

National Intersectoral Coordinating Mechanisms (NICs) Final Report

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Contract for Small Services 00094752/2015/01/UWI-CERMES



Development of this information product and its contents, and/or the activities leading thereto, have benefited from the financial support of the **UNDP/GEF Project**:
“Catalyzing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems”
(CLME+ Project, 2015-2020)

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Publication:

University of the West Indies (UWI), Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), December 2019
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 Photo front cover: Melanie Andrews, Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI).

Citation: Compton, S., P. McConney and R. Mahon. 2019. National Intersectoral Coordination Mechanisms (NICs) Final Report. Contract for Small Services 00094752/2015/01/UWI-CERMES. Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies, The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados. 15pp.

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ACRONYMS

CREMES	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
CFMC	Caribbean Fisheries Management Council
CIRM	Inter-ministerial Commission for Sea Resource
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CROP	Caribbean Regional Oceanscape Project
EAF	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
EBM	Ecosystem-Based Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GIFT	Gender in Fisheries Team
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission
NICs	National Intersectoral Coordination Mechanisms
NOCC	National Ocean Coordinating Committee
NOGC	National Ocean Governance Committee
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OGC	Ocean Governance Committee
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UWI	University of the West Indies
WIF	Women in Fisheries

1 INTRODUCTION

Sustainable governance of marine resources is dependent, in part, on understanding the full range of services provided, how they are linked and identifying all the relevant stakeholders and their capacities. Therefore, assessment tools and supporting governance mechanisms should be in place. There is a need for more empirical evidence to demonstrate actual benefits that can be derived from having multi-stakeholder, multi-sector governance structures. Intersectoral coordination is perceived to be critical to the development and sustainable management of coastal and marine ecosystems.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) International Waters (IW) Programme has recognized the importance of NICs in translating regional efforts to the national level. All GEF IW projects include the requirement to establish or enhance NICs. This report begins with a brief review of these efforts in Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) projects globally.

The CLME+ Project recognises the importance of and need for national-level intersectoral coordination within the CLME+ region, in order to achieve national, regional and international goals. This report outlines the status of national intersectoral coordination mechanisms (NICs), highlighting notable progress (i.e. confirming NICs exists and their establishment or strengthening) post the initial survey of NICs in the CLME+. The context for and approach to NICs are summarised in the sections following.

1.1 Context for NICs in the CLME+ region

The CLME+ is geopolitically, one of the most diverse and complex regions in the world. There are twenty-six independent states and eighteen dependent or associated territories that are located within, or border, the CLME+. In 2013, a 10 year CLME+ Strategic Action Programme¹ (SAP) was finalized and has been politically endorsed by 35 Ministers representing 25 countries and 6 overseas territories in the CLME+ region.

Outcome 1 of the UNDP/GEF Project on *Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Sustainable Management of Shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems* (CLME+ Project, 2015-2020) is Under this, output 1.2 is NICs. A first step towards this output has been to determine: (a) best practices related to NICs in LME projects globally and (b) the trends and status of NICs in the CLME+ region.

The establishment of NICs is identified in the CLME+ SAP as a target (60% NICs in participating countries by April, 2020 – see Box 1 in appendix) at the national level for implementing ecosystem-based management (EBM) and an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) for shared living marine resources in CLME+. No existing NIC is perfect. There is a growing awareness of the need to design these institutions to be adaptive (Compton et. al., 2017).

Regional governance arrangements must be supported by adequate national capacity for regional and international linkages to processes and activities. In theory, NICs could provide that needed national capacity. Ideally, NICs designed to operationalise the principles of good governance, allowing for the accommodation of different types of governance arrangements. NICs carry out most, if not all, the stages of a policy cycle (see appendix for the ideal features of NICs and an illustration on how NICs can become operationalise within governance processes).

1.2 Approach to NICs

In the CLME+ region, the approach to NICs has been focused on: 1) determining the existence of NICs or other similar mechanisms; 2) documenting and understanding best practices of NICs; and 3) where possible, monitoring and identifying any progress of NICs in the CLME+. The intention is to help establish and strengthen NICs for the improved governance of living marine resources throughout the CLME+.

In 2015, NICs in LMEs and the CLME+ region were surveyed. The results of the survey show that many stakeholders were open to either establishing or reactivating marine and/or ocean governance arrangements for achieving effective participatory governance (McConney et al., 2016). This survey of NICs reinforced the need to: 1) promote NICs as critical mechanisms for marine governance for and beyond the CLME+ project; and 2) obtain detailed information [on NICs] from countries to identify successes and best practices. Please refer to the full report on the survey of NICs for more information.

In 2017, guidelines on good practices for NICs were developed based on an assessment of the report on the survey of NICs. Ten good practices for NICs were identified (see appendix) and three samples for successful NICs were presented: Brazil Inter-ministerial Commission for Sea Resource (CIRM); Puerto Rico/US Virgin Islands Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC); and Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Ocean Governance Committee (OGC). For a more detailed account of these guidelines, please refer to the complete document. An update of these guidelines is currently in progress.

The next sections report on the existence of NICs, attention is paid to the limitations, successes and the role of gender in NICs.

2 A SURVEY OF NICS IN SELECTED LME PROJECTS

All GEF International Waters projects require participating countries to have or establish some form of national inter-sectoral coordinating mechanism. Therefore, a selection of GEF projects in LMEs globally was reviewed to determine how they had approached NICs and how successful they had been in developing them. Ten LME projects were reviewed: Agulhas-Somali Current, Arafura Timor Seas, Bay of Bengal, Benguela Current, Black Sea, Canary Current, Guinea Current LME, Humboldt Current, Mediterranean Sea, and South China Sea (McConney et al. 2016). Information on the establishment of NICs in the projects reviewed was difficult to obtain. There are several regular documents and reports that can be consulted in a GEF IW Project including Project Concepts, Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDAs), Strategic Action Programmes

(SAPs), Project Documents (ProDocs), Mid-term reviews (MTRs) and Terminal Evaluations (Tes). In addition, there are internal project documents such as Steering Committee and other meeting reports as well as technical reports some of which relate to governance. Unfortunately, these documents are not always readily accessible on the project, GEF or IW-LEARN websites. Documents are often undated, making it difficult to follow activities through time, and named in ways that make it difficult to know exactly what they are. These shortcomings make research on GEF IW projects difficult and a significant opportunity to understand and learn from these transboundary governance initiatives is compromised.

Regarding NICs specifically, there are few instances of clear reporting on their performance and lessons learned. Often all that can be determined is that NICs were required and whether or not they were established. Process related information that would assist with assessing performance and challenges are scarce. One could conclude that governance lessons learned were not a priority, either for the GEF or the project participants (country and organization representatives).

Whereas NICs (variously called National Inter-sectoral Committees or Inter Ministerial Committees) are required by the GEF for its IW projects, their implementation and functioning has been highly variable. In some cases they are the only national level committee, in others they are a high-level oversight committee together with a national technical committee. In some cases they have a direct role in implementing national level project activities including pilot projects.

The findings indicate that the importance of NICs has increased through time, both within successive LME Projects (e.g. Benguela Current LME) and across the range of projects. The South China Sea Project is an exception in which considerable attention was placed on national committees. However, details of performance are still not available. Even though NICs have become an increasingly prominent project requirement, they appear to have been a relatively low priority in several projects. It appears that when difficulties were encountered with establishing and operating them, not much pressure was applied by the project managers. This may have been for a variety of reasons such as: lack of appreciation of their importance, more interest in technical aspects of the project on the part of project managers, recognition that NICs were a burden on already overworked national staff, unwillingness to pressure countries, belief that it should be the role of national focal points to establish NICs, etc.

It is clear from the review of other LME projects that the establishment and operation of NICs in IW LME Projects has been challenging and that there has been limited success in most cases. A variety of reasons have been identified for this:

- Lack of will and/or capacity for organisation at the national level;
- Lack of funds to operate NICs;
- Perception that project specific NICs are too burdensome and that NICs should be permanent mechanisms;

- NICs not properly incorporated in project design;
- Project management unwilling to push countries to establish NICs.

Taking a broad view of GEF projects, Chen et al. (2013) noted that the large-scale IW projects usually focus on fostering formal intergovernmental cooperation processes, and that this approach may often lead to limited on-the-ground impact. In contrast, they observed that community-based IW projects are often local, individualistic and stand-alone projects, lacking regional linkages and perspectives. They emphasised the frequent gap that exists between regional and local processes and their outcomes. They stressed the need to adopt an integrated management approach to international waters management by incorporating local actions into regional and international waters management frameworks. The need to address this gap calls for project approaches that pay attention to all levels, from local to international, and their vertical and horizontal linkages as proposed in the LME Governance Framework (Fanning et al. 2007).

3 NICS PROGRESS IN THE CLME+ REGION

Establishing and sustaining NICs is challenging. NICs throughout the LME and CLME+ regions are poorly documented. NICs also have a track record of becoming inactive, therefore it is important to monitor their performance and activity.

3.1 Challenges and gaps

Information on NICs still presents some challenge mainly due to; persons who may know of or be involved in NICs availability and willingness to share information; information on NICs not always being documented or easily accessible; and the information acquired remains difficult to validate.

To overcome these challenges UWI-CERMES has been working in collaboration with CLME+ core partners (e.g. OECS, CRFM, UNESCO-IOC and FAO) and a regional network of stakeholders to improve the understanding of and the capacity for marine and ocean governance arrangements such as NICs (see appendix for an update on current activities and collaborations).

3.2 Successes and developments

Over the past two years, research on NICs and interactions with NIC and potential NIC stakeholders have contributed to positive developments in NICS within the CLME+ region. Through the OECS-CROP, the Eastern Caribbean countries of Dominica, Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis have been actively engaged in developing national ocean policies, while St. Vincent and the Grenadines' national ocean policy was recently approved by government in August 2018. These four countries, through the CROP have also been working towards developing NICs for ocean governance. To date, Saint Lucia has identified its list of stakeholders for a national ocean governance committee (NOGC) and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have established,

under their national ocean policy, a national ocean coordinating committee (NOCC). The NOCC convened its first meeting on September 19, 2019. Apart from the OECS-CROP, Antigua and Barbuda has established a NOGC.

More recently, work in the southern Caribbean under the FAO, CLME+ Sub-Project on “Ecosystem Approach to Shrimp and Groundfish Fisheries in the Norther Brazil Shelf” activities under output 1 on participatory governance aided in improving the understanding of NICs in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname. All three countries have NICs in place, however, Trinidad and Tobago does not currently have a NIC for fisheries governance. The intention is to develop the capacities of one of its existing supporting fisheries mechanism and transform it into a NIC.

In the northern Caribbean region: Jamaica has made provisions for a fishery advisory committee (FAC) in their 2018 Fisheries Act; and the Bahamas NIC - The BEST Commission will be reconstituted under the expanded portfolio of the Environmental Advisory Board upon the passing of the 2017 Ministry of the Environment Bill.

CLME+ region is successfully meeting its target with sustainable NICs and near NICs currently operating at 68% (Table 1). Continued support for NICs should result in an increase in the number of operating NICs. This progress will be continuously monitored considering the possibility of NICs still becoming inactive.

Table 1. Status of NICs as of July, 2019. Operating NICs in the CLME+ region is up from 58%(since December, 2018) to 68%, currently.

NIC	Near NIC	No NIC
Antigua and Barbuda	Aruba	Anguilla
Barbados	Bahamas	British Virgin Islands
Brazil	Belize	Dominica
Cayman Islands	Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba	Dominican Republic
Colombia	Costa Rica	Guadeloupe
Cuba	Curacao	Haiti
French Guiana	Jamaica	Honduras
Grenada	Mexico	Panama
Guyana	Montserrat	St. Barts

NIC	Near NIC	No NIC
Guatemala		St Kitts and Nevis
Nicaragua		Venezuela
St. Lucia		
Suriname		
St. Vincent and the Grenadines		
Trinidad and Tobago		

The continued challenge for NICs is to get diverse stakeholders from the different coastal and marine sectors (e.g. fisheries, tourism, marine managed areas, transportation, energy, etc.) with different, competing and conflicting interests to work well together in developing and pursuing shared goals for the overall benefit of society and environment. Even with NICs in place there are still limitations that need to be addressed and capacities that require further development (see appendix for a summary of the needed capacities identified by stakeholders).

3.3 Gender in NICs

In considering NICs, there is recognition of the importance of analyzing and strengthening the gender dimensions in NICs for gender mainstreaming. Improving the understanding of the role of gender in institutional arrangements, stakeholder capacity and stakeholder participation is necessary for identifying gaps and addressing needs.

Gender- disaggregated data continues to be generally poor throughout the CLME+ region. Genderrelated data for NICs is therefore difficult to assess because it is either poorly documented or there is limited access to information (if existing). UWI-CERMES gender in fisheries team (GIFT) continues to work closely alongside its CLME+ project partners and other regional and international agencies to improve the understanding of gender at national and regional levels, in order to: 1) better facilitate gender mainstreaming in the CLME+ region; and 2) work towards achieving global targets such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5.

The GIFT continues to focus its efforts on gender in livelihoods and governance institutions as it relates to an EAF, climate and disasters, poverty, food security and other aspects of the of small scale fisheries throughout the Caribbean region.

Some of the major findings from preliminary gender assessments and interactions (via workshops and meetings) with stakeholders along the small scale fisheries value chain revealed

that women play an important role in institutional and decision-making processes. Much of the information on their [women's] roles and contribution remains undocumented.

To further its effort, GIFT organized the Women in Fisheries (WIF) Forum, held on 8 March, 2019. The forum was the first of its kind in Barbados and was also held in association with the implementation of the Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) Guidelines. The objective of the event was to address the lack fisheries information on gender disaggregated data useful for assessing and comparing the various roles and socioeconomic contributions of women and men.

4 CONCLUSION

NICs play key roles in national and regional ocean governance and are permanent multistakeholder components of regional governance frameworks – connecting vertically the national to local governance levels and facilitating the lateral connection of national sectors in (sub)regional matters. Once NICs are functioning well, countries would be better positioned for achieving goals. The development of effective regional integrating and coordinating mechanisms is essential for the successful achievement of SDGs and other ocean related initiatives, e.g. the Blue Economy (Mahon and Fanning, 2019).

There is empirical evidence to support that NICs do exist in the CLME+ region. Growing awareness of the importance of NICs and support for strengthening and establishing NICs has resulted in promising outcomes for marine and ocean governance in the CLME+ (i.e. development of national ocean policies and committees). However, further understanding is needed of how well and differently NICs within and across countries function and complement each other. Research and continued monitoring of NICs is expected to extend beyond the CLME+ project

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6 APPENDICES

6.1 NICs targets

Box 1. Output 1.2 – NICs milestone and targets to be achieved under the CLME+ SAP.

Output 1.2 (O1.2) <i>National Inter-sectoral Coordination (NIC) mechanisms</i> (including science-policy interfaces) in place	PI1. <i>Functioning NIC mechanism(s)</i>	T.PI1. (Milestone) <i>Completed baseline analysis</i> of NIC mechanisms, including identification of good practices, by end of 2015 and updated by end of 2019; T.PI1. (Target) <i>Sustainable NIC or equivalent mechanisms operating in at least 60% of CLME+ participating countries</i> , by end of April 2020
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6.2 NIC features

Box 2. Some features of an ideal NIC

Conceptually, NICs are based on the principles of good governance. An ideal NIC should be flexible enough to accommodate different types of governance arrangements and exhibit all or a favorable combination of the following features:

1. Support comprehensive and equitable inclusion of stakeholders;
2. Encourages individuals to become champions and leaders;
3. Be politically and administratively endorsed with clear legal mandate;
4. Have well-established processes in place for reviewing and evaluating progress and effectiveness;
5. Promote and enable multi-level, multi-sector integration;
6. Facilitate linkages between national and regional government processes; and
7. Be able to address specific tasks within broader contexts and adaptive capacity

6.3 NICs in governance processes

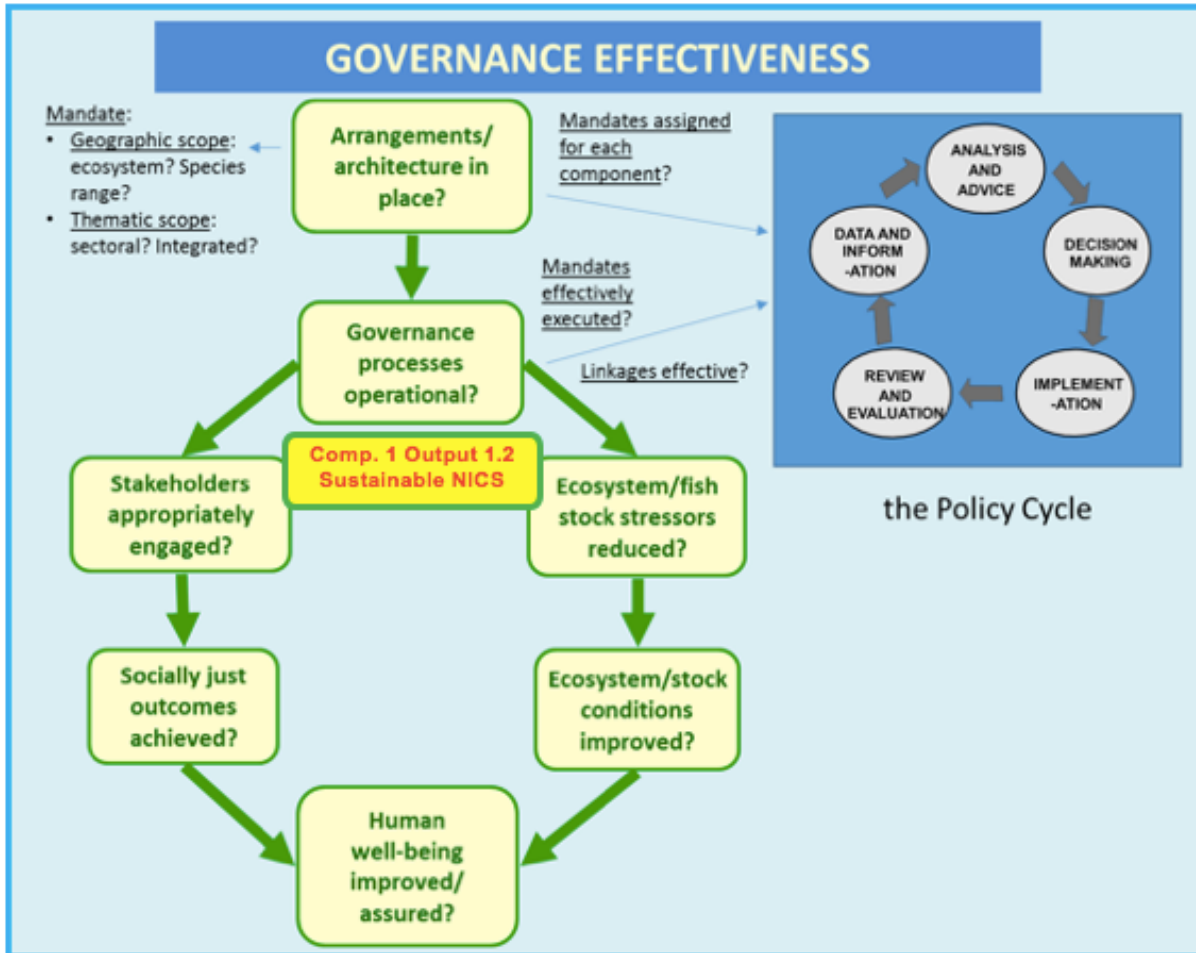


Figure 1. Illustration of how NICs can be seen as the operational input into governance processes.

6.4 NIC good practices

Box 3. The 10 good practices for NIC identified in the guidelines for successful NICs, 2017

1. Promote and practice the principles of good governance as fundamental to NIC
2. Ensure the availability and use of up-to-date and non-conflicting legislation
3. Innovatively reduce the operational costs of meetings and communicating
4. Mobilise champions and leaders to give a NIC new energy and direction
5. Develop internal solution-based conflict management mechanisms
6. Guiding policy influence by effectively mapping and managing networks
7. Include multiple stakeholder groups directly or through sub-structures
8. Understand the hidden power dynamics associated with NIC stakeholders
9. Increase private sector participation for economic links and policy influence
10. Document processes for transparency, accountability, institutional memory

6.5 CERMES partnerships for NICs

Table 2. Summary of some of the more recent CERMES partnerships for NIC programmes, projects and initiatives within the CLME+ region.

Partnerships	Programme/Project/Initiative	NIC Component	Notes
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and their Ocean Governance and Fisheries (OGF) team – through the UNESCO-IOC, LME:LEARN GEF funded inter-project collaboration.	<p>Caribbean Regional Oceanscape Project (CROP) - The CROP has a role in supporting and implementing the CLME+ SAP.</p> <p>The CROP is designed to contribute to strengthening capacity for ocean governance, and coastal and marine geospatial planning in the participating countries.</p> <p>Under CROP, participating countries are to develop/strengthen their national ocean policies and have national ocean governance committees (OGC) in place.</p>	To understand and improve good practices and institutional arrangements including but not limited to marine spatial planning, integrated coastal management, and marine protected areas.	In 2018 the OECS-OGF and the University of the West Indies-Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (UWI-CERMES) collaborated within (CROP) to learn from multi-stakeholder coastal and marine governance arrangements in the Eastern Caribbean CROP countries.
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UWI-CERMES.	Sub-Project on “Ecosystem Approach to Shrimp and groundfish fisheries in the Northern Brazil Shelf” (UNJP/RLA/217/OPS). The aim of the project is to maximize the contributions of the shrimp and groundfish resources to human well-being and socio-economic development in the CLME+ region.	To support participatory governance arrangements (i.e NICs) by strengthening/establishing these arrangements at the national level to facilitate implementation of EAF.	The information on NICs will be used to inform the status of NICs and the EAF Sub-regional fisheries management plan (FMP).
Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat, Caribbean ICT Research Programme (CIRP), UWI-CERMES and FAO.	Implementing the “Developing Organizational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries (StewardFish)” project.	To promote and support good governance and learning for adaptation institutionalized among fisherfolk organisations	A key expected outcome is strengthening the participation of fisherfolk organizations in, and the inclusion of StewardFish in suitable NICs and to develop a good practice guideline.

6.6 Needed NIC capacities

Table 3. The most common limitations identified across several CLME+ countries as being most critical and in need of capacity development to support NICs

Countries	Technical	Governance	Scientific
Saint Lucia	Funding to support: 1. Hiring of financial advisors (to leverage additional funding) 2. Supporting training to develop enforcement capacity	Effective legislation needed for supporting a framework that can address issues related to enforcement	
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	1. Financial 2. Education awareness	Policy Implementation	Research and Data
St. Kitts & Nevis	Human capacity to support: 1. Administrative and management needs such as having: waste management specialist, pollution control specialist, communication specialist/ public education officer.		
Grenada		1. Clear policies and legislation along with management plans. 2. Improved understanding of governance structures.	
Dominica	1. Training for capacity building 2. Administrative assistance to support management	Legislation in place and support for enforcement and monitoring.	
Trinidad & Tobago	1. Funding 2. Human capacity/manpower 3. Governance and leadership training	1. Legislation and enforcement 2. Communication and agreement among stakeholders 3. Board/ committee	Data and information
Guyana	Funding to support training (develop expertise)	1. Policies and guidelines 2. Provisions for improving implementation	

Countries	Technical	Governance	Scientific
Suriname	1. Funding (for supporting implementation activities) 2. Training (develop expertise)	1. Legislative review (for better/more informed decision-making) 2. Implementation/Enforcement of policies 3. Increased participation and better collaboration among stakeholders	Data collection and analysis