

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Development of a National Ocean Policy

Discussion Document



Department of Maritime Administration

Kingstown, St Vincent



Development of a National Ocean Policy: Discussion Document

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Executive Summary

St Vincent and the Grenadines has jurisdiction over an extensive marine area along with the associated living and non-living resources. Such resources contribute significantly to the country's economy and are fundamental to the wellbeing of its citizens. However, the economic potential of the resources in this area is largely unassessed and underutilized.

While emerging opportunities exist to enhance the contribution made by the marine environment to the sustainable development of St Vincent and the Grenadines, it is unlikely that any one resource is sufficient to sustain development goals. An approach is needed that coordinates management across sectors and resources and integrates environmental management directly with economic development, fiscal policy and social goals. Such an approach requires a change in how we view, manage, govern and use the ocean.

Central to such a change is the need to transition to a more integrated governance approach that requires all uses, users and values to be considered. The sustainable development of a portfolio of marine resources will require governance and policies that integrate environmental and economic considerations. The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has clearly signalled its desire to begin this transition and, as a first step, wishes to develop an integrated national policy framework to guide the future governance of the Federation's marine waters.

This discussion document outlines options for a new National Ocean Policy that will promote and guide the future sustainable use and development of St Vincent and the Grenadines' marine waters and resources. The document provides an outline of the key threats and challenges faced by policy makers and managers, the basis for such a national policy, a future Vision for the ocean and a suggested set of principles, and goals for ocean governance in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The document also highlights a number of options for institutional reform towards implementing the National Ocean Policy.



Foreword by Laura Anthony-Browne

This discussion paper, which essentially launches the debate to develop a policy for ocean governance in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, has come at a most appropriate time. In recognizing the potential for oceans to contribute to the economy, the soon to be released National Economic and Social Development Plan (2013-2025) under its first goal of “reengineering economic growth”, has as one of its objectives: “**To optimise the economic contribution made by ocean resources**”.

It is an acknowledged fact that St. Vincent and the Grenadines is well served by the surrounding oceans. No one disputes that the oceans contribute to the overall well-being of Vincentians; that they offer tremendous potential for creating employment, generating incomes and contributing to overall social and economic development.

Where there might be some variance, is in the quantification of the economic, social or other value of the oceans. For example, tourism is a huge beneficiary of the ocean, so too is shipping, and undoubtedly, fishing, is an economic anchor particularly among rural villages and communities. But, by and large, the benefits to be derived from the oceans are not fully explored, and neither is there anywhere, an indication of what precisely is the economic worth of the contribution of the oceans.

Apart from having to value the economic and financial benefits of the oceans, there is another challenge with regard to the utilization of the oceans. This relates to how best, St. Vincent and the Grenadines can manage its oceans, nearly 90 times the area of land, such that these resources are not exploited to the detriment of the country.

We must ensure that within the broad policy guidelines that are fashioned, a comprehensive framework which also incorporates the legal and institutional imperatives and which addresses the fragility of the oceans, is taken into consideration. Also, in identifying the priorities, care should be taken that these are driven by national realities.

Finally, it would be futile, if we put measures in place to utilize appropriately and sustainably the oceans around our country, yet, we fail to devise an adequate methodology which allows the contributions to be economically valued.

Again, I welcome the launch of this discussion document, and look forward to the outcome of the discussions.



1. Introduction and Scope

Background

The marine area under the jurisdiction of St Vincent and the Grenadines is estimated to be about 36,000 square km¹, over 90 times its land area. The marine environment contributes significantly to the economy of St Vincent and the Grenadines and is fundamental to the wellbeing of its citizens; through direct economic activities, provision of environmental services, and as home to much of the population. However, the economic potential of this resource remains underutilized.

The interconnected nature of the marine environment means that utilisation of one type of resource has the capacity to impact on other resources and the wider marine environment. These factors present Governments with significant challenges in terms of ensuring the integrated and sustainable management of marine resources within their jurisdiction.

Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development acknowledged in Chapter 17, that planning and management for multiple ocean uses requires the full range of uses, users and values to be considered, while ensuring that the integrity of ecosystems is maintained. This approach was also supported by the United Nations General Assembly, which in 2005 adopted Resolution 60/30 noting that:

The problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach....

Although emerging opportunities exist to enhance the contribution made by the marine environment to the sustainable development of St Vincent and the Grenadines, it is unlikely that any one resource is sufficient to sustain development goals. An approach is needed that recognises the full portfolio of possible uses and activities within the extent of St Vincent and the Grenadines' marine waters and therefore coordinates management across this portfolio, integrating environmental management directly with economic development, fiscal policy and social goals.

Central to this approach is the need to transition to a more integrated governance approach that requires all uses, users and values to be considered. This is the unique key to achieve adequate management of the ocean and seas under national jurisdiction and is one of the most important conditions for the future of the marine environment.

¹ Source <http://www.seaaroundus.org/eez/670.aspx>. Accessed 19/03/13. The figure is subject to final delimitation of outstanding maritime boundaries with neighbouring coastal States.



Issues facing the marine environment

While the marine environment offers great potential in terms of sustainable economic development, it is under increasing pressure from many uses. Changes resulting from human activities are occurring faster than previously anticipated, affecting especially the most vulnerable ecosystems such as coral reefs. Of the range of threats faced by the marine environment, the most significant include:

- Impacts associated with climate change and sea level rise including sea temperature rise and ocean acidification;
- Unsustainable fishing practices leading to resource depletion and habitat damage;
- Pollution from land and marine based activities;
- Introduction of marine invasive species; and
- Destruction of coastal and marine habitats due to inappropriate coastal development and extractive industries.

Coastal ecosystems and the people depending on them for their livelihoods might also be subjected to the impacts of climate change and environmental variability. These may also lead to an increase in the impacts of traditional stressors (such as pollution or habitat destruction) on ecosystems.

The marine environment's ability to maintain its diversity and productivity, and to provide a wide array of valuable services to people, is therefore increasingly being compromised. By applying adaptive management approaches through strong policy guidance, these stressors and the impacts of our activities can be reduced. Designing and implementing effective governance and management strategies is critical to address the challenges posed by the increasing impacts of human activities on the oceans and to ensure the effective management and sustainable use of living and non-living marine resources.

Ocean governance

Management of the ocean is a complex web of inter-related, converging and competing demands and interests. Adequate governance structures and institutional coherence are essential to respond to growing environmental pressures and are inextricably linked with the goals of economic development. However, the concept of "ocean governance" has many dimensions, and there is therefore, no straightforward definition.

Ocean governance establishes the framework for management and encompasses the values, policies, laws and institutions by which ocean space and marine resources



are managed. The concept includes both formal and informal arrangements and addresses:

- the institutions involved;
- formal and informal agreements and behaviours;
- how ocean space and marine resources are managed and utilised;
- how to evaluate and respond to both problems and opportunities;
- what are acceptable future patterns of resource utilisation and what rules and sanctions should be applied to affect these; and
- roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the use and management of marine resources.

Planning and management for multiple ocean uses requires the full range of uses, users and values to be considered, through an integrated, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approach. To this end, many countries have developed integrated national ocean governance frameworks.

The government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has signalled its desire to develop an ocean governance framework, which includes the adoption of a national ocean policy and integrated ocean management structures.

In developing such a framework, two cross cutting elements are essential:

- Policy framework for integrated ocean management; and
- Institutional design and policy capacity.

An integrated policy framework is an essential element of the governance framework, and serves as the basis to develop all of the activities that are carried out within marine space. Such a policy permits a clear vision of the direction St Vincent and the Grenadines should take to achieve management in ocean affairs. In this regard a national ocean policy will assist the government in setting out basic principles, clarifying roles and responsibilities of government agencies and stakeholders in regard to ocean management, formulating basic plans and priorities in regard to ocean management and prescribing other basic matters concerning measures for ocean and marine resource management.

Purpose and scope of this document

This discussion document outlines options for a new national ocean policy that will promote and guide future sustainable use and development of the nation's coastal and offshore waters. The document provides an outline of the key threats and challenges faced by policy makers and marine resource managers, the basis for such



a national policy, a future 'vision' for the ocean and a suggested set of principles and goals for ocean governance in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

While the discussion document combines the outcomes from a number of previous stakeholder engagements, undertaken at the national and broader OECS levels, the primary aim of this discussion document is to provide a further opportunity for stakeholders to have their say and to inform the development of the national ocean policy that will set St Vincent and the Grenadines' future policy direction on ocean governance.

To allow for collation and analysis, comments on this discussion document should be submitted no later than 7th May 2013 to the following address:

Department of Maritime Administration, Upper Floor, Cruise Ship Terminal, Kingstown, St Vincent.

Section 2 of this document provides some background and the current context for St Vincent and the Grenadines' marine waters including current status and the range of challenges currently experienced.

Section 3 provides information on the governance arrangements currently in place in St Vincent and the Grenadines and the wider Caribbean region.

Section 4 discusses the foundation for a National Ocean Policy including a summary of concerns raised by stakeholders in St Vincent and the Grenadines and other OECS countries regarding the current state and management of the marine environment and the basic principles around which such a policy should be developed.

In conclusion, section 5 presents an outline of the proposed policy framework including a set of draft policy goals and some options for institutional reforms to implement the policy.

Comments are particularly sought on the specific questions that are included at the end of each section of this document. However, comments on any or all aspects of this discussion document are welcomed.



2. Background

Context

National profile

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is an island country in the Lesser Antilles chain, in the southern portion of the Windward Islands, which lie at the southern end of the eastern border of the Caribbean Sea where the latter meets the Atlantic Ocean. Its territory consists of the main island of Saint Vincent and the northern two-thirds of the Grenadines which include the islands of Bequia, Mustique, Canouan, Mayreau, Union Island, Palm Island, Petit St. Vincent, and 28 uninhabited islets. The entire northern Grenadines group stretches some 60 km south from Saint Vincent to Grenada (Figure 1).

With a population of approximately 103,500 persons,² the islands cover a total land area of 389 square km: St Vincent with a land area of approximately 345 square km; and the Grenadines with a combined land area of 44 square km. The population census done in 2002 indicated that 91.9% of the total population live on mainland St. Vincent⁶ with the remainder in the different Grenadines islands. This concentrated population system makes St Vincent, one of the most densely populated islands in the Caribbean.³



The economy, which was for many years predominately agriculture based, has now been transformed into a service oriented economy. Tourism is now the most

² <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vc.html>. Last accessed 03/10/12.

³ *National Environmental Summary: St Vincent and the Grenadines 2010*. United Nations Environment Programme – Regional Office for Latin America and The Caribbean, p. 3.



important economic activity in St Vincent and the Grenadines and it impacts significantly on several other sectors within the economy. It is the largest foreign exchange earner and accounts for approximately 65% of GDP.

Marine environment

In accordance with international maritime law, St Vincent and the Grenadines has declared a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ).⁴ While a number of maritime boundaries remain to be resolved with neighbouring states, the marine space under the jurisdiction of St Vincent and the Grenadines is estimated to be about 36,000 square km,⁵ over 90 times its land space, and therefore represents perhaps the most significant opportunity for future economic growth.

The nation's marine waters constitute a rich and unique habitat, which includes coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangroves and salt ponds. The coastal and marine biodiversity includes a rich diversity of reef and pelagic fish, lobsters, conch, turtles, algae, resident and migratory birds.⁶ Offshore waters are home to numerous species of marine mammal and sea turtles as well as deep water pelagic fish species.

Key Features of Marine Biodiversity

- Marine plants found in St Vincent and the Grenadines include mangroves, sea grasses and algae. Some species of marine algae are still harvested in St Vincent and the Grenadines
- The coral reefs around the islands are the most complex marine habitat and play a vital role in protecting the islands against wave action during storms. Over 30 different species of coral including several ubiquitous species of hard or stony corals and a variety of soft corals and sponges are found in this habitat.
- Of the eight species of sea turtle worldwide four occur in St Vincent and the Grenadines and all are listed as endangered species.
- Well over 400 species of marine fishes occur in St Vincent and the Grenadines water, including numerous species that are threatened or endangered.
- During the winter months, several marine mammal species, including humpback whales, pilot whales, killer whales as well as bottle-nosed, and spinner dolphins visit the offshore waters of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

⁴ Section 7 of the *Maritime Areas Act* (Act No. 15 of 30 August 1983).

⁵ Source <http://www.seaaroundus.org/eez/670.aspx>. Accessed 19/03/13.

⁶ *National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan for St. Vincent & the Grenadines*. May 2010. Available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/vc/vc-nbsap-01-en.pdf>.



These coastal resources provide the basis for a range of economic and social activities, indeed marine-based activities are the mainstay of the economy of the area particularly in the Grenadines, where tourism and fishing are especially important.

Utilisation of the marine environment

Uses of the marine environment already contribute significantly to the overall economy of St Vincent and the Grenadines and are fundamental to the wellbeing of its citizens; through direct economic activities, provision of environmental services, and as home to much of the population. There are also strong cultural attachments to coastal resources and their uses.

Tourism– Despite the impact of the global economic crisis, tourism remains the most important economic activity in St Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2010, over 70,000 visitors visited the islands, although this is down from a high of 97,000 in 2006. The latest value for International tourism receipts⁷ (current US\$) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was \$87,000,000 as of 2010.

The majority of tourism activity in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is centred on the Grenadines islands, with tourists being drawn to the islands by their favourable year-round temperatures and by the excellent yachting, sailing, scuba diving, water sports and hiking facilities. Although mainland St Vincent is recognised as having eco-tourism potential, there are fewer tourist attractions so that it does not attract as many tourists.

Tourism is heavily reliant on the marine environment in terms of cruise ship tourism, beach side hotels and beaches, scuba diving and recreational yachting. The quality and status of the marine environment could therefore have a significant impact on the value of this sector, depending how tourists perceive the quality of the marine environment and the experience it offers, relative to other islands in the region.

Fishing–The fishing sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is artisanal in nature, employing traditional gears, methods and vessels. The numerous small fishery enterprises therefore have a relatively low efficiency. There are five major fisheries, deep-slope, coastal pelagic, offshore pelagic, Spiny Lobster and Conch.

Species targeted in the deep-slope fisheries include snapper and grouper, which are fished more heavily in the off-season for large pelagics. In the Grenadines, they are harvested all year round and a large proportion of the catch is delivered direct to trading vessels for export.

⁷ International tourism receipts are expenditures by international inbound visitors, including payments to national carriers for international transport. These receipts include any other prepayment made for goods or services received in the destination country.



The coastal pelagics are nearshore fish found in mid-water or surface waters in beach areas. They are often smaller than offshore pelagics. The main target species are jack, herring, silverside, anchovy, ballyhoo, robin/scad and small tunas. Coastal pelagics account for 45-60% of the total estimated landings and is one of the most important fisheries in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The offshore pelagic target species include tunas, billfishes, dolphinfish, wahoo, sharks, swordfish, whales and porpoises. This fishery is highly commercial, with relatively high consumer demand and prices. The large tunas caught by the longliners have even greater economic value, fetching high prices in local and foreign markets.

There is the clear distinction between fisheries of the St. Vincent mainland and those of the Grenadines. The mainland fisheries focus on inshore and offshore pelagics, whereas fisheries in the Grenadines target mainly inshore and deep slope demersals, lobsters and conch. Lobster has by far the highest economic value and is heavily demanded by hotels/restaurants and foreign markets.

Humpback whales are also taken in the Grenadines, usually in the vicinity of Bequia between January and May under a quota approved by the International Whaling Commission and pilot whales (Blackfish) and other small whales and porpoises are harvested in St Vincent, mainly from Barrouallie.

Transportation-Like all island nations, St Vincent and the Grenadines is almost entirely reliant on shipping to support its economy. More than 90% of goods imported to the country arrive by sea and most, if not all agriculture products are exported by sea. Thus, shipping and the supporting infrastructure such as ports and harbours are vital to the economic growth of the islands.

Since St Vincent and the Grenadines operates an open ships' registry it also derives revenue from ships listed on the National Register of Ships. Domestic and regional shipping is also a significant marine activity sustaining socio-economic development in St Vincent and the Grenadines. There is considerable scope to further expand the maritime sector in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Conservation- Conservation is an important tool to insure that future generations can enjoy the same, or better, quality marine environment as those today. Conservation supports and improves healthy fisheries, maintains sustainable levels of biodiversity, improves tourist experiences, and creates recreational opportunities. A major attraction in the Grenadines is the Tobago Cays Marine Park, which is important ecologically, economically, socially and culturally to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, partly due to their significance to tourism earnings.

The Tobago Cays are among the most popular sailing destinations in the Caribbean and it is estimated that between 50,000-60,000 tourists visit the Marine Park annually, although accurate data on the number of visitors to the Tobago Cays are not



available.⁸ Major users of the area include cruise ships; yachts; day charters (from nearby hotels); sport divers and snorkelers; and fishing enthusiasts.

Future opportunities - Future opportunities may exist for further development of existing sectors, particularly fisheries and tourism, and also the development of new activities or sectors such as aquaculture, bioprospecting (pharmaceutical products), offshore oil and gas production and offshore renewable energy.

Risks and threats to the marine environment

The sustainability of coastal and marine resources is affected by a number of human activities. A preliminary Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, undertaken as part of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Project, identified three priority transboundary problems that affect the wider Caribbean Sea: (i) unsustainable exploitation of fish and other living resources; (ii) habitat degradation and community modification; and (iii) pollution.⁹ Climate change has added to these pressures.

Major threats to the marine ecology of St Vincent and the Grenadines include coastal development and the destruction of marine ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves, unsustainable, illegal and destructive fisheries practices, land-based and ship sources of pollution, unregulated extraction of sand and marine aggregates; anchor damage to coral reefs, marine invasive species, rising ocean temperatures, and the increasing intensity of hurricanes and other storm events.

An analysis undertaken by the Ministry of Health and the Environment in 2010 highlighted that the severity of threats to the marine environment and marine biodiversity had all increased in the previous decade.¹⁰

The Tobago Cays ecosystem is also fragile and there is growing evidence that this ecosystem is being affected by non-sustainable use and natural environmental impacts. Key human induced impacts include: (i) overfishing attributed to both local fisher folks and visiting yachts (particularly in the use of spear guns); (ii) physical impacts associated with visiting yachts (anchor damage and running aground); (iii) snorkeling and diving; and (iv) bilge and wastewater discharge from yachts.

These activities, along with active hurricane seasons, has contributed to the loss of biodiversity in the area. In recent years this deterioration has accelerated.¹¹

⁸ Pena, M. 2006. *Report on Evaluating Management Effectiveness at the Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP), St. Vincent and the Grenadines*. CERMES Regional Project on Enhancing Management Effectiveness at Three Marine Protected Areas in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica and Belize. Report No. 5. P. 5

⁹ <http://caricom-fisheries.com/Projects/MajorProjects/tabid/58/Default.aspx#579>

¹⁰ *The Fourth National Report of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the UNCBD*. Ministry of Health and the Environment. March 2010. p. ix. Available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/vc/vc-nr-04-en.pdf>.



A 2010 study by UNEP¹² identified a number of key drivers for a range of current environmental problems in St Vincent and the Grenadines:

- Lack of appreciation of the environment and low level of resource ownership by citizens
- Weak laws and outdated legislation, low level of adoption of some major legislation and low level of enforcement of legislation where present
- Implementation of policies, plans and programmes are hindered by inadequate resources and capacity –financial and human
- Poverty.

In addition to these issues, a meeting of marine stakeholders from the across the Eastern Caribbean,¹³ identified a broad range of threats to the marine environment and barriers to achieving better management (Table 1 below).

Based on feedback from local stakeholders in St Vincent and the Grenadines most, if not all of these, are relevant to the current situation facing the marine waters around St Vincent and the Grenadines. The consequences of these impacts includes loss in recreational opportunities, loss of natural habitats for flora and fauna, loss of natural protection of the coastline, as well as loss of livelihoods and economic opportunities to fishers, hoteliers and related business.

Questions

1. *What other uses of the ocean do you think need to be considered?*
2. *Which uses of the ocean are acceptable or unacceptable to you?*
3. *What other risks and/or threats are you aware of that impact on the ocean?*

¹¹ B. Simmons and P. McConney, *Tobago Cays Marine Park: Are the conditions for successful co-management likely to be met?* CERMES Technical Report No 6 (University of the West Indies, Barbados: 2006). p. 12.

¹² *National Environmental Summary: St Vincent and the Grenadines 2010*. United Nations Environment Programme – Regional Office for Latin America and The Caribbean.

¹³ As a first step in the process of developing regional and national ocean governance frameworks, the OECS and ELS co-hosted a two day workshop in Saint Lucia, on 8-9 February 2012. See *OECS Ocean Governance Regional Workshop: Interim Summary Report*. Report prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat. April 2012. 20 p.

**Table 1: Threats and Barriers to Achieving Integrated Ocean Governance**

	THREATS	BARRIERS
<u>ENVIRONMENT</u>	Manmade disasters	Lack of control over land based activities
	Vulnerability to natural hazards & climate change	Lack of data relating to marine environment
	Environmental pollution/spills	Lack of public awareness
	Overexploitation of resources	
	Poor agricultural practice	
	Habitat damage and community changes	
	Declining marine water quality	
	Impact of man-made stressors	
	Invasive species	
<u>SOCIO-ECONOMIC</u>	Population growth / pressure	Inadequate marine planning and prioritisation
	International economic conditions	Lack of public participation
	Changing demographics	Low level of compliance
	Food security	Inadequate human & financial resources
	Threats to livelihoods	Limited alternative livelihoods
	Poverty	Lack of education
	Socio-economic pressures resulting in unsustainable practices	Lack of public awareness
		Low priority given to ocean governance
	Prevailing attitudes	
<u>REGULATION & MONITORING</u>	Political interference	Failure to implement and enforce legislation
	Poor leadership	Failure to domesticate international law
	Absence of land use plans	Lack of public awareness and need for buy in on importance of environmental issues
		Lack of education and public awareness
		Slow legislative process
		Regulatory gaps – inadequate and out of date legal frameworks
		Reluctance to enforce legislation and policy
		Inadequate financial, human and physical resources
		Lack of enforcement mechanisms
		Cost of current technology
		Inadequate marine planning & prioritisation
		Ineffective governance and management structures
		Lack of cooperation between enforcement agencies
<u>INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS</u>	Institutional fragmentation	Third party geopolitical barriers
	Weak regional coordination	Lack of consultation with stakeholders
	Political influence and changing political priorities	Lack of intergovernmental collaboration
	Corruption	Lack of empowerment
	Resistance to change	Lack of political will
	Disconnect between regional and national priorities	Lack of cooperation and coordination
		No private sector consultation
		Lack of strategic planning and development goals
		Limited pool of regional legislative drafters
		Inadequate consideration of regional context
		Inadequate human resources/capacity
		Lack of financial resources for implementation
	Inadequate financial resources	



3. Current Status of Governance in St Vincent and the Grenadines

Policy environment

With the exception of the draft Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy,¹⁴ there is currently no National Ocean Policy for St Vincent and the Grenadines and no specific plan for development of marine resources and activities. The development of the National Ocean Policy is therefore being framed against the relevant regional and international treaties and conventions the country is party to.

International framework

The international ocean governance framework comprises a complex network of international and regional agreements, intergovernmental and civil society organisations and economic/market based drivers.

The overarching framework governing the management of the oceans is provided by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which governs rights, duties and activities throughout the oceans.

In addition to UNCLOS, there are a number of other global and regional agreements that supplement UNCLOS regarding specific activities or regions, including the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Chapter 17 of Agenda 21. Of these, the CBD is especially relevant as an international treaty that calls for conservation of all biodiversity.

Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 is devoted to the protection of the ocean, seas and coastal areas as well as the protection, rational use and development of their living resources. It proposes a plan of action and how to implement the principle of sustainable development that governments and local authorities can use.

Numerous sector-specific instruments have also been adopted under the auspices of relevant governing bodies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for shipping and the International Whaling Commission.

The international agreements St Vincent and the Grenadines has acceded to or ratified that are relevant to the marine environment are listed below.

¹⁴ *A Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*. Revised Final draft, October 2012. 22 p.



International Marine Environmental Agreements

- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982
- Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992
- Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species, 1972 (CITES)
- International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling 1948 ad 1959
- Convention on the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean, 1983 (Cartagena Convention)
- Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean, 1983
- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78) including Annexes I-VI
- International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1969 (CLC '69)
- Protocol of 1992 to Amend the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1969 (CLC '92)
- International Convention relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties, 1969; (INTERVENTION Convention 69)
- Protocol to the International Convention relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties, 1973; (INTERVENTION Protocol 73)
- Protocol of 1992 to the International Convention for the Establishment of an International Fund for the Compensation of Oil Pollution, 1971
- International Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter, 1972, (London Convention 72)
- International Convention on Liability and Compensation from Damage in Connection with Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS Convention, 1996)

Regional Governance Arrangements

The wider Caribbean ocean governance framework is characterised by a collection of multilateral environmental agreements, political agreements, non-binding agreements, programmes, projects and national laws, which exist at various levels.

Over 30 different regional and sub-regional organisations with some level of engagement in governance of the ocean and its resources operate in the region and support these arrangements. They include UN organisations and regional intergovernmental organisations, oriented towards all aspects of ocean governance and marine resource management, although integration across them is poor resulting in both gaps in implementation and duplication of effort. The absence of a regional



body to provide a coordination function is increasingly being recognized as a significant gap by Caribbean countries and organizational partners.¹⁵

A number of key organisations are outlined below:

Caribbean Environment Programme and the Cartagena Convention

The Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) is one of the 18 UNEP administered Regional Seas Programmes. The CEP is managed for the countries of the Wider Caribbean Region through the Caribbean Action Plan (1981). The Action Plan led to the 1983 adoption of the *Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region* (Cartagena Convention), a comprehensive, umbrella agreement, which provides the operative legal framework for much of the ocean governance activity in the wider Caribbean.

The Cartagena Convention covers the combined EEZs of its Caribbean region parties. As well as requiring the adoption of measures aimed at preventing and controlling marine pollution, the Convention also requires parties to take appropriate measures to protect and preserve fragile ecosystems.

The Convention is supplemented by three protocols:

- The Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region (Oil Spill Protocol);
- The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW Protocol); and
- The Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol).

The Cartagena Convention provides support to the implementation of sub-regional, regional and global initiatives involving the countries of the Wider Caribbean. These include the Saint Georges Declaration for OECS, Caribbean Sea Commission, Millennium Development Goals and several multilateral environmental agreements.

Caribbean Sea Commission

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and partners have been pursuing the Caribbean Sea Initiative since 1998 as a way of seeking to persuade the UN General Assembly to pass a resolution declaring the Caribbean Sea a “Special Area” in the context of sustainable development. The major thrust of this work has been through

¹⁵ http://cermes.cavehill.uwi.edu/PolicyPerspectives/CERMES_Policy_Perspectives_2011_11_01.pdf.



the promotion of the UN Resolution 'Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations'.¹⁶

In the process, the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was established in 2008 to promote and oversee the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea. The CSC has therefore been recognized as one body that could potentially provide a regional ocean governance policy harmonisation and coordination function.¹⁷

The CSC has adopted the large marine ecosystem (LME) Governance Framework as its working model for regional ocean governance arrangements. It will focus first on living marine resources which are the basis for livelihoods in fisheries, tourism and domestic recreation, as well as providing many other ecosystem services.

Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project

The Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem and Adjacent Regions (CLME) project is a large-scale Global Environment Fund project, with the overall objective of promoting the sustainable management of cross-border resources, based on an ecosystem approach. More specifically, the CLME Project will facilitate the strengthening of the governance of key fishery ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR). For this purpose, CLME will give particular attention to the strengthening the existing governance arrangements in the region.

The CLME project builds on and complements existing projects and initiatives that emphasize technical and institutional aspects of sustainable living marine resource (LMR) use by focusing on governance, knowledge, and institutional issues in a transboundary marine context.

CARICOM - Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) was established in March 2003, with its mission being to "To promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region's fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region".

The objectives of the CRFM are:

¹⁶ In the resolution the UNGA 'Recognises that the Caribbean Sea is an area of unique biodiversity and a highly fragile ecosystem that requires relevant regional and international development partners to work together to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources...',.

¹⁷ The potential to add value to the work of the other implementing organisations by performing this role was recognized at the Expert Consultation on Operationalisation of the CSC in 2010. It has also been endorsed by regional political fora and by the UN General Assemblies of the United Nations.



- Efficient management and sustainable development of marine and other aquatic resources within the jurisdictions of its Member States;
- Promotion and establishment of co-operative arrangements among interested Member States for the efficient management of shared, straddling or highly migratory marine and other aquatic resources;
- Provision of technical advisory and consultative services to fisheries divisions of Member States to assist with the development, management and conservation of their marine and other aquatic resources.

Conservation and protection of fish stocks and ecosystems is a priority objective of the CRFM. As a member country, St Vincent and the Grenadines' activities in this regard are guided by the CRFM's Strategic, Medium-Term and Annual work plans.

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States

In 2010 the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States(OECS) adopted the revised Treaty of Basseterre which gives additional roles and responsibilities to the OECS Secretariat, including with particular reference to ocean governance. Under the revised Treaty, OECS member States are also required to co-ordinate, harmonise and undertake joint actions and pursue joint policies particularly in the fields of "matters relating to the sea and its resources".¹⁸

At the 54th meeting of OECS Heads of Government, the OECS Authority requested the OECS Secretariat to

continue the process of devoting resources to building capacity at the regional and national levels in the area of Oceans Governance to start the process of implementation of the Secretariat's joint work programme in this area.

OECS is currently working on the establishment of a Programme for Sustainable Oceans Governance to promote maritime cooperation arrangements, at the regional and national levels, as a framework for the sustainable management of ocean resources. At the time of preparing this discussion document the OECS and its member countries are actively preparing a Regional (OECS-wide) Ocean Policy Framework to provide a more harmonised approach across the nine full and associate members of the OECS. Any National Ocean Policy developed by St Vincent and the Grenadines will need to be consistent with this regional framework.

¹⁸ *Revised Treaty of Basseterre establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union, Treaty of Article 4 section 4.1(o).*



OECS - St. George's Declaration

The St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS (2006) is the benchmark environmental management framework in the Eastern Caribbean region. Structured around twenty one principles, the Declaration mandates OECS Member States to ensure the sound management of the biophysical environment, and is implemented by OECS member countries at the national level through the National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS). These strategies offer countries the opportunity to set and pursue national goals and targets in addition to, or at a more rapid pace than, those included in the St. George's Declaration.

Relevance of other planning frameworks

Although St Vincent and the Grenadines lacks an overarching policy framework to deal with management of marine resources, several existing policy frameworks and strategies are relevant to the marine environment.

National Environmental Management Strategy and Action Plan

In response to the St. George's Declaration, the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines developed and adopted a National Environmental Management Strategy and Action Plan (NEMS)¹⁹ which defines the specific directions and mechanisms for more effective policy implementation, as well as identifies key strategies and priority actions for environmental management in the context of sustainable development. The NEMS includes numerous strategic actions that are directly relevant to the marine environment.

Activities identified include:

- implementation of the Fisheries Development and Management Plan and strengthening of relevant fishery management institutions;
- amending Fisheries Regulations to address sport fishing, licensing and registration;
- strengthening the use of Environmental Impact Assessment tools in the planning and development process;
- formulation of criteria for and identification of environmentally degraded areas;
- measures to improve the effectiveness of environmental awareness/education programmes
- strengthening the existing institutional and legal frameworks related to environmental coordination and management functions;
- strategies to ensure sustainable utilization of marine resources;

¹⁹ Homer, F. and Shim, D, *St. Vincent & the Grenadines Environmental Management Strategy and Action Plan 2004-2006*(16th April, 2004). 50 p.



- measures for the prevention and control of marine pollution;
- measures management of biological resources and restoration of biological diversity; and
- measures to ensure meaningful participation in decision making by the private sector and civil society.

The scope of the planned National Ocean Policy will include many of the aspects included in the framework of the NEMS. As such, the policy will complement the NEMS by addressing a range of environmental concerns.

National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy

The overall goal of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy is to establish appropriate measures for the effective management, conservation, sustainable utilisation and development of fisheries and aquaculture resources and related ecosystems, to optimise the social and economic contribution from fisheries in collaboration with all stakeholders.

The Policy formulation and validation phases confirmed a number of priority areas for the future Fisheries and Aquaculture policy. The following six policy goals are proposed:

- Increase production, value added, competitiveness and reduce risks
- Ensure sustainable use and protection of the natural environment and biodiversity
- Strengthen institutions for integrated fisheries and aquaculture development
- Enhance viability of island communities and rural areas
- Contribute to Food security and nutrition
- Optimise contribution to regional and international organisations.

A number of specific strategies are proposed to achieve the policy six specific goals, with a number of general undertakings required to support policy implementation.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Developed in 2000, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) is a strategic plan designed to guide implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by systematically addressing what were regarded as the main threats and key priority areas for action.²⁰

²⁰ National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan for St. Vincent & the Grenadines. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/vc/vc-nbsap-01-en.pdf>. Accessed 09/10/12.



Although the NBSAP should be a vital strategic document for guiding biodiversity and its ecosystems conservation, sustainable use and development, to date, resource and capacity constraints have resulted in the document being under-utilized by key stakeholders to guide their research, planning or decision-making activities.

Nevertheless, some progress has been made through one-off initiatives undertaken by the various sectoral agencies. In particular, significant progress has been made in the areas of developing and enhancing the legal and institutional framework surrounding conservation and sustainable development; thereby addressing the systemic deficiencies that have, thus far, hampered progress.²¹

Medium Term Economic Strategy

The purpose of the Medium-Term Economic Strategy Paper (MTESP) is to set out the policies and approaches to be pursued by the Government to sustain growth and development.

The plan identifies tourism as the “main engine of economic growth.” It also recognizes that an increased emphasis needs to be placed on fisheries management, particularly utilization of under exploited fishery resources and the sustainable use of the traditional fishery resource such as reef fish.

Sustainable development is recognised as an important part for the engine for economic growth and the plan restates the Government’s commitment to a development thrust that hinges on the pillars of sound environmental practices. In particular, over the medium-term, the Government will seek to:

- reduce current and potential environmental degradation;
- reduce the adverse environmental effects of current and future economic development;
- educate and raise awareness on current and potential environmental issues; and
- raise the profiles of the available alternative sources of energy.

Grenadines Trans-boundary Multi-use Marine Zoning Plan

Recognizing the importance of marine resources to the people of the Grenadine Islands, Sustainable Grenadines Inc. (a trans-boundary Non-Governmental Organisation registered in St Vincent and Grenada) has commenced a project to develop a multi-use marine zoning plan for the Grenadine Islands of both St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada.

²¹ The Fourth National Report of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the UNCBD. P 25
<http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/vc/vc-nr-04-en.pdf>. Accessed 09/10/12



This project aims to develop a plan for the management of marine resources of the Grenadines through broad participation of all marine users, self-enforcement, and long-term sustainability of the plan through the engagement of government agencies, NGOs/community groups as well as the full range of marine users.²²

The project will map the range of activities undertaken in the Grenadines into different zones in an attempt to reduce conflicts between different marine users. The plan will encompass the entire Grenadines from Bequia in the north to Isle de Rhonde in the south. The project builds on existing initiatives in the Grenadine islands of both St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada, namely: the Grenadines Marine Resource Space-use Information System (MarSIS) geodatabase and the Protected Area Systems Plans developed by both countries.

There are three project objectives:²³

Objective 1. Develop a draft multi-use zoning plan for the Grenadines. This plan will map activities such as tourism, fishing, conservation, transportation etc. into different zones in an attempt to reduce conflicts between different marine users.

Objective 2. Identify policies and laws required to support the implementation of the marine and coastal zone management.

Objective 3. Design an awareness campaign to promote the use of the zoning plan, and to educate people on the value and importance of marine resources

The project brings together a variety of social, economic and environmental information drawn from both scientific and local knowledge into a single information system. This information system can be used to highlight important areas such as: critical fishery habitats (essential fish habitats, nursery areas, endangered species); areas of highest biodiversity; important marine ecosystems (mangrove, seagrass & coral reefs); areas of high recreational and cultural importance; areas important for fishing, marine-based tourism and shipping; safe anchorages; areas of land-based sources of pollution as well as identify areas of highest human threat and potential space-use conflicts.

The following proposed zones have been designated through the project:

Conservation: No take Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

General Use: Planned development with limited restrictions.

Low impact/ Ecotourism: Very limited land development, recreational uses and local fishing allowed.

²² <http://www.grenadinesmarsis.com/>

²³ Sustainable Grenadines Inc. *Planning the Future of Marine Resources in the Grenadines: Marine Multi-use Zoning Project Update, March 2012.* http://grenadinesmarsis.com/uploads/Grenadines_MMZP_March2012_Reduced.pdf



Nearshore Fishing: Fisheries management area. Some gear restrictions and other fisheries management tools.

Offshore Fishing: For use by local fishers only. No commercial fishing, no dredging.

Transportation: Shipping lanes, seaports, landing sites, marinas.

Mariculture: Seamount farming (no fish farming).

The need for a National Ocean Policy

While the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has clearly prepared a number of strategies and policies of relevance to the governance of the Federation's marine space, no single overarching legislation or national policy to harmonise and coordinate these exists at the national level. The existing policy framework is inadequate for supporting the integrated approach needed in ocean governance.

This may result in increased conflict between users of the marine environment, leading to increased inequality in the distribution of benefits from the use of the marine resources. Moreover, future opportunities for development may be overlooked because of the lack of a national oversight pertaining to management and development of the marine environment.

Given the complexities of the marine environment, and the range of stakeholders with an interest in the way it is managed, the development of an overarching framework to improve governance of the nation's marine space is essential.

The national ocean policy will aim to provide such a framework for legal and institutional development that will guide St Vincent and the Grenadines' marine waters toward a more sustainable future. As such, the policy must both reflect existing national priorities, as articulated in other national policy and planning frameworks, and be consistent with the international and any regional policy frameworks and will set the goals for ocean use and management.

Questions

- 4. Do you agree there is a need for a National Ocean Policy?**
- 5. If no, what other options are there to address the issues identified**
- 6. What other regional and national arrangements should be taken into account in the drafting of the National Ocean Policy?**



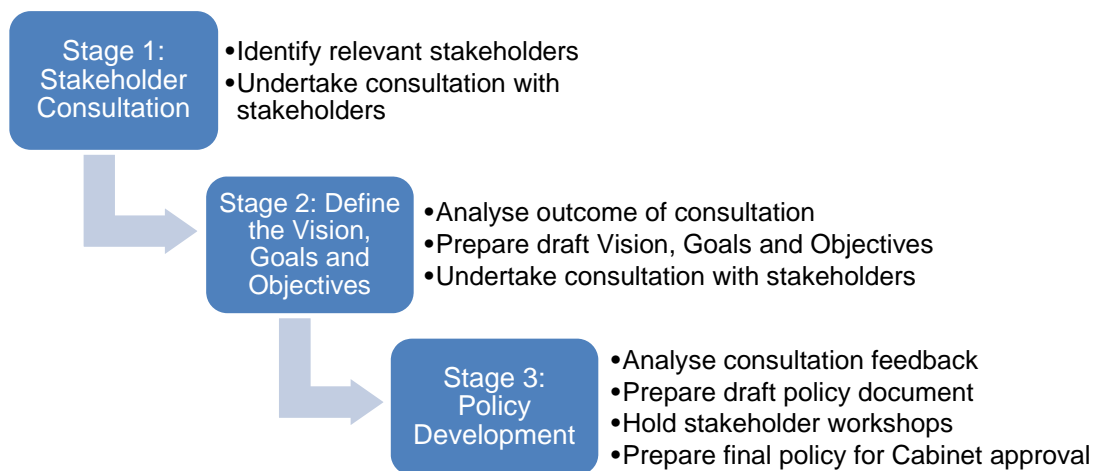
4. Foundation for the National Ocean Policy

The national ocean policy aims to provide a framework for sound management of present and future activities within St Vincent and the Grenadines' marine waters. Such a policy permits a clear vision of the direction St Vincent and the Grenadines should take to achieve management in ocean affairs.

The policy should achieve the following:

- Address issues of public concern pertaining to the coast;
- Develop out of accepted, publicly held values on use and management of the coast;
- Define a vision, principles, goals and objectives for the future governance of the coast; and
- Specify the institutional arrangements that are needed to achieve the desired outcome.

Policy development involves stakeholder consultation and agreement on a set of common objectives and should encompass a set of decisions which are intended to influence and determine planning, decisions and actions relating governance of marine space and resources. The national ocean policy is therefore being developed in three stages as follows.



Stakeholder consultation

The Government recognises the need to understand the range of views held by the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines in relation to utilisation of the marine



environment and marine resources, and the need for them to have an opportunity to participate in the process by which the policy is developed.

A number of different processes have already been undertaken at the national and wider OECS level to better understand the issues facing the marine environment and the needs and expectations of stakeholders. The outcomes of these various processes have been analysed and considered in the context of the national ocean policy and will be complemented by further consultation on this discussion document and the draft policy document itself.

Grenadines Trans-boundary Multi-use Marine Zoning Plan

As part of the development of the trans-boundary marine zoning project and the earlier MarSIS project discussed above, the project teams have worked with a broad range of marine users and other stakeholders²⁴ between 2006 and 2012, in order to integrate a wide range of marine-based knowledge and provide people with a more complete information base for marine planning and management.

Clearly marine users believe that there are significant problems within the marine environment of the Grenadines.

The most significant cause for concern is unsustainable and illegal fishing practices. Other illegal activities such as garbage and pollution, harassment and theft, as well as anchoring on the reefs were other key issues identified.

A major contributory factor to all of these issues is identified as a lack of active marine management and enforcement across the Grenadines. Participants in the consultation processes have identified the need for some form of increased marine management initiatives as a solution to these identified problems.

The keystone activity of the marine zoning plan consultation process was a Visioning workshop through which a vision for the future of the Grenadine's waters emerged.²⁵ Participants identified a number of desirable outcomes from the project including:

- Policy and legal framework for effective management for future generations
- Conservation and sustainable use to improve resilience and biodiversity of ecosystems
- Integrated and adaptive social, economic and biophysical monitoring plans

²⁴ Baldwin, K., Mahon, R., Oxenford, H., Cooke, A., Gill, D and Staskiewicz, T, *A Profile of Grenadine Marine Resource Users in the Marine Space-Use Information System (MarSIS)*. http://www.grenadinesmarsis.com/uploads/Baldwinetal.GCFI_Poster.pdf

²⁵ Sustainable Grenadines Inc. *Planning the Future of Marine Resources in the Grenadines: Marine Multi-use Zoning Project Update, March 2012*. http://grenadinesmarsis.com/uploads/Grenadines_MMZP_March2012_Reduced.pdf.



- Preservation of coastal livelihoods and local cultural heritage
- Culture of awareness, involvement and stewardship between communities, nations and islands

A draft Vision statement was also developed:²⁶

Through the establishment of a comprehensive ecosystem based management/integrated marine multi-use zoning plan, we endeavour to:

- 1. Ensure that marine resource use and conservation is viable, sustainable and maximally effective.*
- 2. Implement appropriate policy, legal and institutional framework for effective management and governance of the Grenada Bank [as a model trans-boundary MPA] for current and future generations.*
- 3. Enhance conservation and management of the Grenada Bank for resilient, robust and biologically diverse ecosystems.*
- 4. Foster a culture of awareness, inclusion, involvement, commitment and stewardship among stakeholders and communities/ Co operation among communities, islands and between nations.*
- 5. Develop effective, integrated and adaptive management plans that encompass socio-economic and biophysical monitoring.*
- 6. Promote holistic, harmonious and sustainable use of resources and provision of livelihoods to multiple users while preserving local cultural heritage.*
- 7. Foster informed, involved and committed stakeholders and communities.*

St Vincent and the Grenadines visioning workshop

On 15 May 2012, the Department of Maritime Administration, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Secretariat, hosted a one-day stakeholder consultation workshop to discuss the scope of the national ocean policy. 22 participants representing a range of different stakeholders participated in the workshop and considered, among other things:

- The value and future contribution of the ocean to sustainable development in St Vincent and the Grenadines;

²⁶ V. Francella and M. Barriteau, *Developing a Framework for a Comprehensive Marine Multi-use Zoning Plan: Visioning Workshop Summary*. Workshop held by Sustainable Grenadines Inc. Carriacou, January 27 & 28, 2011. M. Barriteau personal communication.



- What a future 'Vision' for the state and governance of the marine environment might look like; and
- What barriers need to be overcome to achieve the Vision.

Collectively, participants identified a number of critical issues seen to be holding back effective management of St Vincent and the Grenadines' marine space:

- Lack of political will
- Lack of resources/finances to undertake monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) activities
- Lack of clear roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (awareness/ understanding)
- Insufficient legal framework e.g. absence of a Marine Pollution Act
- Stakeholders embracing/ commitment
- Inadequate information or access to information
- Fragmented institutional arrangements and inadequate coordination among Agencies
- Conflicting departmental priorities
- Inadequate education of resource users
- Inadequate enforcement of existing laws
- Inadequate information on resources, goods and services
- Inadequate information on value of resources
- Lack of awareness of impacts
- Lack of resources (human and financial)
- Ineffective use of resources
- Need to engage civil society (more community service, etc.)
- Culture

Eastern Caribbean regional ocean governance workshop

The Commonwealth Secretariat is assisting the OECS in the process of developing regional and national ocean governance frameworks. As a first step in this process, the OECS and Commonwealth Secretariat co-hosted a two day workshop.²⁷ 41

²⁷ The workshop was held between 8-9 February 2012. See the report of the workshop - *OECS Ocean Governance Regional Workshop: Interim Summary Report*. Prepared by the Special Advisory Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat. April 2012, London. 20 pp.



country participants representing all nine OECS member countries attended the workshop.

Four substantive questions framed the context of the workshop

- What key social, economic and environmental benefits are currently provided to eastern Caribbean countries by the marine environment?
- What possible future opportunities for sustainable development could the marine environment provide?
- What existing risks, threats and barriers are perceived to be preventing countries from fully realising the opportunities the oceans present?
- In order to realise a future vision for the region's oceans, what steps are necessary to overcome threats, barriers and management challenges?

In addressing these questions, participants were encouraged to consider their vision for the future of the eastern Caribbean marine waters.

Summary of key outcomes of stakeholder consultations

The various consultation processes discussed above reveal a wide range of issues with respect to management of the ocean in St Vincent and the Grenadines and the eastern Caribbean, which can be grouped into eleven broad thematic areas that a future policy should address:

Environmental quality

Protection of the health of marine ecosystems is fundamental to sustaining marine biodiversity, economic resilience and the cultural, recreational, aesthetic and intrinsic values that people hold in relation to the oceans.

Water quality and marine pollution were frequently raised as a concern, with widespread agreement about its importance to a healthy sea. Particular concerns were expressed over the issue of pollution from ships and land based sources, although it is recognised that much of the waste found on St Vincent and the Grenadines' beaches probably comes from offshore sources rather than locally.

Protection and preservation of the marine environment

Damage to marine ecosystems and depletion of marine resources were concerns raised by many stakeholders with many supporting the need for active measures to protect marine habitats and biodiversity. The health of coral reefs and associated biodiversity, particularly in the Grenadines, are seen as of critical importance both



from an environmental perspective and as an economic one due to the strong reliance on the tourism sector.

A range of views on how and why marine ecosystems should be protected have been voiced, but there is general agreement that some areas should be protected at some times, by both statutory and less formal means. There is a need for permanent and temporary protection measures, and greater community involvement.

Sustainable use of marine resources

With specific reference to fisheries, many stakeholders felt that some resources were over exploited due to lack of effective regulation and illegal fishing. Overexploitation of fish stocks also causes degradation of habitats, and negative impacts on many ecosystems and fishing communities. Stakeholders articulated such desires as *optimal and sustainable use of marine resources* and *productive fishing and well managed fisheries*.

Consistent with a number of regional initiatives highlighted in this document, fishery management needs to move toward a more ecosystem-based approach to improve its effectiveness and reduce conflicts between socioeconomic forces and biological sustainability. An ecosystem-based management approach will be particularly helpful in protecting essential fish habitat and reducing the impacts of by-catch.

Participation

Active and meaningful stakeholder participation should be central to decision-making. If all stakeholders can participate and express their views and the ultimate decision taken is consensus based, this helps to reduce future potential conflicts among users. Communities and resource users should be consulted during planning and commencement of any developmental projects, and sufficient and correct information should be made available to them beforehand so that participation is meaningful.

There is a feeling among stakeholders that more meaningful participation would ultimately result in greater awareness and ownership, with people taking responsibility for sustainable development of the ocean environment. As such, local communities and local industries should be encouraged to participate in planning and management strategies and share responsibility for the management of ocean resources.

Regulation and enforcement

Although a legislative framework exists for many marine activities, a general observation from the consultation was that the existing framework exhibited both duplication and gaps in their coverage and that the framework does not anticipate or provide an enabling environment for future uses of the marine environment. Certain activities, such as fisheries, have comprehensive legislation while others do not.



Furthermore, many stakeholders felt that lack of compliance monitoring and enforcement is a significant problem - if rules are developed to manage people's interaction with the marine environment, it is important those rules be observed.

Overseas experience shows that voluntary compliance is essential to effectively manage the impact of people's behaviour on the marine environment. To achieve this, people need to understand the implications of their behaviour. Therefore, information and education will be important to promoting such understanding.

Economic opportunities and benefits

Economic opportunities came up prominently during the various consultation processes, due to the high dependence on the marine environment for peoples' livelihoods. In small islands nations such as St Vincent and the Grenadines, the ocean presents perhaps the best opportunity for future economic growth. There is a general recognition that the ocean offers a range of future opportunities which have not yet been realised or, in some cases, even identified.

That said, the majority of the participants acknowledged the need for a balanced approach between potential environmental costs and economic and social benefits.

It is clear that stakeholders see that there is further potential for economic benefit to be derived from the sea – both from living and non-living resources – and that there is a need to explore ways of realising this potential. St Vincent and the Grenadines is one of a few nations where the potential value of oceanic resources exceeds those on land.

Governance

Stakeholders generally support the intention of a national ocean policy to provide better integration of the range of activities and processes currently associated with managing the marine environment.

If a national ocean policy is to provide a framework that minimises conflict by accommodating a wide range of values held within SVG, it will need to provide the means to determine the nature and status of competing claims and their relationship to each other. It must identify the relative priority of the various interests in the range of decision making processes, including the extent to which those not directly represented – such as future generations – have rights that need to be accommodated.

To do this effectively, a national ocean policy must build on what already works and also on the recent work undertaken for marine zoning. It should focus on the effects of any activity in an integrated way, be principled, flexible, efficient, durable and adaptable.



One major issue that surfaced during consultation was the matter of who should manage the marine environment. Many stakeholders identified the need for a single coordinating agency that could function as a "national oceans agency", and be responsible for coordinating among the various government agencies to ensure the effective implementation of the National Ocean Policy.

Creating the **political will** to challenge the status quo and to implement integrated ocean governance was frequently raised as a major concern and a barrier to future development. It is here that a major focus must be placed in order to successfully implement the national ocean policy.

Training and capacity building

A key challenge identified by many stakeholders will be to make the national structures effective and this will require capacity building. There is also a need to devise new ways of working that leverage greater capacity from current systems to make change happen through for example increased regional cooperation, sharing of costs and knowledge and public/private partnerships. It is particularly important to recognise the capacity that does exist (for example Universities, other countries, private sector), either at a national level or at a wider Caribbean level.

Awareness creation, participation and consultation will assist in upgrading skills and understanding of decision makers and professional in all sectors. Furthermore, increased cooperation on certain issues, coupled with greater coordination both within and between governments will help reduce costs and speed up the transition to more sustainable governance and management arrangements.

Security

Many stakeholders referred to the concept of security, although the context of security varied among stakeholders.

Some stakeholders referred to the need to ensure a *safe and secure marine environment* referring to the safety of shipping and for mariners through the provision of adequate charting, infrastructure and effective regulation.

The issue of *security of marine resources* from illegal and unregulated exploitation was of concern to many stakeholders, with particular concerns being raised over the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement efforts.

The impact of natural hazards, such as hurricanes, on the coastline was highlighted as an issue with stakeholders raising the issue of *protection of land and infrastructure*. Related to this is the issue of climate change impacts on coastal areas and many stakeholders recognised the importance of building resilience into coastal systems as a method of mitigating these risks.



Social benefits

As well as the economic benefits and environmental imperatives, a range of social benefits provided by the marine environment were identified by stakeholders as of importance. These include not only the recreational and amenity benefits but also the intrinsic value of the coast and marine environment.

The important future potential that marine resources play in food security and supporting sustainable livelihoods were also identified by stakeholders as issues that needed to be provided for in any future policy framework.

Education, awareness raising and marine information

Strong concerns were voiced over lack of awareness and environmental education opportunities for both coastal inhabitants and also tourists/visitors to the islands. Some stakeholders felt that better general education about the marine environment was one way of enhancing personal levels of responsibility.

Emphasis should be placed on sensitising the coastal population on coastal environmental issues, introducing relevant subjects through the school curriculum by involving the Ministry of Education, as well as capacity building especially for office bearers for effective implementation of the policies and activities.

Knowledge of the marine environment is critical. Without it, effective management policies cannot be achieved. Many stakeholders expressed concern at how little is known about the oceans. There was a strong call for improved general understanding of the marine environment across the community, since the more that is known about the marine environment, the better people's interaction with it can be managed.

Questions

7. *What do you most value about the ocean?*
8. *How does your lifestyle benefit from your own use/enjoyment of our ocean?*
9. *How does your lifestyle benefit from other people's use of our ocean?*
10. *What changes would you most like to see in terms of the way the marine environment is managed?*
11. *What changes would you least like to see in terms of the way the marine environment is managed?*



Defining a vision for the future

In each of the different consultation processes identified above, participants were asked to express their views on what kind of coast they want to see, and what kind of resource uses they want to see there. Each meeting identified the key elements of what should be addressed in a Vision.

The following elements were variously identified by stakeholders:

- Clean and healthy seas
- Rich marine biodiversity
- Provide for livelihoods
- Contribute to economic / social development
- Sustainable resource use and conservation
- Integrated and harmonised at the national and regional levels
- Appropriate policy, legal and institutional framework
- Security, compliance and enforcement
- Participatory process and community engagement
- Awareness raising and education

These various elements have been combined and moulded into a draft **Vision Statement** which will form the basis for subsequent rounds of consultation and discussion.

The 'Vision Statement' is the starting point to articulating the broader policy framework. It is an expression of stakeholders' aspirations about how they may benefit from a healthy and productive marine environment. The vision therefore becomes the context in which the broader governance framework is framed.

Vision Statement

Healthy and richly biodiverse oceans, sustainably managed in an integrated way to promote economic development and the livelihoods and aspirations of current and future generations

Principles for ocean management

The following set of guiding principles, based both on agreed norms for environment and development and the special character of coasts and oceans, emerges from the consultation processes and should be used to inform the development and implementation of a national ocean policy.



Sustainable Development	Sustainable development principles should rest at the core of St Vincent and the Grenadines' ocean policy. It should recognize the need for integration of social, economic and environmental aspects of decision making, and that any current and future ocean resource development must be carefully undertaken without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
The Right to Development	Human development in harmony with the environment is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development, so that individuals and societies are empowered to achieve positive social and environmental outcomes. The value of the resources provided by the oceans must be recognized and opportunities for their economic development optimised to meet society's needs and promote the wellbeing of coastal communities.
Ecosystem Health	The diversity, health and productivity of marine ecosystems is fundamental to the management of both the oceans and the land. The integrity of marine ecosystems must be maintained and, where appropriate, rehabilitated, with a desired end of maintaining or recovering natural levels of biological diversity and ecosystem services.
Ecosystem Based Management	There is a need to move away from the sectoral- and species-based approaches from which characterize ocean governance systems. Marine environments must be treated as a distinctive and indivisible system, recognizing the interrelationships between marine users and ecosystems and between the land, sea and air. Large scale marine spatial planning and other area-based management measures should be integral parts of an ecosystem approach to fisheries and oceans management.
Integrated Ocean Governance	Integrated governance is a commitment to planning and managing human activities in a comprehensive manner while considering all factors necessary for the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources and the shared use of ocean spaces. The many potentially beneficial uses of ocean and coastal resources should be acknowledged and managed in a way that balances competing uses while preserving and protecting the overall integrity of the marine environment.
Duty of Care & Accountability	Access to environmental resources carries attendant responsibilities to use them in an ecologically sustainable, economically efficient, and socially fair manner. Individual and corporate responsibilities and incentives should be aligned with each other and with broad social and ecological goals. All people and organisations must act with due care to avoid negative impacts on the coastal environment and coastal resources. Decision makers and members of the public should be accountable for the actions they take that affect ocean and coastal resources.
Knowledge Based Decision Making	Ocean planning and management decisions should be based as far as possible on the best available information concerning of the natural, social, and economic processes that affect ocean and coastal environments. Decision makers should be able to obtain and understand quality science and information in a way that facilitates sustainable use of ocean and coastal resources.



Precautionary Approach	<p>The knowledge base for managing the marine environment is arguably weaker than for other ecosystems, but this should not be used as ground for lack of action.</p> <p>In the face of uncertainty about potentially irreversible environmental impacts, marine management efforts must err on the side of caution, adopting a risk-averse and precautionary approach to decision making.</p>
Public Participation	<p>Full stakeholder awareness and participation contributes to credible, accepted rules that identify and assign the corresponding responsibilities appropriately. All stakeholders should therefore be engaged.</p> <p>The support of the in the formulation and implementation of decisions concerning governance of ocean uses is seen as crucial to its success. Partnerships between government, the private sector and civil society must be built in order to ensure co-responsibility for coastal management and to empower stakeholders to participate effectively.</p>
Access and Benefit Sharing	<p>The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of common ocean resources, and the responsibilities for their continued health and productivity, among all citizens.</p> <p>St Vincent and the Grenadines should govern marine resource use in a manner that aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of marine resources (including genetic resources) in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies.</p>
User Pays & Other Economic Instruments	<p>Access to common ocean resources for private profit should be priced to give a reasonable rate of return to the community. Charges for access to ocean resources should reflect the community interest and short- and long-term economic, environmental, social, and cultural costs and benefits.</p> <p>Those who generate and release wastes into the ocean should bear the costs of containment, avoidance, abatement, or remediation to the level of best practice.</p>

Questions

12. *What might the oceans be like in 20 years? in 50 years?*
13. *What other principles should be applied to future management of the ocean?*



5. Scope of the National Ocean Policy

The main elements of a national ocean policy are:

the **spatial dimension** - the geographical area where the policy will be applied;

the **jurisdiction** - the area over which St Vincent and the Grenadines exercises obligations, rights and sovereignty;

the **actors involved** - the actors that participate in this process and who should play an active role in the planning and implementation phases;

the **included issues and interests**- the national objectives and strategies, which are the issues and interests, that will be part of the national policy; and

the **administrative system of governance**.

Spatial dimension and jurisdiction

Under UNCLOS, St Vincent and the Grenadines has rights and responsibilities over about 36,000 square km, over 90 times its land area of the islands. As such, the geographical area and the jurisdiction where this policy shall be applied will include all national waters up to the outer limits of the Exclusive Economic Zone or the extended continental shelf, whichever is the greater.

Actors involved

It has been established that in order to adopt an integrated ocean governance framework, traditional governmental entities must work through this process with members of the private sector, academic institutes, and non-governmental organizations, among others.

This process must be horizontally and vertically integrated, to ensure consensus and allow for the required national participation. The governmental entities related with the management of ocean issues at the national and local level would participate, in collaborating with the main political entities represented in Parliament and members of the private sector related with maritime activities (representatives of the maritime industries, academics, NGOs etc).

Issues and Interests

The issues to be addressed in the national ocean policy were presented in section 4 above. The main interests of the policy are articulated in the form of 'policy goals', which emerge from the visioning process and the MarSIS Project.



Policy Goals

The following nine core goals support the principles for ocean management described in section 4 above and are proposed to guide efforts towards ensuring a healthy and productive marine environment for all citizens:

Goal 1. Exercise jurisdiction

Maritime boundaries are formalized to secure, exercise and protect St Vincent and the Grenadines' rights and jurisdiction over offshore areas and resources.

Goal 2. Protection and restoration of marine ecosystems

The overall quality of the marine environment is conserved and enhanced through protection, maintenance or restoration of natural and physical features, processes and biological diversity and the ecologically sustainable use of marine resources.

Goal 3. Sustainable economic, social and cultural opportunities

Economically and environmentally sustainable use of coastal and ocean resources is promoted and incorporated into national development policy and planning to ensure long term economic development and job creation.

Goal 4. New and emerging opportunities

Opportunities from existing, under-utilised resources are optimized, while new and emerging opportunities for ocean industries and ocean-related development are identified and encouraged.

Goal 5. Multiple use, planning and zoning

St Vincent and the Grenadines explores and builds on multiple use marine spatial planning and zoning mechanisms by linking the ocean to coastal and inland issues for improved planning and control of marine activities.

Goal 6. Integrated ocean planning and management arrangements

Clear coordinated institutional mechanisms for integrated national ocean and coastal management are established and implemented across relevant sectors such as fisheries, tourism, transport, energy and environment including, where appropriate, partnerships between government, the private sector and civil society.

Goal 7. Education and capacity building

Our understanding of the marine environment, its natural processes and our cultural marine heritage is increased and to our capacity for informed decision-making by all stakeholders is developed and strengthened.



Goal 8. Public awareness and understanding community needs

Public awareness, understanding and appreciation of the importance of the ocean is raised, while the needs and aspirations of communities are accommodated through active public participation in the development of new policies.

Goal 9. Adapt to changing environment

The increasing risk of coastal hazards and climate change are recognised and managed through the incorporation of appropriate adaptation and mitigation strategies into sustainable development, conservation and governance actions.



Administrative System

No marine or coastal planning occurs in a vacuum. Management of marine uses normally already exists in some form, and a key to successful policy and governance framework is to build on what is there, improving the management and making it more efficient and effective. A key step, therefore, in implementation of a national ocean policy is to compare the *status quo* with the vision and objectives defined in the policy. In particular, this will focus on legal and institutional arrangements needed to fulfil the policy objectives.

Statutory Arrangements

A total of 40 pieces of primary legislation have been identified relating to management of ocean resources and ocean affairs in St Vincent and the Grenadines (Appendix 1).

No account has been taken of any subsidiary regulations that may exist under any of these. However, it is clear from the initial review that there exist a number of regulatory gaps compared to the range of activities undertaken, and that some duplication also exists with several pieces of legislation being administered by more than one of the organizations listed in Appendix 1.

Institutional Arrangements

The management approach to the management of the ocean issues in St Vincent and the Grenadines is highly sectoral. The numerous organizations that have competence in this area are located within a governmental structure, which leads to mostly top-down and segmented decision-making processes, conflicts of mandates and duplication of efforts.

A total of 24 government agencies, three private sector organisations and one NGO, have been identified as having some form of statutory or functional mandate relating to management of ocean resources and ocean affairs (Appendix 1). Furthermore, there are also sectoral sub-divisions and different hierarchical levels in each governmental structure.

The information presented in this document clearly points to the need for establishing effective management of St Vincent and the Grenadines' marine space - it is obvious that the existing framework needs to be harmonized and rationalized before proceeding with further development into an ocean governance framework to implement an integrated national ocean policy. The question arises, how this can be accomplished?

Decisions have to be made about the organisation of appropriate institutional arrangements and the associated enabling legal tools and financing for the implementation of the national ocean policy.



Options for administrative reform

Clarification is needed on the ocean governance mandates and responsibilities of different sectors and spheres of Government. As noted earlier, the development process of a national ocean policy must be guided by a high-level government entity with a specific Cabinet mandate to lead the process. This is required to ensure the necessary political engagement and to establish effective coordination mechanisms with other competent entities and the community in general. In addition to coordinating the development and implementation of the national ocean policy, an institutional home will be needed for supervisory and support activities relating to ocean governance such as marine zoning and the development of marine management programmes.

Considering this context and the critical importance of integration in the management of oceans, it is clearly necessary to modify the present administrative structure. The first action which should be taken is to establish a National Oceans Coordination Committee (NOCC). The NOCC should be composed of representatives from the Ministries and agencies with competence in ocean issues. Likewise, representatives from the private sector, local NGOs and key marine user groups should participate.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has already established a national maritime boundaries delimitation committee to coordinate the countries negotiation and delimitation of maritime boundaries with neighbouring States. This committee includes representatives from many of the same organisations that are suggested for the NOCC. An expanded NOCC could therefore be formed from the existing maritime boundaries delimitation committee with a broader mandate to oversee all aspects of ocean governance in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The first task of the NOCC should be to oversee the process of developing and implementing the national ocean policy. The draft should be approved by Cabinet through a relevant legal instrument.

In the long run, the national ocean policy will require, and lead to, institutional changes. In response to this a permanent national coordination body should be established for the management of ocean issues. This, and other institutional arrangements, will need to be evaluated and implemented in order for the national ocean policy to be effectively implemented.

For such an institutional coordination to be effective, the following key factors are essential:

- The coordinating body would be established at a level above the Line Ministries. It must be firmly supported by the highest levels of government and would be appointed by Cabinet.



- The coordinating body would have to have a clear and legally supported mandate and sufficient resources and capacity to do its job.
- The coordinating body should be comprised of appropriate administrative heads of relevant agencies. Representation by experts and nongovernmental organisations is also necessary.
- Key functions of the coordinating body would be to promote the national vision, goals and objectives for ocean governance, to strengthen inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaboration, to reduce conflict and provide a forum for conflict resolution among sectors and ocean users.
- Additional administrative activities could also be undertaken if the coordinating body is mandated with an administrative and approval role such as implementing the marine zoning framework, development of coastal management plans, monitoring the compliance of sectoral departments' activities with the coastal policy, reviewing proposals affecting areas of strategic importance, and monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the policy implementation.
- Creation of this coordinating body could be achieved through promulgating a National Oceans Act or by amending existing legislation to allow for ocean governance provisions.
- The coordinating body could be established in a phased approach: Initially, the NOCC would fulfil this role but in time it will need to be institutionalised. This interim measure could last a few years, during which time the structure, functions and enabling instruments of the national coordinating body could be established.

The NOCC and subsequent coordinating body would do well to align itself with the proposed regional oceans governance framework being contemplated by the OECS. OECS Member States have agreed to the establishment of an OECS Maritime Governance team and to identify and mandate a lead national agency to participate in this process, working closely with the OECS Secretariat Ocean Governance Unit, in leading and coordinating activities at the regional level. The nomination of a lead national agency is therefore also envisaged by the OECS and has already been agreed to by OECS Heads of Government including the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines. Creation of the NOCC would fulfil this mandate.

Questions

- 14. *What other policy goals would you like to see included?***
- 15. *Who should make decisions about the ocean?***
- 16. *How should decision be made?***



6. How to Make a Submission?

To make a submission either complete the Submission Form at Appendix 2 or simply write down the comments you wish to make.

Send your submission to:

**National Ocean Policy Consultation
Department of Maritime Administration
Upper Floor, Cruise Ship Terminal,
Kingstown
St Vincent**

Attention: Director for Maritime Administration

Telephone: 784-456-1378

Fax: 784-451-2445

E-mail: svgmarad@gmail.com

Website: www.svg-marad.com

The closing date for submissions on this document is 7th June 2013.



Appendix 1

Existing Institutional and Legislative Framework Relating to Marine Management in St Vincent and the Grenadines

FUNCTIONAL AGENCIES WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING OR DELIVERING OCEAN OR MARINE POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES	PRIMARY LEGISLATION (LAWS OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES 2009)
Agency Title	Title
Ministry of Finance, National Security, Grenadines Affairs, and Legal Affairs	
	Mineral (Vesting) Act
	Carriage of Goods by Sea Act
	Oil Pollution (Liability and Compensation) Act
	Visiting Forces Act
	Continental Shelf Act
	Maritime Areas Act
	Petroleum (Production) Act
Department of Customs and Excise	Oil in Navigable Waters Act
	Tonnage Dues Act
	Yachting Licence Act
	Customs (Management Control) Act
St. Vincent and the Grenadines Port Authority	Litter Act
	Cruise Ship (Service Charge) Act
	Harbour (Dues and Charges) Act
	Kingstown Harbour Regulation Act
	Management of Ship-Generated Solid Waste Act
	Passenger Boats Act
	Port Officers Act
	Powercraft Act
	Port Authority Act
Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force	Against the Taking of Hostage Act
	Hijacking Act
	Litter Act
	Maritime Security Act
	Oil Fuel (Handling and Storage) Act
	Oil in Navigable Waters Act
	Petroleum Act
Ministry of Finance, National Security, Grenadines Affairs, and Legal Affairs	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Coast Guard	Powercraft Act
Department of Maritime Administration	Alien (Officer of Ship) Restriction Act
	Convention on Oil Pollution Damage Act
	Safety of Navigation Act
	Shipping Act
Tobago Cays Marine Park	Marine Parks Act &(Order and Regulations)
Department of Passports and Immigration	Immigration (Restriction) Act
	Maritime Security Act



National Emergency Management Organization	National Emergency and Disaster Management Act
National Telecommunication Regulatory Commission	Telecommunications Act
Ministry of Housing, Informal Human Settlements, Lands and Surveys and Physical Planning	
Physical Planning Department	Town and Country Planning Act
Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, Forestry, Fisheries, and Rural Transformation	
	Beach Protection Act
Fisheries Division	Fisheries Act
	High Seas Fishing Act
	Fishing Regulations (1991)
	Maritime Areas Act (Act No. 15 of 1983)
Forestry Division	Forestry Resource Conservation Act
	Wildlife Act
	Litter Act
Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment	
	Litter Act
Central Water and Sewerage Authority	Management of Ship-Generated Solid Waste Act
	Waste Management Act
Department of the Environment	Dumping at Sea Act
	Public Health Act (No. 9 of 1977)
	Litter Act
Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture	
	Marine Parks Act
National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority	National Parks Act
	Tobago Cays Marine Parks Act (1999)
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust	SVG National Trust Act
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs	
	Oil Pollution (Liability and Compensation) Act
Ministry of Transport, Works, Urban Development and Local Government	
	Convention on Oil Pollution Damage Act
Canouan Resort Development Limited	Canouan Resort Development Limited (lease Ratification) Act
Mustique Company Limited	Mustique Company Limited Act
Isle Quatre Resort Company Limited	Quatre Isle Resort Company Limited Act
Mayreau Environmental Development Organisation	Mayreau Environmental Development (SVG) Incorporation Act

