

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

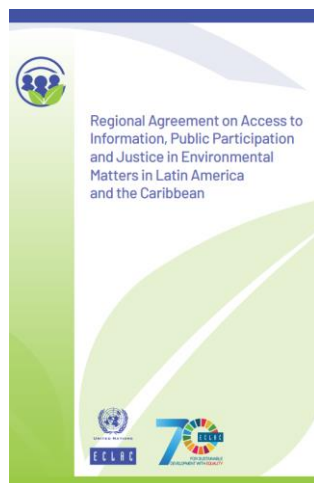


The Escazú Agreement: a pathway to developing an Environmental Information System (EIS)

David Barrio Lamarche
Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division

Roseau, Dominica, 19 July 2022

Basic facts



Adopted in Escazú (Costa Rica) on **4 March 2018**

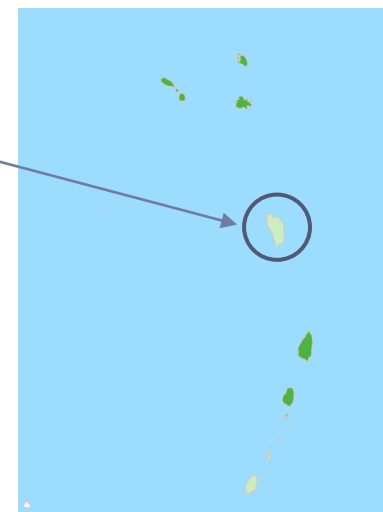
Entered into force on 22 April 2021

- **First regional environmental treaty** of Latin America and the Caribbean
- Ultimate aim: **to protect the right of present and future generations to a healthy environment and to sustainable development**
- **Creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation**

24 signatories (6 OECS) (Dominica)

13 ratifications

(4 OECS: Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

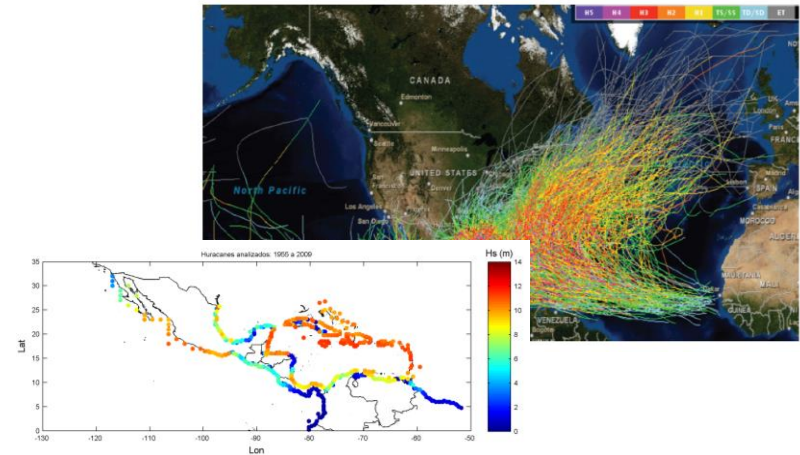


Underlying basis of the Escazú Agreement



Environmental issues are best handled with the active participation of all concerned

Generation and access to environmental information is critical for sound policy-making



Environmental harm must be prevented and remedied

Regional cooperation is key

Salient features of the Escazú Agreement



- Achieving a healthy environment and sustainable development
- Rights-based
- People-centered
- Leave no one behind
- Capacity-building and cooperation

Environmental dimension of sustainable development

Generation and access
to environmental
knowledge and
information

Meaningful
engagement of all
sectors of society

Redress and remedy
against environmental
harm

Special consideration of Small Island Developing States

Implementation support

Progressive realization

Environmental information



ART. 5 ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

ACCESSIBILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

In accordance with the principle of maximum disclosure

RIGHT OF ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION IN POSSESSION, CONTROL OR CUSTODY OF THE STATE

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Request information from authorities without mentioning an interest or giving reasons
- Receive such information promptly
- Challenge its non-delivery

PAY ATTENTION TO PERSONS OR GROUPS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

REFUSAL OF ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

ACCESS TO INFORMATION MAY BE REFUSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH DOMESTIC LEGISLATION

THE REASONS FOR REFUSAL SHALL BE LEGALLY ESTABLISHED IN ADVANCE AND BE CLEARLY DEFINED AND REGULATED

WHEN THE INFORMATION IS NOT PROVIDED, THE AUTHORITY MUST NOTIFY IN WRITING

CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO THE DELIVERY OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

IN THE FORMAT REQUESTED BY THE APPLICANT, IF AVAILABLE

RESPOND TO REQUEST AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

THIS PERIOD MAY BE EXTENDED WITH DUE JUSTIFICATION IN WRITING

IT SHALL BE DISCLOSED AT NO COST, INSOFAR AS ITS REPRODUCTION OR DELIVERY IS NOT REQUIRED. SUCH COSTS SHALL BE REASONABLE AND MADE KNOWN IN ADVANCE, AND PAYMENT CAN BE WAIVED

INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS

ONE OR MORE IMPARTIAL ENTITIES OR INSTITUTIONS TO PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY IN ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION



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READ THE AGREEMENT²

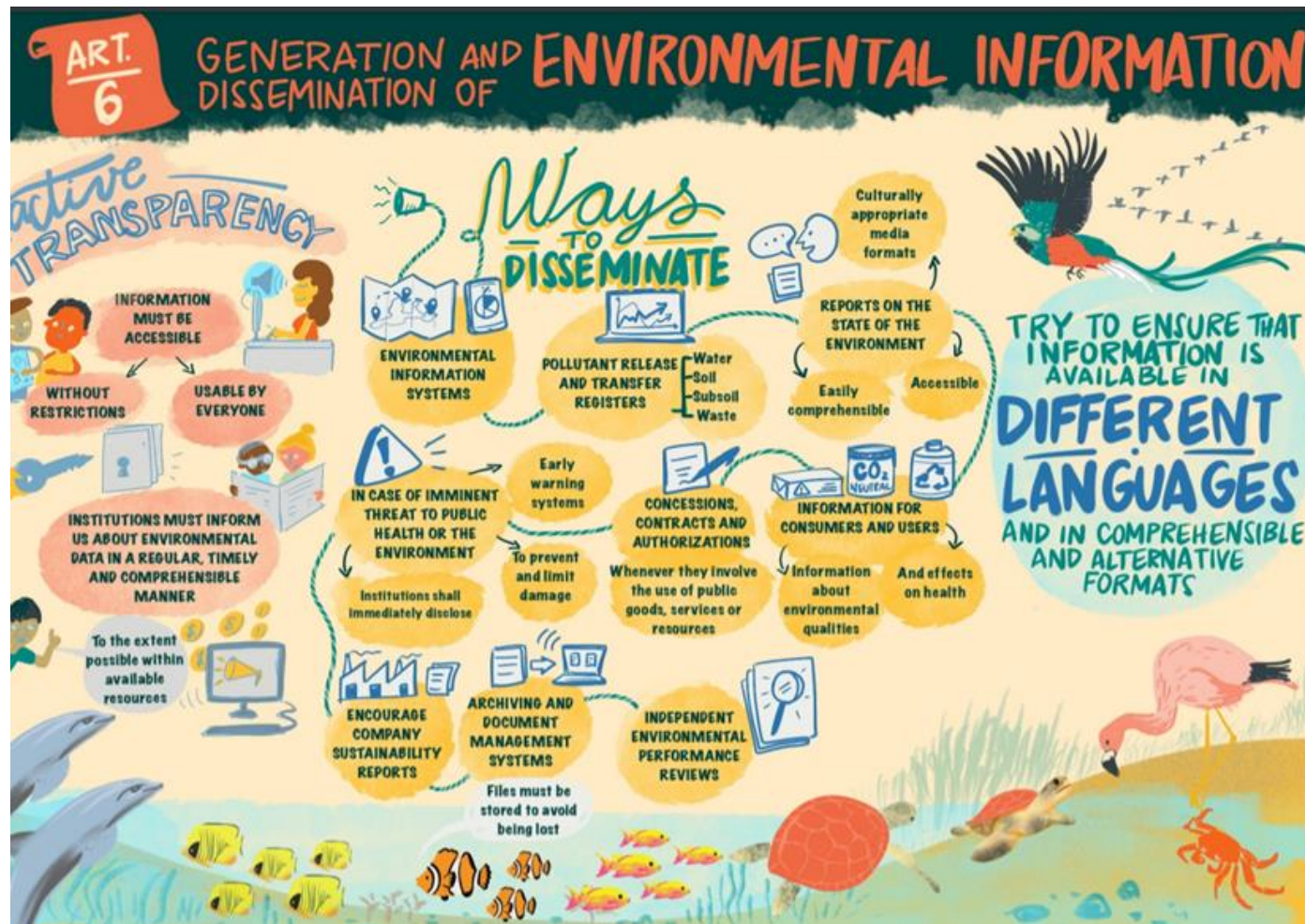


GET TO KNOW THE OBSERVATORY



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Environmental information



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EIS under the Escazú Agreement

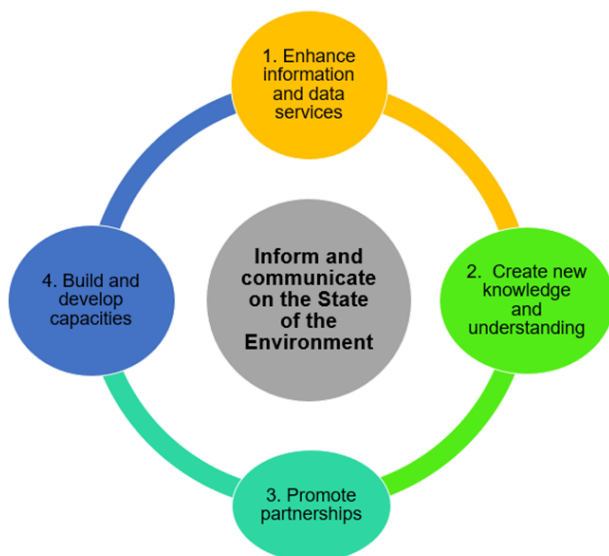


- ▶ One or more systems
- ▶ Up-to-date
- ▶ Duly organized
- ▶ Accessible to all persons
- ▶ Made progressively available through information technology and georeferenced media, where appropriate

▶ Possible content:

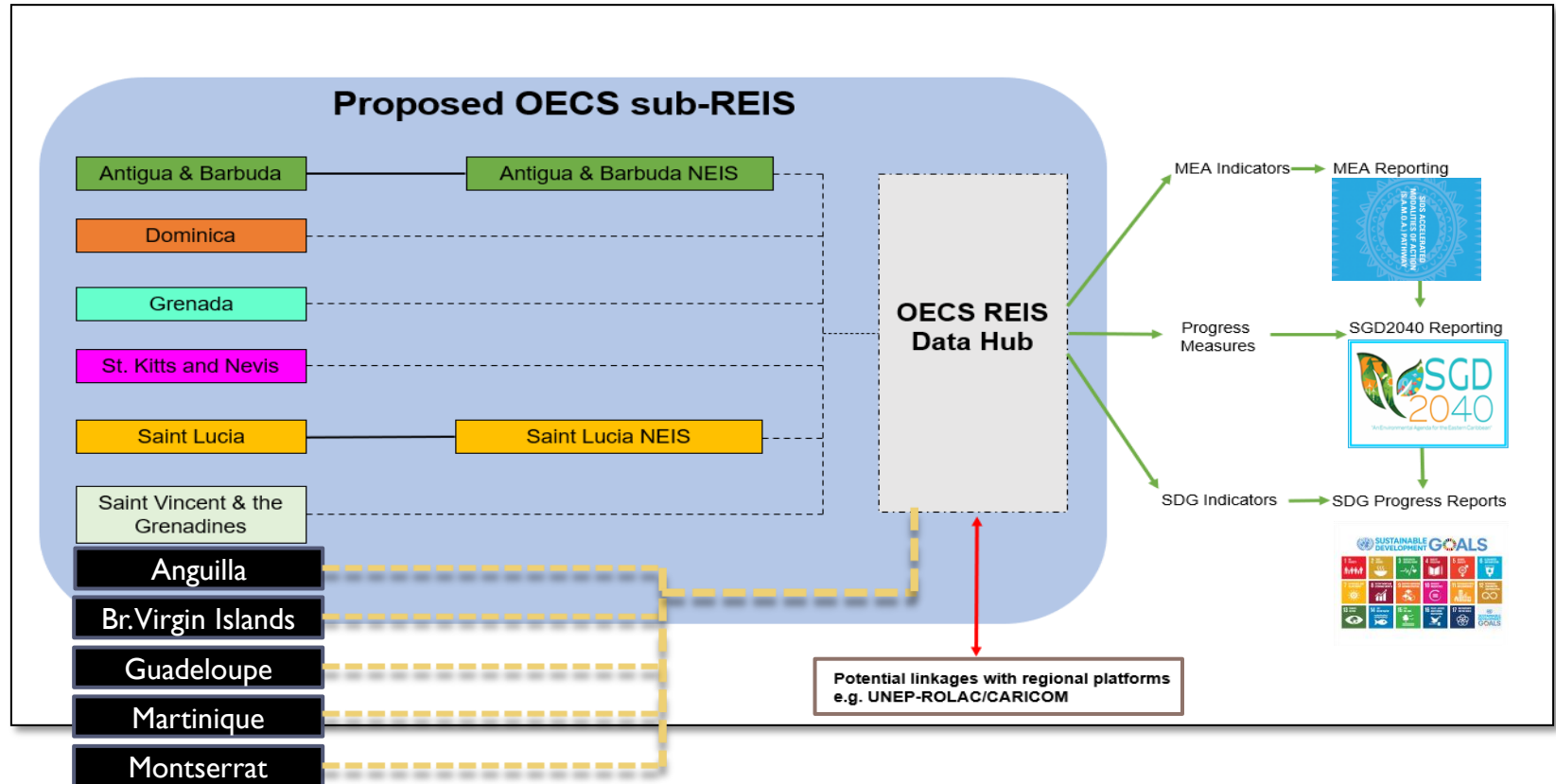
- ▶ Reports on the state of the environment
- ▶ List of public entities competent in environmental matters
- ▶ List of polluted areas, by type of pollutant and location
- ▶ Information on the use and conservation of natural resources and ecosystem services
- ▶ Climate change sources aimed at building national capacities
- ▶ Information on environmental impact assessment processes and on other environmental management instruments, environmental licences or permits granted by the public authorities
- ▶ Estimated list of waste by type and, when possible, by volume, location and year

Why an EIS in the OECS?



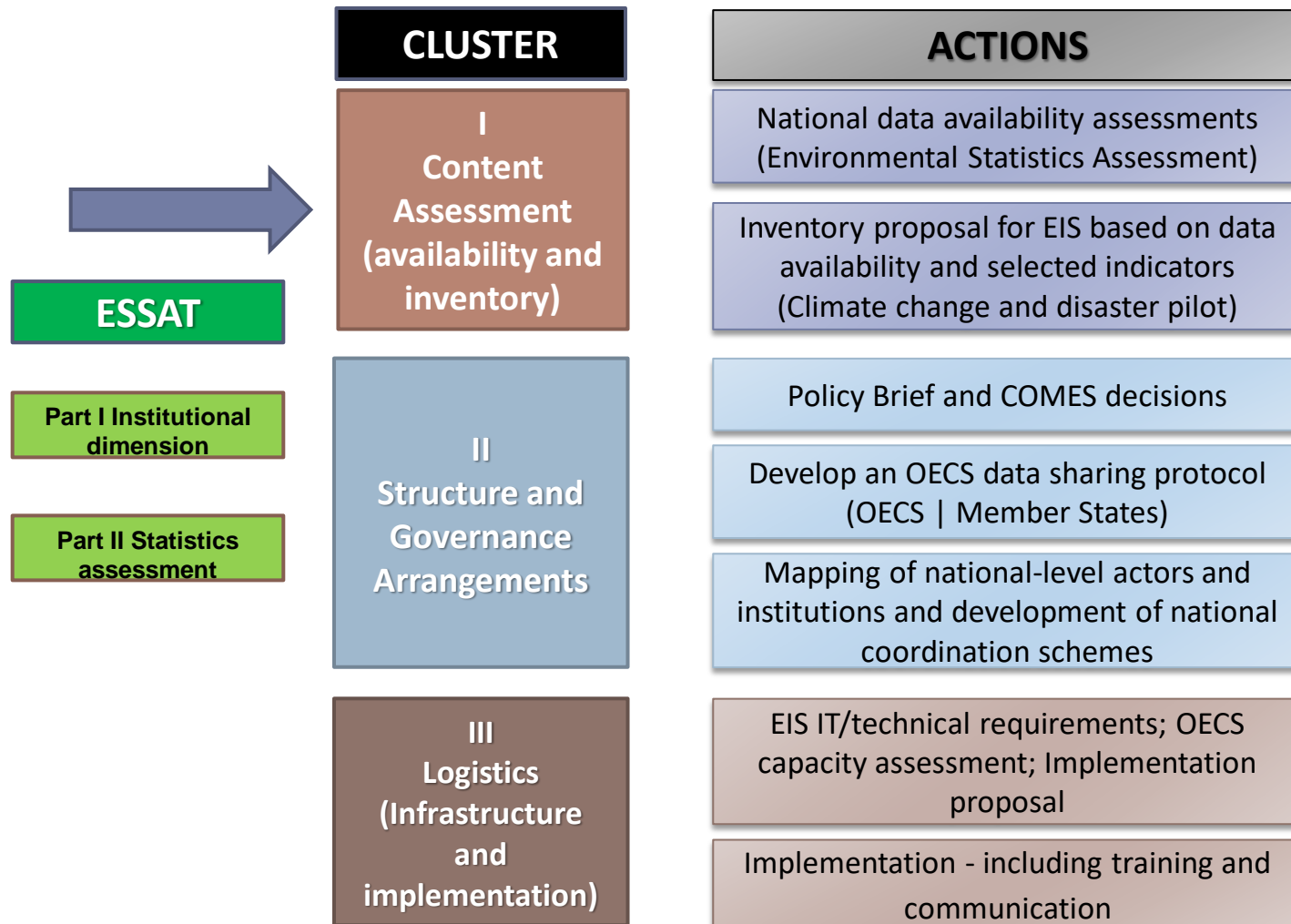
- (1) Provide the OECS region with a **comprehensive platform to access data**, which will allow integrated planning, impact assessments and risk analysis for national and regional development.
- (2) **Display information publicly** on a range of interests to support policy and decision-making dialogues on environmental management, social and economic issues; and facilitate public and special interest group validation at the national to international scales.
- (3) **Identify trends** (e.g., levels of pollution, population, waste disposal, uptake of renewable energy etc.) that can be categorized for prioritization of actions.
- (4) Serve as **one-stop-shop** and searchable portable **for information** that can be used to monitor and track areas of interests and develop strategies to minimize or mitigate negative trends.
- (5) **Facilitating reporting obligations; avoiding duplication; ensuring consistency; and cost-effectiveness**

OECS EIS structure





OECS endorsed roadmap for the EIS



Cluster I: Content Assessment with national counterparts – Steps

Previous diagnosis & workshop preparation

Work along with the country to fill up the self-diagnosis of availability of environmental data (Global Set + ESSAT)

Coordinate with the Focal Point for logistics of virtual workshop

- Statistic Office
- Environmental Authority

Live workshops and exercises

Targeted audience (producers and users): NSO, Ministries, Environmental Authorities, Disaster Risk Reduction/ Emergency authorities, sectoral authorities, universities, research centers, and private sector

3 days of Workshop (3 hours per day)

Based on initial self-diagnosis

Methodological presentations on statistical techniques. Practical exercises / Group works - Build indicators / Develop methodological sheets

Participants receive a certificate

Follow-up activities

Review the methodological sheets of the indicators built during the Workshop, and provide feedback

Develop a report where the availability of national information is evaluated and synthesized

Strengthened further indicators selected by the country



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**COVID-19
RESPONSE**



“The region has a valuable tool to seek people-centred solutions grounded in nature”: **the Escazú Agreement.**

*UN Secretary-General Policy Brief:
The Impact of COVID-19 on Latin America and the Caribbean (2020)*

By enhancing access to data, knowledge, and information, and by engaging vulnerable groups, **it upholds fundamental values of democratic life and fosters responsive public policies.**

When the agreement enters into force and is implemented, countries will be **better placed to preserve their strategic natural heritage through more inclusive and community-oriented actions**



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Acuerdo
de Escazú



Escazú
Agreement

Secretariat – Escazú Agreement

Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division

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<http://www.cep.al.org/en/escazuagreement>

<http://observatoriop10.cep.al.org>