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**ACS PROJECT CONCEPT DOCUMENT
(ACS PCD)**

**REGIONAL MASTER DEGREE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH A FOCUS ON
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES – ACS –

**ACS PROJECT CONCEPT DOCUMENT
(ACS PCD)**

**Regional Master Degree in Sustainable Development with a focus on Disaster Risk
Reduction**



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
ACP	Asia Caribbean Pacific
ACS SF	Special Fund of the Association of Caribbean States
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCRIF	Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CEPREDENAC	Coordination of Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America
CERMES	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
CIMH	Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CC	Climate Change
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRC	Disaster Risk Reduction Center
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GC	Greater Caribbean
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PCD	Project Concept Document
REDULAC	Red Universitarios de Latinoamérica y el Caribe para la Gestión y Reducción del Riesgo de Desastres
SALISES	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, St Augustine
SD	Sustainable Development
SEDU	Sustainable Economic Development Unit
SICA	Central American Integration System
SMPA	Saint Marc Plan of Action
SRC	Seismic Research Centre
TBD	To be determined
UAG	Université des Antilles et de la Guyane
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UN-ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNOCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UWI	University of the West Indies

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW	
A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
1.1 Project name/number	Regional Master degree in Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development
1.2 ACS Focal Area	Disaster Risk Reduction
1.3 Objectives	<p><u>Overall objective:</u> To establish a network of universities, departments, institutes and centres devoted wholly or mainly to SD and DRR</p> <p><u>Specific Objective(s):</u></p> <p>(a) To improve training in SD and DRR;</p> <p>(b) To promote academic collaboration and exchange among students and professors in SD and DRR</p>
1.4 Justification	A need exists to train highly qualified professionals, oriented to the solution of the issues that the region is facing in the fields of sustainable development associated with problems such as disaster preparedness and management.
1.5 Results / Components	<p>(a) An integrated view of the political, economic, social, geographical and cultural forces shaping the Greater Caribbean.</p> <p>(b) To develop the research capacities of the students in the SD and DRR fields studied throughout the master.</p> <p>(c) To develop the capacities of the graduated students to bring solutions to concrete problems the Greater Caribbean face.</p>
1.6 Estimated Duration and Cost	Estimation duration: minimum of 2 years
1.7 Project current status	Preparation
B. STAKEHOLDERS	
1.8 Entity responsible	ACS, participating universities
1.9 Beneficiaries	ACS, participating universities
1.10 Collaborating institutions	<p>ACS, participating universities</p> <p>Conference Bodies (DRR-related organizations that participated in the ACS High Level Conference on Disaster Reduction in Haiti, in 2007): CDEMA, CEPREDENAC, UNECLAC, IADB, IFRC, PAHO, UNDP, UN-ISDR, UNOCHA</p>
1.11 Executing institutions	Participating Universities
1.12 Financing institutions	ACS Special Fund and ECLAC (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean)

II. PROJECT INTERVENTION LOGIC

A. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Features of the sector

At the Association of Caribbean States, we consider that “the primary goal of Disaster Risk Reduction is the safeguard of the lives of human beings, the protection of their means of subsistence and those of the local economy, as well as the environment¹”.

In the context of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), it is generally agreed that education for disaster reduction and for global climate change must be an integral part of the educational strategy aimed at promoting sustainable societies.

Thus, the Association of Caribbean States encourages the integration of DRR into school curricula in the Greater Caribbean, in order to build the resilience of the communities vulnerable to natural hazards in the region.

As it is a common issue to be faced regarding the sustainable development of the region, the idea came up to foster a regional master degree in sustainable development and disaster risk reduction.

This commitment follows the Saint-Marc Plan of Action:

Article 14: “Encourage and contribute to the exchange of national experiences in introducing disaster risk reduction subject matter in educational activities at all levels (primary, secondary, university, academic and scientific) as well as formal and non-formal training activities”.

Article 15: “Encourage and contribute to the development and revision of curricular material for formal and non-formal educational sectors in collaboration with established national and regional institutions”.

It is also important to notice that this initiative is in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015. Of the five Priorities for Action of this global strategy, education features prominently in Priority 3: “Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels”

2.2 Problems that will be addressed

This initiative is a response to the need to train highly qualified professionals, oriented to the solution of the issues that the region is facing in the fields of sustainable development (human,

¹ Saint-Marc Plan of Action, paragraph ii

social, environmental, infrastructural and institutional) associated with problems such as disaster preparedness and management.

The need for this degree is justified by:

- The relative lack of educational and academic exchanges among the countries of the Greater Caribbean;
- The need to aggregate specialized and high-level existing programs in a common curriculum, and to share the knowledge and teaching capacities of the academic staff of the Greater Caribbean;
- The lack of Master's degrees in Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development in the whole Greater Caribbean.

2.3 Project Proposal

The Master's program fits in the framework of the general missions of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). The article 3.a of the Constitutive Convention of the ACS, indeed, states: "The Association is an organization for consultation, co-operation and concerted action, whose purpose is to identify and promote the implementation of policies and programs designed to harness, utilize and develop the collective capabilities of the Caribbean Region to achieve sustained cultural, economic, scientific and technological advancement". A key objective of this program is to promote educational, research and capacity building co-operation, in order to contribute to the sustainable development of the Association of Caribbean States Members.

The development of this Master Programme would participate to the efforts of the Greater Caribbean to integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development programmes and frameworks, including the protection of the environment, the economical diversification and the poverty reduction strategic frameworks.

This project will be supported by the ACS Secretariat and the Special Fund and will be implemented by the participating institutions, universities from Member States and Associate Members offering Master degrees in Sustainable Development, Disaster Risk Reduction or other relevant field of studies.

Chosen universities will be structured in networks based on linguistic criteria (a Spanish speaking network, a French speaking network and an English speaking network) cooperating to create a common master degree. The diploma, a **Master Degree in Sustainable Development with focus on Disaster Risk Reduction**, will be delivered by the three universities designated to represent each network.

In order to foster the relationship between research and implementation, regional organisations working on sustainable development and disaster risk reduction must be involved as key stakeholders of the programme.

Regarding the link between research and policymaking, and in addition to the ACS, the following stakeholders might be consulted and involved as well: CARICOM, SICA, and OECS

2.4 Other interventions

National risk reduction related organisations could be contacted and integrated to the program. The “Conservatoire du Littoral de la Guadeloupe”, for instance, has been approached for participation to the programme in the form of presentation at the university, welcome of students as interns etc...

B. OBJECTIVES

2.5 Project overall objective

To establish a network of universities, departments, institutes and centers devoted wholly or mainly to Sustainable Development and Disaster Risk Reduction studies through the implementation of a specific Masters degree delivered by three universities (English, Spanish and French speaking).

2.6 Project specific objective(s)

(a) To improve training in Sustainable Development and Disaster Risk Reduction Studies through greater co-operation among the institutes, departments and universities of the region and outside the region.

(b) To promote academic collaboration and exchange among students and professors in Sustainable Development Disaster Risk Reduction Studies and thereby contribute to the strengthening of a Pan-Caribbean Sustainable Development and resilience towards disasters.

(c) To serve as an informal think tank to conduct research and analysis in order to contribute to the consultation activities of the Association of Caribbean States. Students will be asked to write dissertation papers on subject of interest for ACS members.

2.7 Expected results

(a) This area of studies offers a unique opportunity for students to transcend disciplinary limits and master an integrated view of the political, economic, social, geographical and cultural forces shaping the Greater Caribbean.

(b) To develop the research capacities of the students in the fields studied throughout the master.

C. STAKEHOLDERS

- Universities, departments, institutes and centres of the Greater Caribbean
- ACS Member States and Associate members and more specifically their ministries and/or institutions in charge of disaster risk reduction and Sustainable Development.
- Conference Bodies (disaster risk reduction organizations that participated in the ACS High Level Conference on Disaster Reduction in Haiti, in 2007):

CDEMA (Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency), **CEPREDENAC** (Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central / Coordination of Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America), **UNECLAC** (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), **IADB** (Inter-American Development Bank), **IFRC** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent), **PAHO** (Pan American Health Organization), **UNDP** (United Nations Development Programme), **UN-ISDR** (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction), **UNOCHA** (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

- Other international and regional organizations involved in Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development globally or regionally:

CCRIF (Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility), **UNEP** (United Nations Environment Programme), **IOM** (International Organization for Migration)...

2.8 Beneficiaries

- Whole population of the Greater Caribbean
- Students, professors and researchers within and outside the region
- Member States and Associate members of the Association of Caribbean States.
- Directorate of Disaster Risk Reduction of the ACS

2.9 Participating institutions

- English speaking universities
- French universities
- Spanish speaking universities

Name of institution:			
Name and last name of legal representative:			
Address:			City:
Country:			
Tel:	Fax:	Email:	Website:

D. BENEFITS, RISKS AND SUSTAINABILITY

2.10 Benefits

- *Benefits for students:*

The programme will provide the participant with the opportunity to develop skills to:

- Analyze and evaluate problems of sustainable development and disaster risk reduction with international projection
- Propose solutions to the problems of sustainable development (human, social, environmental, infrastructure, institutional) and disaster risk reduction.
- Assess the impact of social development programs
- Investigate the function of the transfer of technology in sustainable development, aimed at social and economic development
- Investigate the function of the risk transfer in disaster management,
- Use tools and methodologies for the development and risk mitigation through programs and research projects
- Work in research groups
- (Modern appropriation of new information technologies and communication for learning in the case of the development of the programme online)
- ***Benefits for the universities:***
 - Exchange and coordination of research
 - Development of international exchange programs
 - Increased visibility
- ***Benefits for the regional organizations involved in disasters risk reduction and sustainable development:***
 - Poll of candidates to be recruited as intern or staff
 - Development of research on key subjects
- ***Benefits for the political bodies (regional and national):***
 - Research based recommendations for policy making

2.11 Critical risks and Sustainability

Critical Risks	Risk Rating	Risk Mitigation Measures
Lack of responsiveness from the identified participating institutions	High	Involve these institutions in the curricular of the programme
Lack of financial resources for its implementation	High	Previously to its official launch, the necessary financial resources must be secured and a relevant and sustainable business plan must be defined.
Difficulty to obtain the accreditation of the Degree within the framework of international standard	Low	Integrate the programme in the framework of already accredited institutions

Lack of participation from students	Moderate	Increase communication through modern and targeted tools (Google and Facebook)
Impossibility to launch the programme online	High	This feature of the Programme is not mandatory

2.12 Ex-post sustainability

The programme is expected to be long-term duration and therefore to be fully integrated in the curricular of the participating institutions. For this end the following must be secured:

- ***Financial sustainability:***

- Tuition fees

It is expected that the tuition fees obtained from the students enrolled in the master programme will provide the participation institutions with the necessary financial resources for the implementation of the programme.

- ACS Special Fund

Ideally, the ACS will secure sufficient funding from its partners in order to guarantee the proper launch of the Programme. Thus a sum will be allocated to the Special Fund of the ACS in order to contribute to the general expenses of the programme management and monitoring.

- ***Operational sustainability:***

- Organization

It is crucial for the proper execution of this program that the organization is clearly clarified and its functioning does not depend on the support of the ACS but rather, it is truly organizationally independent.

For more details, please consult the paragraph B3.5 and B3.6 of this PCD.

- Partnership development

In order to guaranty the future of this programme and to contribute to its further development, it is important to consider continuously the inclusion of other participating institutions.

- *Caribbean context*

Ideally, the Regional Programme will count with the participation of Universities, Research Centres, and Specialized agencies in every country of the Greater Caribbean.

- *SIDS/ACP context*

In addition to the regional entities, the programme could also benefit from the participation of extra-regional organizations and universities. Such entities could ideally pertain to Small Islands Developing States or from the ACP Group of Countries.

- Communication

In order to raise awareness among the students of the Caribbean of the existence of this programme an efficient and targeted communication campaign must be implemented. This communication strategy needs to be developed continuously in order to secure the future enrolment of students.

- Accreditation

International recognition is vital for the professional insertion of the enrolled students and for the publication of the researches undertaken in the context of the programme. For this reason, it is crucial for the programme to obtain the highest accreditation and to respect continuously their inherent standards.

III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A. COMPONENTS AND ACTIVITIES

3.1 Components description

Target universities: This program targets public universities from Member States and Associate Members offering Master degrees in Sustainable Development, Disaster Risk Reduction or other relevant field of studies.

Chosen universities are structured in networks based on linguistic criteria (a Spanish speaking network, a French speaking network and an English speaking network) cooperating to create a common master degree. The diploma, a **Master Degree in Sustainable Development with focus on Disaster Risk Reduction**, will be delivered by the three universities designated to represent each network.

Funding: In order to minimize costs for universities, the program will not necessarily require them to create content or to hire new lecturers, the idea is to integrate participating students to existing master curriculum so that material, lecturers and other resources are maximized. Each network will have the possibility to organize lecturer mobility toward the focal university if necessary, arrangement will then be made to cover housing and traveling costs for a semester. The ACS is hoping to get donors to support the program by financing mobility grants for participating students. This project will also be supported by the ACS Secretariat and the Special Fund and will be implemented by the participating institutions.

Administrative management and registration: Each participating network will recruit 5 students. A university is designated in each network to welcome students, teachers and other necessary resources. However, students can be recruited in all Member States and Associate Members and visiting lecturers can be recruited in all universities constituting the networks. The designated universities will be responsible for registration of their 5 students to the program, providing information and guidance for financial aid (grants available in the country or offered by the university) and medical insurance. School fees for the Master degree will be paid to the tutoring university only.

School fees, grants and financial aid: Administrative matters like registration, collection of school fees, information on grants and other forms of financial aid will be taken care of by the designated focal university of each network. In addition to fund collected by the ACS from donors, students will rely on grants and other forms of financial aids available in their respective countries of origin.

Accommodation: The three designated focal universities will be responsible for facilitating accommodation for students and visiting lecturers on campus for one semester whenever possible. Students will be required to pay for accommodation.

- **Admission requirements**

Students will be required to be citizens of the Member States and Associate Members to be eligible to the program.

This program will welcome no more than 15 students selected on the basis of their academic achievements (at least an undergraduate diploma with outstanding grades) from the various participating countries.

Students will be required to have basic knowledge of the 3 working languages of the ACS and be fluent in English in order to be able to attend classes and be evaluated in English. All classes will be offered in English and examination will be held in English or in the native language of the lecturer.

- **Structure**

Selected students will successively attend classes in three selected focal universities, for a period of one semester.

The **Regional Master Degree in Sustainable Development with focus on Disaster Risk Reduction diploma** will be delivered by the three selected host universities.

- Foreign language**

Students will attend Spanish or French classes depending on their needs. Students fluent in all 3 languages will be exempted from attending language classes.

- Research paper and Internship**

The fourth semester will be dedicated to an internship or the writing of a thesis.

Internship: The Conference Bodies mentioned earlier, as stakeholders of the project would be highly encouraged to host, as interns in their respective institutions, the students of the programme. The duration must be 6 months; and the remuneration package is left to the discretion of the hosting organisation.

Research paper: The research paper must have a minimum of 100 pages. It must identify a problem and present an original interpretation of it; engage with existing literature in the field; and bring to their treatment of the problem new factual data. The original component of the work may be drawn from published data, interviews, archival materials, and other kinds of material that can qualify as primary sources. The contours of the research will be approved by a minimum of two professors teaching in the master.

3.2 Expected schedule

		Years	2011										2012										2013							
		Months	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Step	Component	Activity																												
Design	Design of the Programme	1.1																												
	Presentation of the first draft	1.2																												
	Finalization of the project with partners	1.3																												
	Circulation of the PCD	1.4																												
	Submission to the Special Committee	1.5																												
Preparation	Amendments to the PCD	2.1																												
	Finalization of responsibilities	2.2																												
	Finalization of programme activities	2.3																												
	Budget and administration set up	2.4																												
	Communication campaign	2.5																												
Implementation	Beginning of classes for 1st batch	3.1																												
	Follow up on the implementation	3.2																												
	End of first year	3.3																												
	Evaluation of the programme	3.4																												
	Beginning of classes for 2nd batch	3.5																												

B. EXECUTION

3.3 Physical means required

In order to minimize costs for universities, the program will not necessarily require them to create content or to hire new lecturers, the idea is to integrate participating students to existing master curriculum so that material, lecturers and other resources are maximized. Each network will have the possibility to organize lecturer mobility toward the focal university if necessary, arrangement will then be made to cover housing and traveling costs for a semester. The ACS is hoping to get donors to support the program by financing mobility grants for participating students. This project will also be supported by the ACS Secretariat and the Special Fund and will be implemented by the participating institutions.

3.4 Expertise required

Lecturers and administrative teams from participating universities.

3.5 Project Team

Regular human resources from the Directorate of Disaster Risk Reduction of the ACS.

3.6 Matrix of Responsibilities

Role / Responsibility	Actor
Communication	All participating institutions
Selection of students	5 students will be recruited from each network by a team of lecturers and officials representing the participating institutions
Registration of students	The three host universities will be in charge of registration
Budget and Administration	The three host universities will be in charge of budget and administration
Accommodation of visiting lecturers and students	The three host universities will facilitate accommodation of visiting lecturer and students on campus whenever possible. Students will be responsible for paying rent