



E/CEPAL/CDCC/16/Rev.1

14 February 1977

SECOND SESSION

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
16-22 March 1977

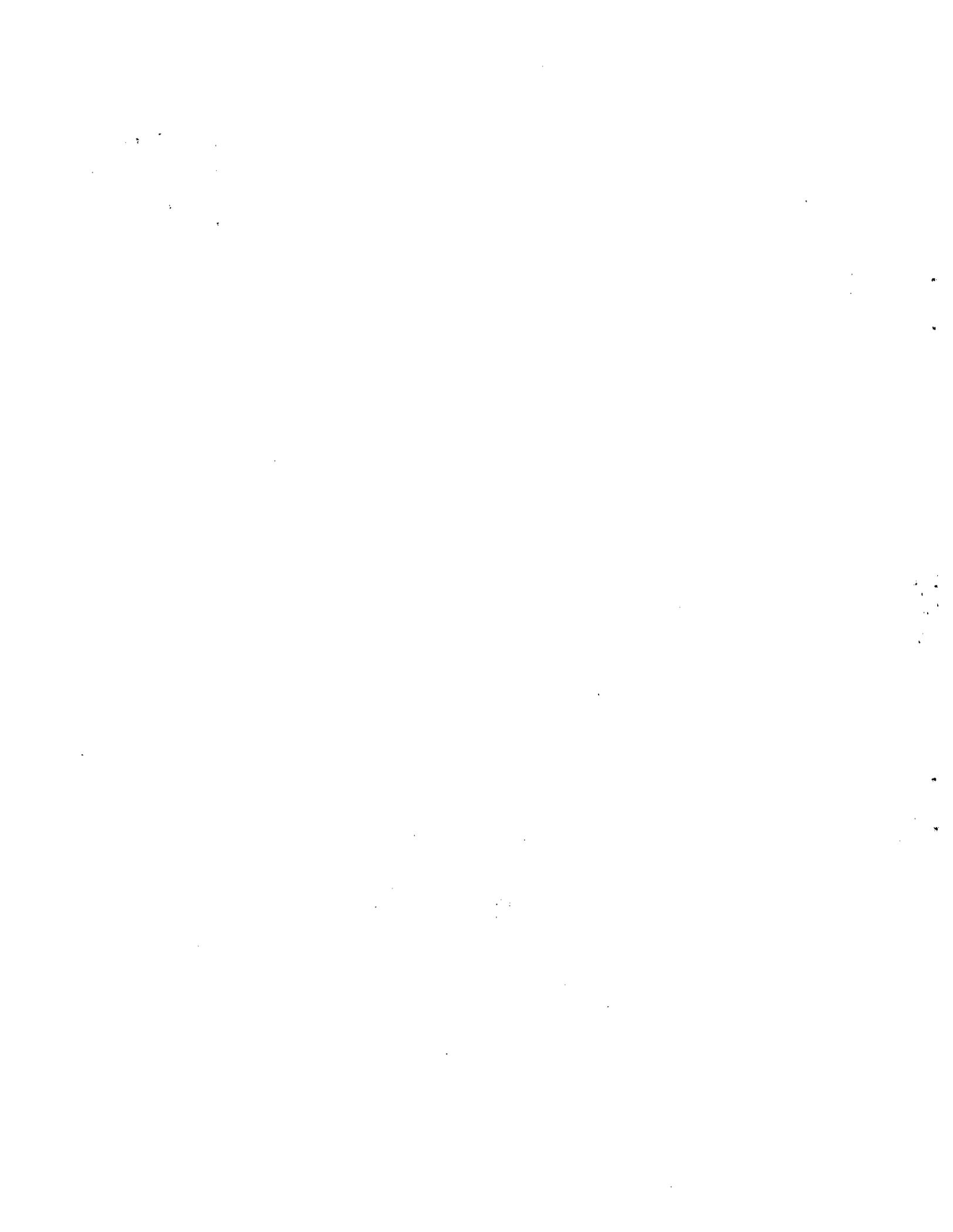
DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

To serve the countries of the Caribbean  
Development and Co-operation Committee  
(CDCC)



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA Office for the Caribbean



## C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction .....	1
I The Role of Information Supporting Services to the CDCC .....	1
II Identification of Information Inputs for Caribbean Co-operation promotion activities .....	4
III Work Programme for a CDCC Documentation Centre .....	7
Appendix: Methodology to estimate information requirements for Caribbean co-operation promotion activities: an outline .....	11



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CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE (CDCC)  
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INTRODUCTION

1. This note examines the question of the creation of a documentation centre to serve the countries of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC).<sup>1/</sup> It proceeds from the basis that some essential information infrastructure has to be established if the objectives of the CDCC are to be met. The study concludes, on the one hand, that a Documentation Centre is an adequate institutional answer to CDCC information needs. On the other, it is advocated that its structure should be based as far as possible on close links with existing Caribbean and international documentation services; and that its main functions should be dissemination and referral services, rather than a centralized gathering of documents and data.

2. The document outlines a sequence of activities for the design and development of the Centre. The conception of the Centre is based on an analysis of the information requirements of Caribbean co-operation promotion activities and the degree in which these requirements are being satisfied by existing information services. A detailed description of the methodology used is attached in an appendix. The document ends with a programme to implement the establishment of the Centre.

I. The Role of Information Supporting  
Services to CDCC

3. The political commitment of the CDCC member countries and ECLA Secretariat to work together in the promotion of development and co-operation efforts in the Caribbean poses a unique challenge. The activities on the part of the Governments will depend upon its ability to:

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<sup>1/</sup> The CDCC was set up to act as a co-ordinating body relating to development and co-operation actions among Caribbean countries and to serve as an advisory and consultative body for the Executive Secretary of ECLA in respect to Caribbean issues and circumstances. For a more detailed explanation reference should be made to "Report of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee", E/CEPAL/CDCC/8/Rev.1, February 1976.

- i) Carry out prospective studies and formulate substantive projects and policy proposals to be submitted to the CDCC member countries in Caribbean priority sectors;
- ii) Co-ordinate regional technical assistance programmes and supply the needed expertise to support these policies and projects.

4. Information interchange among CDCC Secretariat and CDCC member countries' Ministries during co-ordination and implementation processes will be effective and constructive provided both parts receive pertinent, accurate and updated information about the priority sectors on which regional co-operation actions are to be centred. The sectors which have been mentioned so far cover a wide range of subjects about which information should be provided, such as:

- Horizontal Technical Co-operation;
- Agriculture;
- Industrial Development;
- Social Development;
- Public Health;
- Education and Culture;
- Tourism;
- Transport and Communications;
- Marine Resources;
- Coastal Area Development;
- Regional Economic Co-operation;
- International Trade; and
- Natural Disasters.<sup>2/</sup>

5. Information needed for the effective promotion of Caribbean concerted efforts is of a varied nature. Normally, documents and references about documents containing theories, methodologies, statistical data etc. would be demanded relating to different levels of Caribbean action such as joint programmes (policies, agreements, legislation, projects, etc.) and enquiries and studies being carried out by various research groups on Caribbean problems. If this information

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<sup>2/</sup> Op. cit. - Annex 3 - Work Programme of the CDCC.

is not made available to both decision-making and "decision-preparing" agents of CDCC, the main obstacles that have hindered co-operation efforts will remain untouched:

- i) duplications and inconsistencies of efforts among countries and international bodies;
- ii) communication gaps between researchers, advisers, and policy-makers; together with great losses and distortions of information.

Thus, the effective role of ECLA in the Caribbean is seen to depend much upon timely information flows and better informed decisions.

6. The information which flows between the institutions and the countries involved have been normally channelled through mechanisms such as meetings, field visits and personal contacts. However, the presently increasing complexity in terms of the number of concepts and facts that must be manipulated, is exceeding these mechanisms' capacity as information channels. Although they still remain very useful and should be encouraged, they need to be supplemented by other information interchange devices. Accordingly, the main focus is on the particular type of mechanism required by the CDCC that is capable of recording, digesting, storing and retrieving registered information with the purpose of providing a continuing service to its set of users: a Documentation Centre.

7. The methodology used for the Centre's design is straightforward. It consists of the following sequence of logical steps:

- i) Identification of the Centre's priority users;
- ii) Identification of these users' information requirements;
- iii) Analysis of existing documentation services in the Caribbean that might fulfil the user's information requirements;
- iv) Comparison of information demand and information supply for each type of information required.

II. Information inputs for Caribbean co-operation promotion activities

8. In order to identify the information inputs required and the way in which they are currently provided by existing information services, classification of types of information and their users need to be specified.

9. On the basis of CDCC documents and first experiences of the CDCC Secretariat in the region, the following priority users have been identified.

- i) CDCC Secretariat (ECLA Office for the Caribbean);
- ii) CDCC Permanent Secretaries;
- iii) Caribbean integration agencies and bodies;
- iv) International Agencies operating in CDCC countries;
- v) Research Institutes specialized in Caribbean problems (located both inside and outside the Caribbean);
- vi) Information Units endowed with important Caribbean collections (located both inside and outside the Caribbean).

These groups of users can be taken to be the scope of the Documentation Centre's clients. Of course, it is envisaged that other users could also benefit from the services provided by the Centre, but their involvement is seen to be of less direct importance.

10. Similarly, on the basis of consultations with experts and officers involved in performing research, co-ordination and decision-making activities similar to that of CDCC, the following information inputs have been identified.

Type of Information Input	International Scope (I)	Caribbean scope (C)
Statistical data (registered in documents)	X	X
Periodicals	X	X
Books	X	X
CDCC Governments technical reports		X
Academic Research Reports	X	X
Technical assistance and Integration agencies reports		X
Newspapers Clippings		X

11. In Table 1, an estimate of the balance between demand of and supply for each type of information inputs is provided. The relative importance of information demand was estimated using the methodology described in the attached appendix. This methodology allows only a rough approximation of demand since it is based on parameters estimated on the basis of current practical experience. On the other hand, the relative importance of information supply is founded on data detected in interviews and documents collected during field visits to Caribbean Information Units. These visits were required for organizing national inventory projects at present sponsored by CLADES in the Caribbean. The inventory is being carried out through a questionnaire which covers an ample range of documentation resources and services.

12. According to Table 1, there appears to be some types of information requirements not fully satisfied by existing services, which can be used as a guide for areas of specialization of the documentation centre. These are characterized by a demand largely exceeding the available supply, and are:

- i) Statistical data on the Caribbean;
- ii) CDCC Governments technical reports;
- iii) Technical Assistance and Integration documentation on the Caribbean.

13. Another possible area of specialization in which demand only moderately exceeds supply is the one of Caribbean Periodicals.

14. These areas have been taken as a preliminary guide of the functional structure of the documentation centre and of its programme for implementation. However, it should be stressed that: (i) a more thorough analysis of demand and supply would be needed, and (ii) this analysis should be undertaken from time to time, once the documentation centre is operational since it will allow a permanent adaptation of the centre to the regional information needs in the field of co-operation promotion and integration. The demand estimate would for example need a detailed user profiles study while the supply estimate would be greatly improved once the results of the CLADES inventory projects are available.



III. Work Programme for a CDCC Documentation Centre

15. The programme for setting up of the Centre can be conceived as a series of sequential activities, proceeding gradually from the easier services to the more complex. This allows an accumulation of experience through "learning by doing", which can be very useful for the more complex stages.

16. This sequential strategy can be divided into two phases:

First Phase (0-18 month): Devoted to the establishment of the basic operational tools for doing documentation work such as:

- i) users studies and directories;
- ii) design of controlled vocabulary based on OECD Macrothesaurus and works being done by CLADES on thesauri;
- iii) setting up of a comprehensive reference collection (indexes, abstracts, bibliographies), and a basic collection of Caribbean books and periodicals;
- iv) experimental indexing; and
- v) arrive at agreement with the governments in order to gather and disseminate technical documents not normally published by the official agencies.

Second Phase (19-36 months): This phase, while continuing with the services of Phase 1, would introduce the operation of more sophisticated services such as:

- i) Caribbean newsletter;
- ii) bibliographic control on technical co-operation reports;
- iii) indexing; and
- iv) the computerization of the processing and retrieval of bibliographic information.

17. The human resources that would be needed to operate the Centre are:

	First Phase	Second Phase
Centre Chief	X	X
Documentalist/Librarian	X	X
Assistant Information Officer/Secretary	X	X
Documentalist/Programmer		X
Secretary		X

18. Tables 2 and 3 show a description of activity involved in Phases 1 and 2 respectively. For each activity, the type of co-operation with outside institutions, the activity output, and the needed human resources inputs has been specified.

Table 2

WORK PROGRAMME:

1ST PHASE (0-18th MONTH)

Activity	Activity Outputs	Related Institutions	Type of Co-operation	DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF WORK		
				Chief	Documentalist/ Librarian	Asst. Information Officer/Secretary
1. Users Studies	a. Users Profiles	CLADES	-Technical Assistance	Methodology; Design	Field Work	--
	b. File of Institutions and Individuals	Caribbean Information Units	-Data	Design	Searches	Maintenance of File
2. Controlled Vocabulary	List of Descriptions	CLADES	-Technical Assistance	Methodology; Supervision	Experimental Indexing	--
3. Reference Collection	Reference Service	ECLA Library UN Library UWI, IDC	-Donation -Donation -Loans	Methodology	Compilation of Reference works; Reference Service	--
4. Caribbean Books & Periodicals Collection	Union Catalogue; Reference Manual; SDI	Trinidadian libraries; Library of Congress (Washington)	-Exchange	Supervision; Preparation of Bulletin	Selection; Indexing; Reference	Cataloguing; Circulation; Distribution; Shelving; Purchasing; Typing
5. Government Reports Collection	Idem	CDCC Printing Agencies & Governmental Agencies		Negotiation	Idem	Idem

Table 3

WORK PROGRAMME:

2ND PHASE: (19th-36th MONTH)

Activity	Activity Outputs	Related Institutions	Type of Co-operation	DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF WORK				
				Chief	Documenta- list/Libr.	Asst. Docu.	Infor. Officer /Secrty	Key Puncher/ Codifier
6. Technical Assistance and Integration Agencies Collection	Reference; Bulletin	UNDP, CDB, CARICOM, IDRC	Exchange	Negotiation; Supervision	Indexing Reference	Cata- loguing		
7. Caribbean Academic Research File	Bulletin; Reference		Inter- change	Negotiation; Supervision	Indexing; Reference	Cata- loguing		
8. Caribbean Co-operation Newsletter	Bulletin	INTAL; Institute of Inter- national Relations, UWI	Inter- change	Negotiation; Supervision	Indexing; Reference	Cata- loguing		
9. Computerization of Information Processing	Indexes; Automatic searches; SDI	CLADES	Technical Assistance	Negotiation; Supervision	Indexing; Reference	Cata- loguing		Key- Punching; Codifying

APPENDIX: Methodology to estimate information requirements for Caribbean co-operation promotion activities: an outline

19. A. The methodology is straightforward and consists of two sequential steps:
- i) The construction of an information-requirements matrix;
  - ii) The establishment of parameters to estimate the relevance of a particular information input and the relative importance of each type of users;
  - iii) The calculation of a modified information-requirements matrix weighted according to users importance and information input relevance.

20. The information requirements matrix shown in Table 4 has been built on the basis of reasonable estimates taken from current practical experiences of regional agencies doing similar work to the CDCC. The ordinal scale used (high, medium, low), rank the relative relevance of an information input in the context of the total information utilized by a particular user. Thus a high level of relevance for one user is not identical with the high level for another, for a particular information input.

21. The modified matrix shown in Table 5 was worked out to what is considered a reasonable set of parameters.

Information Inputs

Information Relevance Scale:	High = 3; Medium = 2; Low = 1
Users importance scale:	CDCC Secretariat = 6
	CDCC Permanent Secretaries = 5
	Caribbean Integration Agencies = 4
	International Agencies = 3
	Caribbean specialized research institutes = 2
	Caribbean Specialized Information Units = 1

22. It is worthwhile noting that this methodology provides only a first approximation to information demand. A more accurate estimate could be obtained if the information requirements matrix and the relevant parameters are revised through users information profiles studies. Similarly, the users importance is to some extent a political decision that might be structured with the help of, for example, sociological scaling techniques.

TABLE 4: INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS MATRIX

USERS	SPECIFIC INFORMATION INPUTS										
	Statistical Data		Periodicals		Books		Government Reports	Academic Research		Tech.Asst. and Integration Reports	Newspapers Clippings
	I	C	I	C	I	C	C	I	C	C	C
CDCC Secretariat	M	H	M	H	L	M	H	-	M	H	M
CDCC Permanent Secretaries	L	H	L	M	-	L	H	-	M	M	H
Caribbean Inter-governmental Agencies	M	H	M	H	L	M	H	-	M	H	H
International Agencies in the Caribbean	M	H	M	H	L	M	H	-	M	H	M
Caribbean Specialized Research Institutes	L	H	H	H	H	H	M	M	H	M	L
Caribbean Specialized Information Units	-	L	-	-	-	-	M	L	M	L	L

I: International Scope  
C: Caribbean Scope

H: High  
M: Medium  
L: Low

TABLE 5: WEIGHTED USER - INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS MATRIX

USERS	SPECIFIC INFORMATION INPUTS										
	Statistical Data		Periodicals		Books		Government Reports	Academic Research		Tech.Asst. and Integration Reports	Newspapers Clippings
	I	C	I	C	I	C	C	I	C	C	C
CDCC Secretariat	12	18	12	18	6	12	18	0	12	18	12
CDCC Permanent Secretaries	5	15	5	10	0	5	15	0	15	10	15
Caribbean Inter-governmental Agencies	8	12	8	12	4	8	12	0	8	12	12
International Agencies in the Caribbean	6	9	6	9	3	6	9	0	6	9	6
Caribbean Specialized Research Institutes	2	6	6	6	6	6	4	4	6	4	2
Caribbean Specialized Information Units	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	1
TOTAL SCORE	<u>33</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>48</u>

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