

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Brief description of programme evaluated**

CARTAC was established based on a request to the IMF from the CARICOM Council of Ministers of Finance and Planning (COFAP) for technical assistance to build regional capacity to address the emerging challenges to fiscal and debt sustainability, financial sector development and overall macroeconomic management for sustained growth and development. The CARTAC Office opened in Barbados in November 2001. During its first three phases, CARTAC operated as a UNDP project, executed by the IMF and financed through bilateral and multilateral donors as well as through in-kind contributions from the IMF and host country Barbados, and annual contributions from participating countries.

CARTAC programme activities have been demand-led and focused on the delivery of technical assistance at the regional and national levels. During a decade CARTAC has provided technical assistance in five core areas at the request of 21 participating countries<sup>1</sup> in the Caribbean region. These five areas are: 1. Public finance management; 2. Revenue administration; 3. Financial sector regulation and supervision; 4. Production and analysis of economic statistics; and 5. Financial programming.

### **Purpose and objectives of the evaluation**

The purpose of this evaluation is to conduct a results-oriented, end-of-project assessment of CARTAC. This evaluation draws from and builds upon the comprehensive mid-term reviews previously completed for CARTAC (2003, 2006 and 2009) which contain detailed information with respect to the results attained under each phase of the programme. Ultimately, this evaluation will be used by UNDP and other partner organizations to assess how CARTAC results have contributed to the overall programme outcomes envisaged in the creation and establishment of CARTAC as a UNDP project and as agreed to by funding organizations and participating Caribbean States.

The primary audience for this evaluation is the UNDP Sub-regional Office – Barbados and Eastern Caribbean UNDP/RBLAC, UNDP RSC – Panama, UNDP Executing Agency – IMF, CARTAC and the principal partner and donor organizations that support the establishment and development of the CARTAC Programme.

### **Description of key aspect of the evaluation approach and methods**

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<sup>1</sup> This number includes The Dominican Republic that moved from CARTAC to CAPTAC-DR in June 2009.

Evaluation data collection processes consisted of both qualitative and quantitative methods and was gathered by means of both secondary and primary data, using three lines of evidence: (1) Secondary data in the form of a file, document and literature review; (2) primary data comprising of key informant interviews and (3) primary data drawn from an electronic survey covering an additional sample of countries and organizations involved with the programme.

### **Summary of main findings, conclusions, and recommendations**

Key findings from the evaluation include the following:

Relevance. Overall, the programme is regarded as relevant and useful. However, from the point of view of the countries' institutions there are "grey areas" in the way the technical assistance, especially the training, is determined.

Effectiveness. Key findings in relation to the UNCP partnership strategy include:

- Improved relationship between Countries and CARTAC / IMF;
- higher awareness among regional bodies of capacity development and financial management issues in region; and
- greater conscience-raising among donor organizations as a result of working together in spite of varying levels of contribution and support to the programme.

Key findings in relation to the results-based management of CARTAC include:

- End-of-project survey responses were mixed with respect to whether the CARTAC results based management (RBM) framework had been effective in supporting programme results;
- Initial resistance from IMF and particularly CARTAC to adopt and implement RBM was broken especially during the third phase, due to the persistence of donors, especially CIDA, UNDP and DFID, in demanding its use; and
- The adoption of RBM procedures is still seen as a nuisance rather than a tool for strategic planning, both at the CARTAC level and the country level. There is little clarity among participating countries and other stakeholders about the role of the RBM in the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of their institutional needs.

Efficiency. Conclusions made in the first mid-term review of CARTAC suggest that participating countries believed that interventions were made with due regard to costs and benefits, while findings from the second mid-term review confirmed that CARTAC was efficient in terms of location and timely response to regional and country needs. More recently, at the request of the donors, CARTAC's Steering Committee is currently

undertaking an evaluation of Phase IV with the key objective to assess the overall cost-effectiveness of CARTAC activities for the first year under the Fund modality. This specific evaluation will provide more detailed findings with respect to programme efficiency.

Key conclusions of the evaluation are:

- UNDP has contributed to the establishment of a relationship between the countries, the regional bodies, the donors, and CARTAC with the backstopping<sup>2</sup> of the IMF. Despite on-going challenges, the cost-shared multi-donor scheme has resulted in the most successful intervention of the RTACs out of the eight centres currently found globally, to support financial management technical assistance in 21 countries<sup>3</sup> of the Caribbean.
- Evaluation findings suggest that the UNDP has held an important role in its contribution to the success of CARTAC, especially through the creation of a firewall between the Fund and the region, and by defining clearly the importance of Human Development, poverty reduction and pressing for the adoption of result based monitoring and reporting tools to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes of CARTAC.

A series of recommendations have been drafted based on evaluation findings. They are as follows:

- UNDP should leverage its position in the region by moving into more “substantive”, less administrative opportunities, capitalizing on experience gained from administering programmes such as CARTAC.
- UNDP should enhance its strategic positioning of the sub-regional programme to further build on the reduction of human and social vulnerabilities (ADR implementation report), improve south-south cooperation strategies and work to a greater extent with the private sector.
- In line with recommendation No.11 of the ADR, greater efforts should be made to strengthen the capacity of the UNDP Barbados office to utilise and manage RBM procedures.

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<sup>2</sup> “Backstopping is the core work carried out by IMF staff economists in their direct support of the expert in the field. It is this distinctive feature to the IMF TA delivery approach that stands it apart from other TA providers who typically do not have an institutional framework to provide the systematic backstopping undertaken by the IMF”. Definitions, Annex VI, Phase IV, 2011-16

<sup>3</sup> This number includes The Dominican Republic that moved from CARTAC to CAPTAC-DR in June 2009.

- Respondents suggest that the UNDP office in New York (RBLAC) should offer greater levels of administrative support and not leave the regional office alone to administer all programme and management tasks on its own.

Evaluation recommendations for other donor organizations include:

- Donors should clarify their positions and priorities with respect to their roles and expectations for outcomes.
- Sharing knowledge, experience, and participation among donors can result in a valuable experience with significant positive outcomes to organizations and participating countries.
- In order to contribute to the efficient development of the project, donors should harmonize their request for report.