Small Island Developing States**

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All societies have inherent capacities for responding to the various development challenges triggered by increasing globalisation and changing power relations between the nation states and global governance mechanisms. Many response mechanisms have been successful and provide lessons for guidance and adaptation where feasible by other societies.

Small Island Developing States are extremely vulnerable to a range of internal and external shocks as acknowledged by two major global conferences, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 and the United Nations Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (GSIDS) in 1994. SIDS have often responded with levels of creativity that are unique and appropriate to conditions within small states. Sharing of experiences among these states has proven to be an important element of capacity building and an effective strategy for providing these nations with substantive technical support.

It is in this context that the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) seeks to promote the documentation and sharing of experiences of "innovative strategies" by institutions and organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, in addressing the needs of these societies as a whole, or local communities within them. The Case Studies in this Report portray a range of initiatives from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the English-speaking Caribbean, as they address the 14 Priority Areas of the Programme of Action (POA) emanating from the 1994 Global Conference.

Many institutions have been undertaking very valuable work for a number of years without the capacity or the financial resources to record such efforts. This paucity of documented information on historical responses to developmental problems prevented a more in-depth analytical approach to this study. Despite this limitation, it was felt beneficial to document the experiences of Caribbean countries in their efforts to address developmental problems. It is hoped that this compendium can provide a basis for future analytical studies.

The Report should be seen as a working document to foster the exchange of ideas, personnel and related literature among and between Governmental institutions, organs of civil society, the private sector and community-based organisations within the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. It is also hoped that the “lessons learned” and guidelines on substantive issues discussed in the concluding chapter would be useful to those providing assistance for implementation of the SIDS POA, as well as for “innovative” strategies in South-South Co-operation.

The implementation of the project and the preparation of the report were managed by CARICAD, with the financial support and guidance of the Special Unit for TCDC of the UNDP. I thank the Information Services Officer of the Special Unit for TCDC, Atsede Worede Kal, and Dr. P. I. Gomes the Director of CARICAD for conceptualising, co-ordinating and implementing the project. I would also like to thank Dr. Carol James, the UNDP Caribbean Senior Sustainable Development Advisor, for the technical support, editorial assistance and guidance that she provided through the different stages of the project.

It is difficult to list the names of all the individuals and organisations that made valuable contributions to this study. To all the persons associated with the Case Studies, particularly those who assisted in data collection and gave their invaluable insights, I wish to extend my gratitude. I wish to thank specifically Mrs. Claudia Johnson of the Caribbean Development Bank; Ms. Celeste St. Hill, UNDP, Barbados, the staff of Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the field research team of Mr. Franklyn Michael, Mr. Simon Best, Mrs. Norma Shorey-Bryan and members of the organisations which formed the subject of the case-studies. The editorial quality of the Report was substantially enhanced by the skills of Mr. Norman Faria of Barbados and Ms. Ann Richardson of Caribbean Information System and Services, Trinidad and Tobago.



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## Introduction and Background to the Study

**D**evelopment policymaking can benefit from the collective wisdom, concrete experiences and innovative strategies of communities and institutions in the South. Donor agencies have recognized this and are giving greater attention to the documentation and dissemination of such experiences.

The case-studies documented in this Report draw on a wide range of experiences from among member countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). However, they are by no means representative of the breadth of experiences of the fifteen small island and low-lying coastal societies of CARICOM, but are primarily illustrative. These studies attempt to portray unique features and earnest efforts of small states to come to terms with the complex demands of sustainable development within small land masses, constrained by scarce resources and fragile ecosystems.

There is therefore, a need for these small states to rely on optimum utilisation of their physical, human and financial resources. These experiences demonstrate the will and creative energies of the people in managing the environment in a sustainable manner and in providing examples which may be replicated by other states, which have similar limited physical resources and other constraints.

Governments and other agencies need to articulate priorities and develop strategies, which would help in the implementation of sustainable programmes. It is hoped that these cases would assist them in that process.

Readers will be familiar with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro of 1992 and the special United Nations Global Conference in 1994 in Barbados, which formulated a Programme of Action (POA) directly relevant to the priority needs of small island states. The **POA** for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS **POA**) has become a

tangible example of a “global partnership,” between rich and poor countries working together for sustainable human development. (SIDS POA Priorities are identified in Annex 1).

The Study under Project INT/96/902 of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (SU/TCDC) was implemented by the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) - an inter-governmental policy research and human resource development agency of the CARICOM, headquartered in Barbados - with support from a Project Steering Committee comprising the UNDP Sustainable Development Advisor for the Caribbean, the Senior Project Officer of the Technical Cooperation of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and a representative of the UNDP Barbados Country Office.

A brief overview is presented of the historical context and process methodology utilised by CARICAD in support of capacity building and technical assistance under the POA of the Global Conference on SIDS POA, held in Barbados, in May 1994.

In a number of Caribbean countries, inadequate institutional and administrative capacity, as well as lack of relevant legislative frameworks, contributes to the limitations of progress towards achieving sustainable development at the national level. Responsibility for environment management and sustainable programmes often involves several ministries and sectoral interests, and the reality usually is a lack of coordination, and fragmented implementation, which affect planning and integration of national development activities. Such uncoordinated approaches to implement, and the lack of participatory planning processes, often bring benefits to one sector with ensuing problems to others. Additionally, sectoral approaches do not enable the identification and treatment of underlying structural issues affecting poverty and degradation in countries.

## Research Design and Methodology

Several "cases" which were illustrative of issues related to the 14 Priority Areas in the SIDS POA were identified and a standardised reporting format from SU/TCDC based on a 1996 Needs Assessment Survey was distributed to potential participants. A low response rate to the questionnaire and follow-up communications prompted a random identification of a preliminary group of cases as relevant examples of the 14 Priority Areas of the SIDS POA.

For instance, under the SIDS Priority Area of "natural and environmental disasters," actions in response to the crisis resulting from the Langs Soufriere volcano in Montserrat automatically merited attention. This case was selected with a view to identifying practical lessons on how institutions and agencies, within and outside Montserrat, responded to disaster management. Similarly, an analysis of activities relevant to the Priorities of the SIDS POA, of a few widely-recognised institutions in specialised areas such as the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST) and the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), was undertaken and presented here as case studies.

Based upon consultations by the CARICAD research team with the Project Steering Committee, and with potential participants, twenty-five cases were identified from which a "final sample" was selected for primary data-collection through field visits and interviews. The cases were taken from activities in nine of the fifteen CARICOM member countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

Despite limitations of the data available during the period of this study resulting from the lack of quantifiable indicators, project implementers particularly NGOs and Community-based Organisations (CBOs), often do not document activities or collect data of success/failure and derivation of lessons learned. Useful

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experiences were obtained and these were considered worthy of documentation.

The research exercise was helpful in making agencies more reflective and conscious of the need for specificity in defining expected outputs and outcomes, as well as measurable indicators of relative success/failure of their programmes and projects. It was also realised that the "neatly categorised **14** Priority Areas of SIDS POA are artificial categorisations really intended only to be of reporting value as the issues addressed are invariably cross-cutting.

Section **2** presents the cases; Section **3** provides a synthesis of some of the generic issues captured within the case studies and includes a few policy recommendations for further action towards people-centered development in the Caribbean.