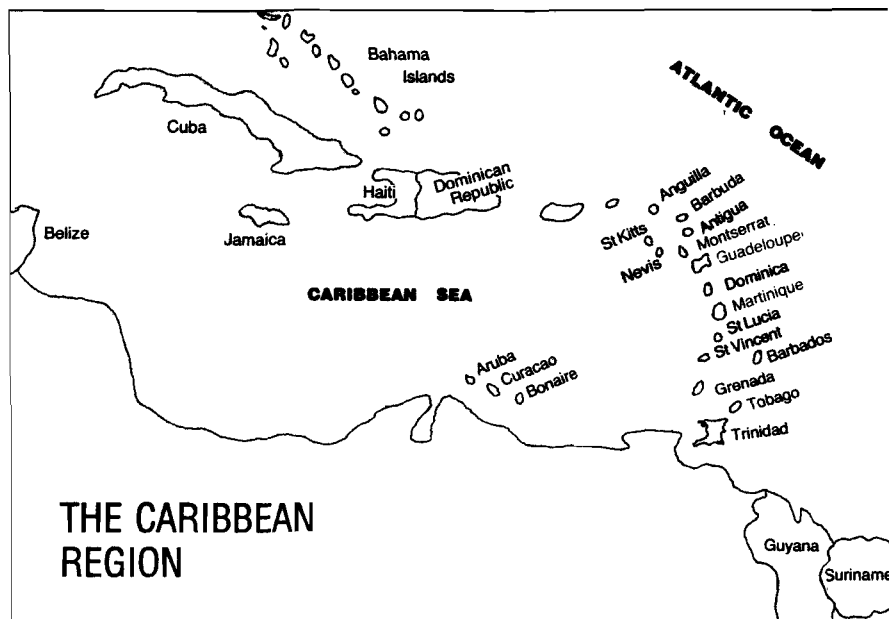


CARIBBEAN
DEVELOPMENT
AND
CO-OPERATION
COMMITTEE



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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Subregional Office for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Evaluation Meeting on the
Caribbean Information System
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
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Evaluation of CARBIB and CARCAT data
bases.

Organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America
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UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA Office for the Caribbean



This attempt to evaluate the CARBIB and CARCAT data bases suffers from certain limitations. As you know, the CARISPLAN data is processed at ECLA headquarters in Santiago where it is available for searching. Since at present it is not possible to interactively search this entire data base at the Caribbean Documentation Centre, much of the analysis for this evaluation is based on a sample diskette, which corresponds to the first nine issues of CARISPLAN Abstracts. In some instances, however, e.g. growth rate and input by participating centres, the analysis was based on the total input, that is approximately 6,000 entries received and checked by the Centre up to June 1983.

The areas covered in this presentation; and which participants may wish to consider for evaluation, relate to format and compatibility/Subject and geographical coverage, document type growth of the data base and its potential value to the region.

Format and Compatibility

In designing the CARISPLAN data base, a decision was taken to adopt the international standard for bibliographic information interchange (ISO 2709) since there was widespread international agreement on this standard as the basic exchange format for computerized data bases.

With regard to compatible logical data structures, that is, which data elements were to be included in the bibliographic record and in what form, a number of standards were considered, including those of UNISIST, MARC, AGRIS and INIS. The UNISIST standard was adopted. Initially, the UNISIST format was designed for secondary services but the revised format caters for many library applications. The Centre's revised worksheet is virtually compatible with the second edition of the UNISIST Reference Manual.

The decision to adopt the Reference Manual was based on the fact that there would be a high degree of potential international compatibility and provision of updating and maintenance.

Functional compatibility was also an essential consideration in the design of the data base. Two systems are functionally compatible when users can store and manipulate essentially the same kinds of data elements, and can perform the same types of operation on the data. The basic design functions of CARISPLAN at present are: interactive data entry and data editing, data base creation and record maintenance, retrieval of relevant information and numerous outputs in a variety of formats and media. The choice of hardware and software was based on functional compatibility and the CARISPLAN data is processed at ECLA, Santiago on an IBM 370-148 using the ISIS software package - Integrated Set of Information Systems. ISIS and MINISIS, which are compatible, are used by over 120 national and international organizations, many of which deal with development literature.

You may wish to consider whether the decision to seek compatibility with other systems providing access to development literature was a sound one, especially in relation to the reduced level of compatibility with other bibliographic services in the region.

Subject Coverage

An attempt was made to evaluate the subject coverage of CARISPLAN using the sample diskette. The priority areas of the CDCC work programme were chosen as the main subject categories. The descriptor group display of the OECD Macrothesaurus was consulted to determine the relevant descriptors for each category.

Table 1 lists the main subject areas in hierarchical order according to the number of records, expressed as a percentage of the records in the sample diskette.

Bearing in mind the degree of overlap among the subject categories, the analysis indicates that economic development, regional and technical cooperation, industry, trade, and agriculture are the main subjects covered in the CARISPLAN data base. The paucity of records dealing with natural

TABLE 1

Main Subject Areas Covered in CARISPLAN
Data Base

<u>Subject</u>	<u>No. of Records in Sample</u>	<u>Percentage of data base</u>
Economic development	329	17.1
Regional and technical cooperation	293	15.2
Industry	261	13.5
Trade	254	13.2
Planning	247	12.8
Agriculture	239	12.4
Education	139	7.2
Transport	126	6.5
Energy	110	5.7
Demographic Analysis	84	4.4
Natural Resources	75	3.9
Tourism	68	3.5
Environmental Management	64	3.3
Science and Technology	61	3.2
Culture	35	1.8
Marine resources	27	1.4
Women and Development	22	1.1
Elimination of language barriers	17	.9
Coastal area development	7	.4
Natural disasters	4	.2

resources, tourism, science and technology, culture, marine resources, women and development, elimination of language barriers, coastal area development and natural disasters suggests that these areas warrant greater coverage.

The sample diskette is available for searching during the meeting and you may wish to search for other subject areas which are of specific importance to your individual countries. The result of your search will be an important input to the evaluation exercise.

Document Type

When the system started in 1979 it was possible to identify input by form. This is no longer possible. Table 2, however represents a distribution of the CARISPLAN data base (000001-004040) by institutions responsible for producing the literature.

The table indicates that government organisations were the major producers of documents in CARISPLAN, being responsible for 35% of the literature covered in the data base.

Universities/Research institutions contributed 14% to the data base, with the University of The West Indies being the most outstanding contributor in this category.

Fifteen percent of the documents in the data base were produced by international organizations, with ECLIA Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean contributing 9% of this grouping. Regional organizations were responsible for the intellectual content of 8% of the documents in the System, an indication of the fact that these organizations have only recently been submitting entries to CARISPLAN. Two hundred and twenty-five (225) were produced by non-governmental organizations, representing 6% of the records. This category includes private sector organizations, political parties, professional associations and trade unions.

Geographical Coverage

A geographical spread of the items in the data base is represented in table 3.

TABLE 2.

Statistical Analysis of CARISPLAN data base
by types of institutions primarily
responsible for producing documents
(000001 - 004040)

Type of institution	Total items in data base	Percentage of data base
Government organizations	1393	35
Universities/Research institutions	574	14
International organizations	266	6.5
ECLA Subregional Office for the Caribbean	354	9
Regional organizations	314	8
Individuals	235	6
	(Private sector 166)	
	()	
	(Political parties 14)	
Non-governmental organizations	() 225	5.5
	(Professional)	
	(associations 40)	
	()	
	(Trade Unions 5)	
	()	
Other	675	16

The active participation of Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Barbados, over a longer period of time, accounts for the detailed coverage of these countries, as the figures 457, 402, 701, 217, 213 respectively indicate. Lower level coverage of some of the larger member states may be attributed to their recent participation. Figures ranging from 23-70 characterize the coverage of the OECS states. Grenada's economic and/or social development has been treated in 70 documents and St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 40 documents. The Caribbean in general has had detailed coverage in a total of 835 documents representing the region.

Perhaps you may wish to compare this coverage with the relevant literature produced by your respective countries during the period covered by CARISPLAN/

Distribution by Date of Documents

Since the existing sample diskette does not include date as one of the elements, it was not possible to evaluate the currency of the data base. During the group discussion, participants may find it useful to randomly select a sample number of items from each issue of CARISPLAN Abstracts and endeavour to determine the currency of the data base.

Size of Data Base and Growth Rate

The number of worksheets which have been received and checked by the Centre are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Worksheets Rec'd</u>
1979/1980	855
1981	2037
1982	2100
June 1983	935

These figures suggest a relatively constant growth rate between 1981 and 1983. It is hoped, however, that the results of this meeting will be an incentive for greater participation.

Some other areas which participants may wish to consider in this evaluation exercise are as follows;

- The potential value of the data base to Caribbean countries, bearing in mind that much of the information made available through the products of the data base would not otherwise be widely disseminated or known.

- Are the documents of intrinsic and lasting value
- How many of the items in the data base are readily accessible from other sources
- How many of the documents or reports in the data base are encapsulated in published final reports

The CARCAT data base is a record of the monographic collection held in the Caribbean Documentation Centre, and includes documents published by international organizations, research centres specializing in development areas, books and documents relating to the Caribbean, photocopies of relevant journal articles. Abstracts are not provided for non-Caribbean publications. The data base is not available for searches at the Centre but periodic update printouts are provided by the computer centre



