

Future Direction

A Blueprint for Ocean and Coastal Sustainability

REGIONAL OECS WORKSHOP ON OCEAN GOVERNANCE

8 & 9 February 2012

Outputs from the questionnaire will inform the workshop, which has the objective to report on steps for building consensus among OECS Member States on the way forward for developing ocean governance frameworks for the region. The anticipated outcomes of this process include the possible development of a Regional Ocean Policy for endorsement by the Authority.

There are many issues affecting the ocean. The fragile and interconnected nature of ocean ecosystems and human activities has in recent decades become readily apparent. From climate change, through damages to marine ecosystems, many ocean areas are already under pressure yet the oceans provide many future opportunities demanding coordinated and integrated approaches to meet future management challenges.

To help develop a way forward for the establishment of a regional integrated ocean governance framework for the eastern Caribbean the workshop will focus on four key areas:

1. What key economic, social and environmental benefits are currently provided to the eastern Caribbean region by the marine environment, and are there issues regarding their sustainability and viability into the future?
2. To consider what possible opportunities the marine environment may provide to the eastern Caribbean region in the future?
3. To consider the risks and barriers that are preventing countries and the region from fully realising future opportunities?
4. To discuss and agree a way forward to achieve the future social, economic and environmental benefits that can be provided by the marine environment through an improved regional Ocean Governance framework.



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OECS Ocean Governance Project Stakeholder Survey

The Economic and Legal Section (ELS) of the Commonwealth Secretariat has recently expanded its long running Maritime Boundaries Delimitation (MBD) Programme to include assistance relating to ocean governance and marine resource management. Since this is a new work area, there is a need to communicate the expanded scope of advisory services now available to member countries as well as to raise awareness among member countries of the benefits of managing marine space in an integrated way.

The OECS has asked the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist in the development of regional and national governance frameworks for oceans governance.

A survey has been completed to obtain the views of OECS Member States on: the current status and utilisation of marine resources, the status of ocean governance, and the barriers to improving the current status.

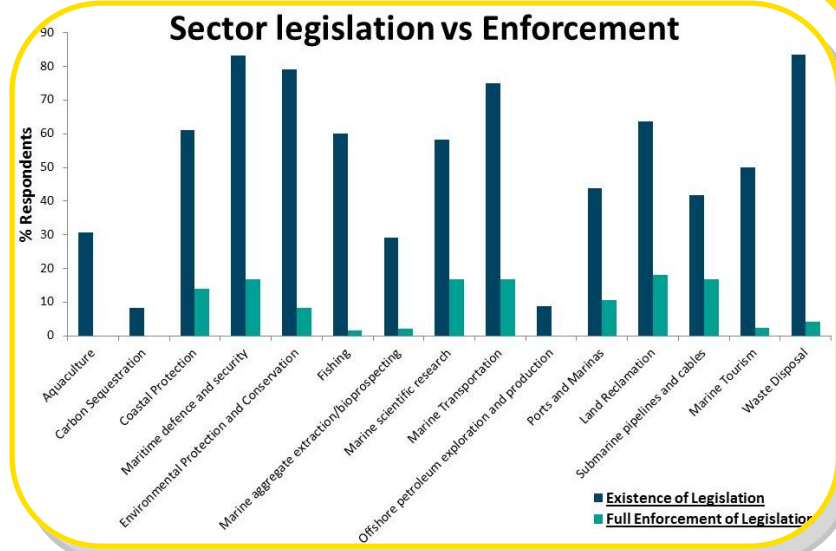


Commonwealth Secretariat Ocean Governance Aim

“Assist member countries to sustainably develop and benefit from marine resources through integration of economic development and effective ecosystem Management.”

Results & Analysis

The survey responses have come in the main from the level of 'Middle Management' and therefore represent the views primarily from those charged with the implementation of policy, rather than the makers of policy. This is a useful starting point for the workshop because the results paint a picture of the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing institutional setting for ocean management in the OECS region.



The survey was broken down into three main sections and the initial results and analysis from each of these are presented below.

Section 1: CURRENT STATUS AND UTILISATION OF MARINE RESOURCES

– What socio-economic and cultural benefits are currently derived from oceans, and what issues surround the importance of seas within the region? Many sectors have high levels of legislation, although legislation is at a low level for some emerging sectors, such as offshore industries.

30% of respondents felt that the existing regulatory mechanisms did not meet the requirements for integrated management of the marine space.

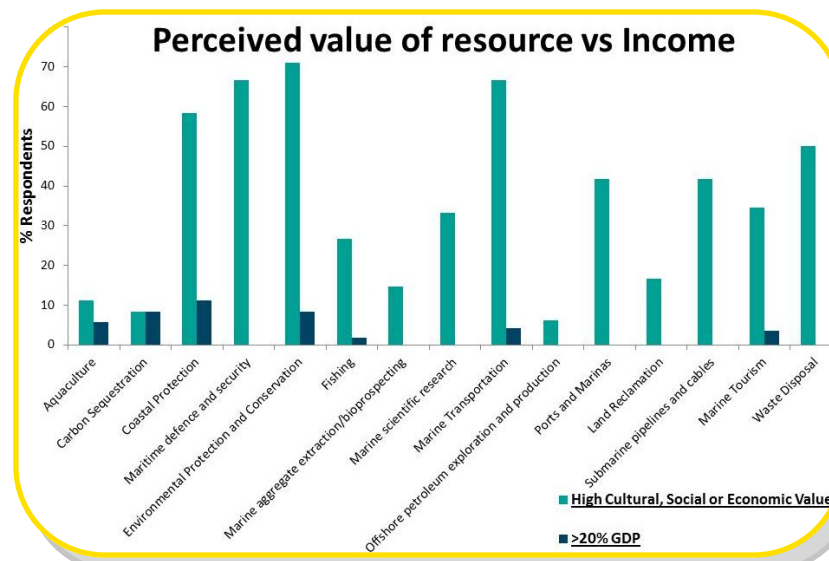
Involvement of the Private Sector, as developers of economic opportunity, and Universities, as providers of knowledge to inform decision making, was considered lacking.

Where legislation exists it is often fragmented amongst multiple agencies with an absence of effective cooperation and coordination so that there is no overarching framework to manage the marine environment, its resources and economic opportunity.

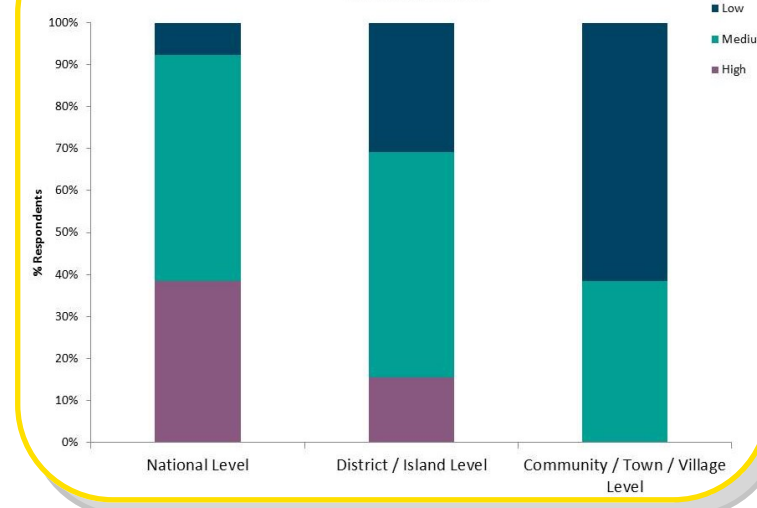
Section 2: STATUS OF OCEAN GOVERNANCE IN YOUR COUNTRY

– What are the current policy and institutional arrangements governing marine resource management in your country?

Perhaps because of the current sectoral nature of management, less than 10% of respondents felt that there was a good overall awareness at national-level for the needs of inclusive marine management. This was also reflected in the preparedness at National-level for institutional arrangements for embracing 'Green Economy' approach to marine management. Respondents perceive that in contrast to often high levels of technical competencies at national level this is not reflected at lower levels,



Perceived management levels of marine resources



The results of the questionnaire suggest that, although there are laws related to components of ocean management and use, there is only limited policy articulated. Where policy exists it tends to be focused on particular sectors and/or components of management. An example is the Caribbean Common Fisheries Policy (currently in final draft stages) that once endorsed could facilitate national fisheries sector policy development but is unlikely to embrace any other aspects of ocean governance and management.

and that this can compromise the effectiveness of existing management.

There is a clear challenge in arriving at a regional-level governance framework that encompasses the specific needs of local-level circumstances.

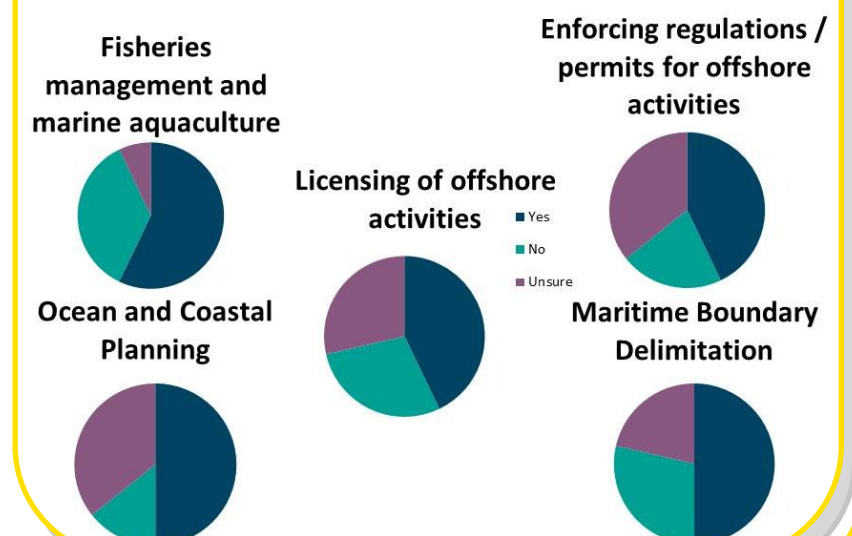
The 'extra' demands that addressing the institutional challenges of developing a robust policy framework for the marine environment, and the new opportunities it presents, is reflected in a need to improve the use of technical competencies to develop more holistic and integrated ocean governance responses for management mechanisms. In other words, while the capacity to develop a new framework for Ocean Governance exists within the OECS, it is not currently employed in a manner to support the development of a new framework.

Section 3: BARRIERS TO IMPROVING CURRENT STATUS

- What are the known risks and barriers (e.g. institutional, financial, human capacity, etc.) to realising economic potential of seas within the region?

In addition, although there is significant policy development in some sectors in others it is weak/outdated. Despite there being a significant amount of legislation in place, it is not always the case that policy decisions become enshrined in specific legislation meaning, for management purposes, there is not always the legal jurisdiction to enforce policy decisions. In some areas, for example, marine genetic resources, marine biological diversity, non-living marine resource, the need for integrated policy and law is recognized but these do not yet exist.

Do the necessary skills exist to develop the following...?



Results & Analysis