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CARIBBEAN COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



MECHANISMS FOR COLLABORATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
BETWEEN CCST AND CARICOM

Paper presented to the  
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for Science and Technology

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Introduction

In March 1977, during the Second Session of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC), it was decided that urgent steps be taken to establish a Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST) and this decision was brought to successful fruition with the adoption and signing of the Statutes by eleven countries in Kingston, Jamaica on 17 April 1980.

The CCST is envisaged as a unique operational mechanism for enhancing regional co-operation and mutual assistance in Science and Technology which will strengthen the thrust for regional self-reliance whilst simultaneously observing the national independence and sovereignty of its Member Countries.

Objectives

The CCST is envisaged as a nucleus with functional co-ordinating responsibility for Science and Technology within the region, but with the day-to-day activities devolved amongst the various national institutions. Its specific aims include:

- (i) to implement CDCC objectives by designing and executing appropriate joint scientific and technological projects, and also advise the CDCC and its Member Countries on scientific and technological issues requiring attention;
- (ii) to identify institutions that could participate in the projects, and establish the mechanisms for co-operation;

- (iii) where no relevant institutions exist, to propose measures for the implementation of particular projects;
- (iv) to devise procedures for the effective dissemination of the results of Caribbean R+D projects, and their application in Member Countries;
- (v) generally, to promote the establishment and strengthening of appropriate national and Caribbean organs and mechanisms for science and technology development and application.

#### Present Membership

Membership of CCST is open to those Member Countries of the CDCC who have accepted or ratified the Statutes. At the time of writing membership comprises:

Belize	Haiti
Cuba	Jamaica
Dominica	St. Lucia
Grenada	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Guyana	Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago	

At the Third Plenary Session of the Council held in Curacao, an amendment to the Statutes was adopted which would allow Associate Members of the Economic Commission for Latin America within the Caribbean Region to become Associate Members of CCST. Thus on that basis the Netherlands Antilles would become eligible for Associate Membership.

Each Member and Associate Member Country is entitled to designate two Council Members, one of whom must be a scientist chosen by the respective Government.

#### Background

The CARICOM Ministers responsible for Science and Technology held their first Meeting in Jamaica, 6-8 April 1983. They commented on the need to increase at higher decision-making level, the harmonious integration of Science and

Technology within the overall strategies for national and regional development.

As an "ad-hoc" mechanism, they established the Interim Coordinating Committee (ICC) comprising representatives from Caribbean and other international Agencies and requested the ICC to prepare and submit a report to a five-member inter-ministerial sub-committee by August 1983.

The Ministers' directives were discussed during the Second Inter-Agency Meeting (26 July) and the Third Plenary Session (27-29 July 1983) of CCST and the Secretariat was asked to prepare a discussion paper which would elaborate mechanisms and areas for enhancing collaboration whilst taking into account the mandate, the programme and the membership of CCST.

#### Discussion Briefs

1. Any mechanisms for collaboration which may be suggested, must take cognizance of the fact that in the present financial climate, the creation of additional bureaucracies should be avoided and whatever supplementary resources may become available should be channelled to support existing institutions that are already performing in the field. It makes no sense to allow one institution to fail because of lack of support, just to create a new institution-

2. Among the several important assets which may enable the CCST to enhance regional S+T collaboration are:-

(i) its Membership which embraces the wider Caribbean and which in the foreseeable future, will make it the perfect interface between CARICOM and non-CARICOM States.

(ii) its Composition. Each Member Country is entitled to designate two Council Members, one of whom must be a scientist chosen by the respective government from amongst senior officials of national

Science and Technology Councils. It is therefore intended that CCST should be the forum at which policies and programmes in S+T can be discussed and identified at both official and technical levels. Also by virtue of its composition, CCST can play an important role by involving NGO's such as Science Foundations, Professional Associations etc..

3. Since the CCST was created by Member Governments as a vehicle for enhancing regional S+T collaboration, it has a major responsibility to devise mechanisms for discharging this mandate. Council has recognised that effective collaboration and coordination can only be based on information about current S+T activities in the region. The CCST therefore, commissioned a report on regional S+T Projects/Programmes which are presently supported by the various Agencies.

The report Document No. CDCC/CCST/83/17 was prepared by Dr. Irvine, UNESCO Consultant to the Caribbean in S+T and was discussed at the Second Inter-Agency Meeting (Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles 26 July 1983).

As a result of the discussions many of the Agencies represented at the Meeting have become convinced that much more can be done by the Agencies themselves in coordinating their activities and this process can be facilitated by CCST. One particular area for example would be in the formulation of a Regional Policy in Science and Technology in order that projects are directed towards overall national as well as regional development goals.

#### Recommendations

In order to avoid wasteful duplication of effort, it is recommended that:

1. The Inter-Agency Meeting which now forms part of the CCST calendar, could be formally institutionalised as the forum in which S+T collaboration among the various agencies can be implemented and strengthened.

2. The CCST be given every assistance to allow the following projects to be completed so that the results can be made available to all governments and organizations within the shortest possible time.

It should be noted that the results of these projects can in most instances form the basis for furthering collaboration between Member Countries.

Project I

Title: "Assessment of National Science and Technology Capabilities"

Objectives:

The principal objective is to obtain information on quality and quantity of S+T Personnel as well as their deployment within the national framework for development.

Comments:

This project is well advanced in/or already completed by some countries and an attempt is being made to identify a regional profile. However, several of the smaller territories need and have requested assistance and CCST is willing to provide this in the form of a Research Assistant for approximately thirty (30) working days. The computer analysis will be done 'in house' for a nominal sum.

As this is the type of information upon which all future programmes in S+T will be predicated, the meeting is asked to fully endorse the project and to provide whatever resources are required.

Project III

Title: "Preparation and Exchange of Audio-Visual Material for Education in Science and Technology".

Objectives:

To sensitise students, teachers, decision-makers and the general public to the pivotal role which S+T can perform in present day society by providing information in a format that can be understood by all levels of users.

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Comments:

As far as is known no other regional institution is as yet engaged in this activity. Two films have already been made both of which have received favourable reviews. In considering the CARICOM Ministers' directives (Agro-Industries and Information) it will be possible to produce educational films to stimulate the Development of Regional Agriculture and Agro-Industries and thereby providing the ultimate harmony in executing the directives of the Ministers.

Project VII

Title: "The Potential and Limitations of Newly Emerging Technologies with special reference to developing countries".

Objectives:

- i) To create an awareness of the implications of newly emerging technologies among senior officials and decision-makers in regional governments and institutions.
- ii) To identify and implement the type of practical action that would be most effective for the beneficial utilization of these technologies.

Comments:

Much of CCST's Work Programme is meant to be guided through Specialist Committees and Working Groups. Thus by utilising the best technical expertise available both regionally and internationally CCST can ensure that its Members are kept fully informed of those developments which are presently taking place in the frontiers of science and technology, but which in a few years will impact upon everyday life in the region.

By its composition and mandate CCST is ideally suited to perform this anticipatory function and thereby keeping the execution of projects in generally purposeful directions.

Project VIII

Title: "A Science and Technology Policy for the Caribbean"

Objectives:

To formulate a cohesive Regional Policy on S+T which will harmonise the priorities and present capabilities of individual Member Countries.

Comments:

A Preliminary Analysis of Document CDCC/CCST/83/17 indicates the lack of cohesion in the plethora of projects being undertaken. This observation will be further supported as additional and updated information becomes available.

The situation is mainly due to the absence of a fully articulated Regional Policy in S+T which would take account of national needs, perspectives and capabilities.

The CCST by its composition and mandate should be identified as the mechanism for formulating a Regional Policy.

