



Project no: 216721  
Project acronym: WINDS-Caribe  
Project title: Widening IST Networking Development Support – Caribe  
Instrument: SSA

## **D5.3 Consultation Document on future ICT R&D between Europe and the Caribbean**

Due date of deliverable: M10  
Submission date: M9

Start date of project: 01/01/2008  
Duration: 24 months

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: MENON

<b>Deliverable Fact Sheet</b>	
<b>Deliverable Version:</b>	5.0
<b>Deliverable Type:</b>	Report
<b>Current Release Status:</b>	Public
<b>Final Release Status:</b>	Public
<b>Workpackage:</b>	WP5
<b>Organization Responsible:</b>	MENON
<b>Primary Contributor:</b>	Fabio Nascimbeni
<b>Internal reviewers:</b>	Daniel Pimienta and Roderick Sanatan

**Change Log**

No.	Date	Sections	Change	Editor
1	15/05/09	All	Creation of the document	Nascimbeni
2	20/05/09	3	Improvement of the document content	Carulli
3	24/05/09	All	Improvement of the document content	Sanatan
4	04/07/09	All	Improvement of the document structure	Davidziuk
5	05/07/09	All	Restructuring of the document	Nascimbeni
6	08/07/09	4	Revision of the document	Cortes
7	11/07/09	All	Revision of the document	Munoz
8	13/07/09	All	Revision of the document	Pimienta
9	18/07/09	All	Improvement of the document	Sanatan
10	23/09/09	All	Final Review and consolidation	Nascimbeni
11	28/09/09	All	Quality Check	Davidziuk

<b>Actual Date of Delivery</b>	30/09/2009
<b>Audience</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Internal

<b>Version number</b>	5.0
<b>Date</b>	30/09/2009
<b>Status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WP leader accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality checked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project coordinator accepted
<b>Action requested</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> To be revised by partner in charge of the deliverable <input type="checkbox"/> To be reviewed by the appointed partners <input type="checkbox"/> For approval of the quality assurance leader <input type="checkbox"/> For approval of the project coordinator

## Executive Summary

The aim of the present document is to propose and support a consultation among relevant stakeholders on how to improve the level of cooperation between the European Union and the Caribbean region in the field of ICT research, and on how to increase the importance of the Caribbean region as a S&T partner for the EU, in furtherance of the existing schemes such as the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) or the LAC Region (Latin America and the Caribbean), where the region can enhance its strategic importance.

This document is the result of a number of activities that the WINDS-Caribe project, an action supported by the EU FP7, has conducted in the period 2008-2009 by involving a number of European and Caribbean actors active in ICT research. In particular, WINDS-Caribe carried out four consultations in the Caribbean during four events that were organised in Martinique, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Cuba, and complemented these results with a number of interviews with key ICT research stakeholders.

The present document is composed by four sections:

- **Section 1. Context** presents the state of the art of ICT research in the Caribbean and the level and characteristics of EU-Caribbean cooperation in ICT research, together with a list of the main challenges that hinder this cooperation from boosting and working in a satisfactory way.
- **Section 2. Stakeholders** is about “*who should take part in the consultation.*” The actors that should take part in the debate and their role in the consultation are briefly presented, in order to make sure that the present document does not limit to an academic exercise but gets to the proper stakeholders and decision makers.
- **Section 3. Critical issues** proposes “*what should be discussed*”, in terms of critical issues that should be urgently tackled. These issues derive from the state of the art analysis and represent a possible set of starting points for future actions.
- **Section 4. Future planning** is about “*how to move from consultation to implementation*” and proposes the first steps for a Roadmapping exercise that will result from the consultation itself and will be presented to the stakeholders identified in December 2009.

The views expressed in this document are solely those of the WINDS-Caribe project, and are, under no circumstances, those of the European Commission. While due care has been taken to provide data which is both accurate and up-to-date, the WINDS-Caribe consortium will not be held responsible for information which is inaccurate, incomplete or out of date, nor be held liable for decisions made by the user based upon the data, analysis, conclusions and recommendations contained in this publication.

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## 1. Introduction and aim of the document

The aim of the present document is to propose and support a consultation among relevant stakeholders on how to improve the level of cooperation between the European Union and the Caribbean region in the field of ICT research, and on how to increase the importance of the Caribbean region as a S&T partner for the EU, in furtherance of the existing schemes such as the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) or the LAC Region (Latin America and the Caribbean), where the region can enhance its strategic importance.

This document is about improving the dialogue among decision makers, donors and research leaders on how to make Europe-Caribbean cooperation on ICT research more relevant, effective and meaningful for the two regions. This improved dialogue would have a number of positive effects on optimising:

- bilateral and reciprocal collaboration through smart and enabling partnership that integrates the Caribbean linguistic regional groupings, including the development of cooperation projects taking advantage of EU funding opportunities such as Seventh Framework Programme (FP7);
- the Caribbean particular structures of actual ICT Research functions, namely, in Science and Technology organisations, in universities, in national and regional specialised bodies, in industry.

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In producing the document, we have tried to be as brief as possible in order to provide a handy and useful consultation starting point; relevant links and references are provided for further information.

The present document is composed by four sections:

**Section 1. Context**

In this section the state of the art of ICT research in the Caribbean and the level and characteristics of EU-Caribbean cooperation in ICT research are briefly presented, together with a list of the main challenges that hinder this cooperation from boosting and working in a satisfactory way.

**Section 2. Stakeholders**

This section is about “*who should take part in the consultation.*” The actors that should take part in the debate and their role in the consultation are briefly presented, in order to make sure that the present document does not limit to an academic exercise but gets to the proper stakeholders and decision makers.

**Section 3. Critical issues**

This section is about “*what should be discussed*” and proposes an agenda for the consultation that focuses in a few critical issues that should be urgently tackled. These issues derive from the state of the art analysis and represent a possible set of starting points for future actions.

**Section 4. Future planning**

This section is about “*how to move from consultation to implementation*” and proposes the first steps for a Roadmapping exercise that will result from the consultation itself and will be presented to the stakeholders identified in December 2009.

## 2. Context

### 2.1 *ICT and research in the Caribbean*

In the last decade, consistent with the rest of the world, ICT development in the Caribbean has intensified. Throughout the Region, such progress gains particular significance since it represents the provision of alternative economic opportunities in the face of declining revenues in traditional sectors such as agriculture, and more recently tourism.

The ICT deployment exercise within the Region has included a focus on research and development projects, e-commerce, infrastructure development, financial services, fair trade, education and training, virtual reality, company registration and other government services, community services, ICT for social inclusion and poverty reduction, e-health and biotechnology, environment. The processes of change of national and regional regulatory and legislation frameworks, including liberalisation of ICT industry as well as the public sector reforms taking place in many Caribbean countries also shape the ICT research environment.

As a small developing region, the Caribbean does not have a large, robust and connected ICT research community. Nevertheless, several innovations have taken place in various sectors. Furthermore, many Caribbean States have developed comprehensive policy positions on ICT and have enacted enabling legislation to ensure the execution of those policies.

Looking briefly at the actors dealing with ICT research in the Caribbean, the three main institutions where ICT research is concentrated are:

- The University of the West Indies (UWI), which spans many countries from the English speaking Caribbean;
- Université des Antilles et de la Guyane (UAG) which is present in Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guyane and is part of the French academic system, therefore with EU standard in terms of research;
- Universidad de las Ciencias Informáticas (UCI) a recent Cuban experience which is innovative in many aspects, gathering a student population of more than 10,000 dedicated to ICT with integrated objectives in the curriculum of software production and targeting social priorities UCI should in the short term evolve towards a catalyst of Cuban ICT research, which for the moment is spread between many institutions.

Beyond, there is a mix of players from the different sectors in the region like for instance government agencies such as Instituto Tecnológico de las Americas (ITLA) in Dominican Republic or Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) in French Guyane, few private or non profit groups, such as École Supérieure d'Informatique de Haïti (ESIH), and national universities such as the University of Technology in Jamaica, the Université d'Etat d'Haïti and the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

## **2.2 EU-Caribbean cooperation in ICT research**

Given this Caribbean scenario, the current European thrust for innovation, novelty and thus collaboration in its research efforts must be situated within the framework of an unwavering regional process for ICT development. The overture from Europe comes in the form of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) that is one of the chief funding instruments used by the European Union (EU) for research collaboration in ICT. The programme promises highly competitive positioning, with tremendous social and economic benefits to be derived for EU Member States. Non-European partners also stand to benefit by their participation in the endeavor.

The WINDS-Caribe consultation resulted in the following statements:

- International cooperation plays a key-role for R&D in ICT in the Caribbean region, since it seems one of the best ways for bringing local enterprises and centres to compete at a global level
- The geographic position of the Caribbean region (linking countries belonging to different administrative systems such as the North American, European, British and Latin American ones) should be an aspect to be exploited in order to strengthen international collaboration
- The EU has a strong role to play, beyond UK, France and Spain. A need of coordination and articulation among different EU initiatives exists
- International cooperation should be a leverage for intraregional cooperation so as to strengthen links and capacities among main Caribbean actors
- ICT research developed in the Caribbean may be competitive in the world market since models and tools acquired may be transposed in other countries of the world. Despite this, few research actions start from local needs, normally research is driven by a *global* agenda

## **2.3 Challenges to EU-Caribbean cooperation in ICT research**

A set of outstanding challenges have been identified which may hinder successful, fluid and consistent cooperation between EU and the Caribbean in ICT research and the participation of Caribbean researchers in European research projects. These are of two kinds and represent the starting point of the WINDS-Caribe Roadmapping work for EU-Caribbean cooperation in ICT research.

### **A) General challenges:**

1. Large differences of political status between the Caribbean islands. For example, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and other countries are independent, Martinique and Guadeloupe are part of EU, and Puerto Rico is part of the USA.

2. Lack of continuity in supporting mechanisms – the well known syndrome of *reinventing the wheel* in terms of supporting EU-Caribbean cooperation research, where many support mechanisms exist for a limited time (normally 2 years) against cooperation programmes with a longer duration (such as, 7 years like the FP7).
3. Lack of articulation of the different research agendas gravitating around the Caribbean region (World Bank, UNESCO, Commonwealth, ITU, UNDP, European Commission, the Organisation of American States, Bilateral Agreement agendas, National agendas, etc.). Fragmentation of programmes, projects and support measures has to do with the fact that coexistence of regional, sub-regional and bilateral cooperation challenges clear articulation. In fact, in the European Commission itself, different Directorate Generals are in charge of different cooperation lines, which coexist with other mechanisms (ACP, bilateral schemes, etc).
4. Diaspora of Caribbean researchers around the world and consequent loss of expertise, information, knowledge. This situation can be stressed due to lack of national and regional schemes and opportunities to reinsert back the professionals to their own countries needs.
5. Lack of prepared human resources in the Caribbean, in terms of research capacities (quantity and quality of researchers), institutional capacities, and research management capacities.
6. Lack of a network of recognised thematic centres of research excellence across the region, which would allow to concentrate expertise and to use scarce resources more effectively.

**B) Functioning bottlenecks:**

1. Scattered knowledge in the EU on the heterogeneity and potentials of the Caribbean, especially in interesting sectors such as biodiversity, energy, health.
2. Scarce knowledge in the Caribbean on existing cooperation possibilities with Europe.
3. Funding and cash schemes: generally, Caribbean institutions are asked to produce funds in advance, which is either very difficult or impossible in most cases as these universities' financing systems do not allow the possibility of advancing funds to participants in projects.
4. Lack of project managers and fund seekers. Training to acquire those skills or even assistance from other actors was proposed as solutions to this problem.

### 3. Stakeholders

In order to be effective and to reach a long-term impact, the consultation proposed by the present document should involve as much as possible all the main stakeholders of ICT research in Europe and the Caribbean. The following non-exhaustive list presents those actors, which will be engaged in the debate and will shape the practical steps that will derive from the consultation.

#### **CARIBBEAN NATIONAL AUTHORITIES**

They are leading the ICT development strategy in their countries, and coordinate cooperation policies at national, regional and international level. They have a pivotal role in the decision-making procedures, programmes implementation and funds allocation/management. This group of stakeholders is represented in the consultation either directly, as in the case of Martinique, Jamaica, Cuba and Dominican Republic or indirectly, through the Embassies of all the Caribbean Countries in Brussels.

#### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

It is interested in longstanding relationships with the Caribbean region for ensuring growth, stability and development in the region and aims at strengthening the economic and political partnerships and at assisting all the countries in the Caribbean region to achieve regional long-term development goals in a self-sustaining manner. Both DG Information Society and DG Research shall be involved in the consultation.

#### **EUROPEAN MEMBER STATES' GOVERNMENTS**

They have strong interests in the region for economic, political and historical reasons (for example, the Départements d' Outre-Mer, forming an integral part of the French territory, or the territories linked to the UK and the Netherlands) and are committed in addressing regional needs through national actions, programmes and projects. They are reached through the different Liaison Offices for research in Brussels.

#### **ACP –AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC GROUP OF STATES**

It is interested in strengthening the partnerships and cooperation strategies with the EU, as well as in facing development challenges and fostering economic relations between the two regions, thus contributing to the development of local civil societies. It is reached through the ACP Secretariat in Brussels.

#### **COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT**

It represents a key stakeholder with good overview of dynamics and programmes for the Caribbean region and is deeply committed in promoting and supporting economic and social development there, responding to demands for assistance and implementing programs on the field.

#### **UNDP – UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

It represents a key international actor in the region, active in the field of ICT research and ICT for development. Committed in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, advocates for the development of civil society. Even if it does not

specifically focus on R&D but rather on ICT for Development, its presence is important since a great part of the research initiatives taking place in the region are done for direct social impact.

**CARICOM SECRETARIAT**

It plays a fundamental role in the coordination of Caribbean countries' community, is strongly involved in accelerating, coordinating and sustaining economic development, as well as in expanding trade and economic relations with other countries and regions, including the EU.

**CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK**

An international donor working providing expertise, trust, lending and financing for the reduction of poverty in the Caribbean region and having a deep knowledge related to local needs, as well as region's potentialities.

**CKLN - CARIBBEAN KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING NETWORK**

A regional mechanism established by the CARICOM Heads of Government and interested in the outcomes and results achieved in the framework of ICT R&D cooperation in the region and in the relation between the EU and the Caribbean. Although it is not a player in the overall ICT cooperation, CKLN has specific subsets of ICT work.

**SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH COUNCIL – JAMAICA**

A public National body involved in fostering and coordinating scientific research and in promoting its application for the benefit of the Jamaican research community. It has a broad overview and knowledge on Jamaican strengths and constraints in the field of research and it is the only FP7 National Contact Point in the Caribbean Region.

**UWI – UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES**

One of the most prominent actors doing and promoting research in the Caribbean, with a strong educational offer in the ICT sector (engineering, computing, data processing among others) and with a regional coverage of the English-speaking Caribbean.

**UAG –UNIVERSITÉ DES ANTILLES ET DE LA GUYANE**

The most important actor in the field of education and research in the French Caribbean, doing research in its laboratories and counting on an extensive network and experience on ICT reality in the Antilles and abroad.

**UCI - UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS CIENCIAS DE LA INFORMÁTICA - CUBA**

It is a university with an innovative training and productive model and has become a fundamental force for the informatization process of several national sectors such as Education and Health and national software industry.

**UNIVERSITÉ D'ETAT D'HAITI**

It is the most important university in Haiti, with both management and academic experience in ICT research, especially for engineering and business. It plays a fundamental role in the country competitiveness and social inclusion development.

**CARIBBEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION**

The CTU is a Caribbean intergovernmental organisation dedicated to facilitating the development of the regional telecommunications sector. The CTU's Mission is to create an environment in partnership with members to optimise returns from ICT resources for the benefit of stakeholders.

**COMISION NACIONAL DE LA SOCIEDAD DE INFORMACION Y EL CONOCIMIENTO – DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

A public body deeply rooted in the information society and ICT community of the Dominican Republic reality, with strong interests into the results of the ICT trends, cooperation frameworks and agenda in the region. Haiti's spread of influence in its Universities and its large population size make it a major player.

## 4. Critical issues and draft recommendations

The following seven issues are proposed by WINDS-Caribe as important points to be discussed among the stakeholders presented in the previous chapter, since they have the possibility to transform bottlenecks and challenges into catalysts for EU-Caribbean development. Following each issue, some draft possible recommendations are proposed, as emerging from the consultations run by the project.

### 1. The approach of the EU towards the Caribbean

The implications of small Caribbean research entities cooperating with much larger EU organisations should be carefully examined given the fact that the entrepreneurial dimension of most Caribbean research bodies is still relatively new. Disparities in size, resources and administrative support systems could also weigh unfavorably for the region, especially because research operations in the area are not normally associated with strong commercial outfits. Furthermore, the fact that in the EU external policy, the Caribbean is included in the APC (Africa – Pacific - Caribbean) Group of States, the importance of the region can decrease with respect to other growing regions, such as Africa.

#### **POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The specificities of the region should be taken into account when planning cooperation programmes.
- Whenever possible, specific calls for proposal shall be planned for EU-Caribbean proposals.

### 2. Inter-regional collaboration as a way to respond to the international collaboration challenges

International collaboration in ICT research can have a benefit on strengthening inter-regional community of Caribbean researchers, in terms of synergy and scale. While organisations may join a FP7 consortium on an individual basis, there may be opportunities to consolidate regional efforts. Furthermore, working at the regional level can break the rule for which benefits are only for strong countries of the region. A regional strategy could provide potential Caribbean applicants with tools, knowledge and technical assistance in drafting, submitting and coordinating proposals to the EU for ICT R&D projects. Creating the capacity to respond to international cooperation opportunity as a region, taking into account existing trade arrangements, including the recent Economic Partnership Agreements, regimes and enabling the ongoing development of ICT policies, infrastructure, commercial activity, services provision and social inclusion in the Caribbean, is key to the regional development.

#### **POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Further support the existing efforts in terms of regional ICT research portals and regional ICT university programmes.
- Create a regional research programme to support excellence research unities, networks, and centers in the Caribbean.

### 3. Knowledge Transfer and Intellectual Property

The process of establishing appropriate policy, regulatory, institutional and fiscal measures able to support research results exploitation and sustainability is still in its early stages in the Caribbean. Patent knowledge and processes require appropriate institutional routines, especially for ICT research disciplines. Despite the fact that copyright organisations throughout the region have become more skilled and assertive in harvesting royalties, and patents, research innovations do not have as visible a profile and as vibrant an experience in securing the interests of creators. The EU FP7 calls, therefore, offer regional researchers a valuable opportunity to strengthen and build the rules of patent knowledge and processes that require appropriate, institutional routines, especially for ICT research disciplines.

#### **POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION:**

- A specific set of consultations and proposals need focusing on, relative to intellectual property issues arising from ICT research.

### 4. Local support to FP7 and international collaboration

The EU is supporting WINDS-Caribe as a specific support action to assist consortia in preparing and filing their submissions. Additionally, a National Contact Point has been identified in Jamaica, and others could be established. However, there have been resource challenges to the task: efforts of awareness-building, identification of prospective projects, evaluation and then preparation of proposals are being significantly constrained. Structuring the support scheme at the local level would bring several advantages: dedicated resources could be assigned to the process; efforts could be directly connected to the functions of the focal point; the Caribbean knowledge base in this area would be enhanced and made available for similar ventures in the future; Caribbean interests would be well-served by a team of Caribbean personnel.

#### **POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The role and capacity of the FP7 ICT NCPs have to be enhanced
- Caribbean NCPs can join in meetings and workshops where ICT Latin American NCPs and Liaison Offices (ABEST in Argentina, BBICE in Brazil, CHIEP in Chile, and UEMEXCyT in Mexico) are very active to exchange knowledge and experiences
- A network of “incubators” of research proposals should be built, for screening, preparing and maturing Caribbean proposals in readiness for calls. The Technology Incubation Centre in UTECH, Jamaica and the CEREGMIA Lab in UAG, Martinique could be pilot experiences. CARIMAC is willing to be the centre actor to grow this project for the Caribbean.

#### 5. International collaboration and the researchers diaspora problem

Brain drain and diaspora of Caribbean researchers (especially to UK, USA, and Canada) are very difficult issues to be solved since they result from structural reasons, such as salary differences, lack of research facilities in the Caribbean, etc. The fact of having a relevant number of researchers working abroad, on the other hand, can be seen as an opportunity to work with them as natural links for international cooperation projects.

##### **POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Use EU mobility schemes to facilitate the work of diaspora researchers coming back to the region, even for limited periods
- Set up and support a network of “Caribbean ICT researchers abroad”

#### 6. Raising the importance of ICT research in the Caribbean policy agendas

S&T and ICT research can benefit from more attention in the Caribbean national agendas. Research should be seen as a pillar of ICT for development, together with other areas such as national ICT strategies, regulatory and legislative harmonisation and capacity building.

##### **POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Encourage research centers and university representatives and networks to be involved in agenda consultations and meetings
- Keep in mind that nobody starts from “zero”, since all countries have some experience on ICT research, beyond their development level
- Political does not emerge exclusively in the State or political environment; it is built by society. In order to implement diverse aspects of a public agenda, concerted social actions are necessary.

#### 7. Fostering articulation among the existing collaboration schemes dealing with ICT and ICT research in the region

A number of international organisations do support actions focusing on ICT and ICT-research in the Caribbean Region (World Bank, UNESCO, Commonwealth, ITU, UNDP, European Commission, and the Organisation of American States, among others), to which the bilateral cooperation schemes between Caribbean and European Countries must be added. Communication in international cooperation is based on the availability and free flow of information between organizations and disciplines at and between the local, national and international levels.

##### **POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Enable resource support to organise periodic meetings among all donors working in the Caribbean to know who is doing what and to foster efficiency and collaboration.
- Identify examples of ICT successes or best practices either within the Caribbean to adjust them as needed to fit the region’s unique circumstances
- Plan the collection, coordination and distribution of best practices information, which could constitute a permanent helpdesk source for new beginners and actors who need to contact Caribbean initiatives

## 5. Next steps

The content of the present Consultation Document, and particularly the seven points presented in the previous Chapter, have been shared with the stakeholders mentioned in Chapter 3 in September, and will be discussed in a face-to-face debate involving most of these stakeholders in occasion of the WINDS-Caribe Workshop titled "Fostering EU-Caribbean cooperation in ICT research", organised on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October in Brussels in the ACP Secretariat ([www.winds-lac.eu/brussels\\_seminar](http://www.winds-lac.eu/brussels_seminar)).

The aim of this debate is to facilitate the transformation of the proposed recommendations in sound plans for action, deciding upon a number of priority activities and on a time horizon for them.

These actions will be structured and gathered by the WINDS-Caribe project in *D5.4 Roadmap on ICT Research between Europe and the Caribbean*, to improve Europe-Caribbean cooperation in the field of ICT research, and will be delivered to the main decision-makers dealing with ICT research in Europe and in the Caribbean, as important recommendations for future actions.

## **Annex 1: Acronyms**

ABEST: Argentina Bureau for Enhancing Science and Technology Cooperation between Argentina and the European Union

ACP: African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

BBICE: Brazilian Bureau for Enhancing the International Cooperation with the European Union

CARIMAC: Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication, Jamaica

CDERA: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency

CEREGMIA: Center for Research and Studies in Economics, Marketing, Modelisation and Applied Computer Science, Martinique

CHIEP: Oficina de Enlace para la Promoción de la Cooperación entre Chile y la Unión Europea en Ciencia y Tecnología

CKLN: Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network, Jamaica

DG: Directorate General

DOM / TOM / COM: French overseas departments and territories (Départements d'Outre-Mer, Territoires d'Outre-Mer, Communautés d'Outre-Mer)

EC: European Commission

EU: European Union

FP7: Seventh Framework Programme

FUNREDES: Networks & Development Foundation, Dominican Republic

GATS: General Agreement on Trade in Services

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

IRD: Institut de Recherche pour le Développement

ISIH: École Supérieure d'Informatique de Haïti

ITLA: Instituto Tecnológico de las Americas

ITU: International Telecommunication Union

LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean

NCP: National Contact Point

OAS: Organisation of American States

R&D: Research and Development

UAG: Université des Antilles et de la Guyane, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyane

UCI: Universidad de las Ciencias Informáticas, Cuba

UEMEXCyT: Oficina de Enlace para la promoción de la Cooperación entre México y la Unión Europea en Ciencia y Tecnología

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNIBE: Universidad Iberoamericana, Dominican Republic

UPC: Universidad Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain

USA: United States of America

UTECH: University of Jamaica

UWI: The University of the West Indies, Jamaica

WB: World Bank

WINDS: Widening IST Networking Development Support

WTO: World Trade Organization