

# Implementation of the Recommendations of the Architecture Group at CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum: Pro- posed Road-Map

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Caribbean

**Proposed Roadmap for Implementation  
of the Recommendations of the  
Architecture Group  
at CAF-EU Business Forum**

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## **Proposed Roadmap for Implementation of the Recommendations of the Architecture Group at CAF-EU Business Forum**

### **I. Background**

The Architecture Group of the CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum mainly consisted of two groups of persons - those primarily interested in developing business linkages and those interested in promoting institutional linkages.

The business track primarily concerned the use of the "contract" system of Spain and the possibility of linking Caribbean architectural firms into this system of procurement of goods and services in connection with construction. The major interest in this regard from the participants came from the Dominican Republic participants present at the forum.

Participants from the eastern Caribbean or the English-speaking Caribbean, on the hand, were primarily interested in the creation of institutional linkages between this region and Europe to promote joint business ventures. In going forward it will therefore be necessary to provide for both these tracks.

### **II. Trade promotion**

This element particularly involved the participation by Caribbean architectural firms in trade fairs in the Europe and with links to the contract element as well as to the institutional element.

It will first be necessary to determine the European Realty fairs in which future participation is recommended. One such trade fair identified as being critical was the MIPIM Fair<sup>1</sup>. According to the fair's website, "MIPIM is the place to meet leading partners and prospects from 89 countries. Over 29,000 decision-makers, including more than 7,600 top investors, corporate end-users and hotel groups, will be doing business at the fair." It is held annually in March in Cannes and details regarding the participation at the 2008 MIPIM are presented in the Table below. The 2009 MIPIM will be held between 10 and 13 March 2009.

#### **MIPIM 2008 IN FIGURES**

▪ Participants: <b>29,318</b>	Investors: <b>6,800</b>
▪ Exhibiting companies: <b>2,687</b>	End-users & Hotel Groups: <b>825</b>
▪ Countries: <b>89</b>	Journalists: <b>613</b>
▪ Exhibiting surface: <b>26,842 M<sup>2</sup></b>	

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mipim.com/App/homepage.cfm?moduleid=399&appname=100517>

Under this rubric, we also must consider the question of market information. Market information is required to facilitate both the contract process and the more general process of promoting trading linkages with Europe. In this regard it's necessary for us to identify the information that is required and then determine the content of the market study. Finally it's possible to identify the organization that would be required to carry out or oversee the work.

A critical point made during the discussions concerns the need for the Caribbean to conduct a sector audit. An inventory of the skills and numbers of persons involved in the profession in the Caribbean does not exist. Creating one would provide both sector participants, prospective partners and consumers with a clear idea of the capacities and capabilities of the members of the architectural sector in the Dominican Republic and in the Commonwealth Caribbean. It will also be useful information for incorporation in the official trade promotion activities of Caribbean states, and for the growing network of services coalitions in the region (Barbados, St. Lucia, Guyana, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago).

### **III. Mutual recognition**

Important to both tracks is the matter of mutual recognition between Europe and the Caribbean. The EPA agreement provides for the signature or negotiation of mutual recognition agreements and names the architecture sector<sup>2</sup> as one of the possible priorities.

Necessary steps include:

- the identification of the appropriate regional institutions on both sides
- the development of a business case for the mutual recognition agreement. This could be linked to the contract issue for example.
- study and review of the EU Architects Directive
- dissemination of information in the Caribbean about the EU Architects Directive and how it could affect the negotiation of a MRA
- gaining agreement on the negotiation of a mutual recognition agreement and the nomination of the negotiating team for CARIFORUM

### **IV. Institutional Issues and Challenges**

The profession in the region would benefit from the existence of a single professional association for the entire CARIFORUM region. A single organization could, among other tasks, represent the region in MRA negotiations, engage in advocacy toward national governments and regional institutions, act as a vehicle for increasing intra-firm linkages throughout the region and support the exchange of information and experiences.

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<sup>2</sup> EPA prioritises accounting, architecture, engineering and tourism for mutual recognition agreements

On the one hand, the Federation of Caribbean Associations of Architects<sup>3</sup> has membership of Commonwealth Caribbean institutions, the Dominican Republic and French and Dutch architectural associations in the Caribbean. However, not all Commonwealth Caribbean countries are represented. Further, the presence of French and Dutch associations within the FCAA suggests that the organization might find it difficult to negotiate on behalf of CARIFORUM. This organization though could play a key role in advocacy on behalf of the Greater Caribbean.

The other main regional architectural Association is the Association of Commonwealth Societies of Architects in the Caribbean<sup>4</sup>. Its membership is mainly comprised of members from the eastern Caribbean, former subjects of the British and now members of the Commonwealth. Critically, the Dominican Republic is not a member of this organization. The region's architects might consider the successful model of the West Indies Rum and Spirits Producers Association (WIRSPA) in addressing this constraint. One option might be the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding between ACSAC and the "Colegio Dominicano de Ingenieros, Arquitectos y Agrimensores", the Dominican Republic's Association of Architects, Engineers and Land Surveyors.

Both organizations could be involved in fulfilling another relevant need, regional advocacy on behalf of the sector. FCAA could address broader issues involving both Europe and the Caribbean, while the ACSAC-CODIA link could focus on CARIFORUM-level advocacy. The latter would necessarily involve both regional governments and the institutional structure they establish for EPA implementation.

Institutional linkages are also required with UNEX in Spain in order to promote cooperation in respect of the contract system. Due to the membership of the FCAA, it would seem to be immediately best placed to implement this part of the agenda.

Finally, it is necessary to consider which organization within the Caribbean should be primarily responsible for supporting the work of this architecture group. At the Business Forum the Director of Caribbean Export offered a member of his staff on a temporary basis to support the process. Ultimately perhaps this function may best fall under the institutional structure approved by CARIFORUM to implement the EPA agreement. This function might possibly be a useful grounding to institutions more used to focusing on public sector requirements and could be helpful in supporting the public activity by maintaining a strong linkage with private sector action to take advantage of the EPA negotiating outcomes. Alternatively, this might also be a function which the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC) could fulfill.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://fcaa.info/en/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.acsac.net/>

## V. Standards

The architecture group also discussed the issue of standards. The view was expressed from the European side that a firm or individual interested in doing business in Europe must be fully acquainted with EURONORMS<sup>5</sup> which guide the profession in the European Community. This would definitely call for new learning in the Caribbean in the EURONORMS. It is noted though, that as far as working in Europe is concerned, regional architects tend to believe that they will most likely work in Europe according to UIA guidelines<sup>6</sup> that is, with a local architect whose responsibility it will be to ensure that the project meets local requirements.

In addition, there was discussion of the opportunity for regional architects to develop or exploit a particular capability in the area of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in design. Several times participants mentioned BRIAM and LEED certifications. A mechanism therefore might be put in place to assist regional architects in understanding EURONORMS and in gaining capability and certification in environmental areas. For the CARICOM, this might best be accomplished through the existing institution, the College of Architecture in Jamaica.

## VI. Linkages with other Sectors

The linkage most discussed was that with the tourism sector through the contract system. Tourism is, of course, the largest sector in the Caribbean and there is already a strong European presence and a growing Spanish presence in particular.

In connection with the contract system, a primary action will be to identify firms interested and capable in participating in the contract system. The group discussed whether this should be done through a process of self-identification by firms or whether there should be more organized and open through the respective architectural associations. No clear decision was taken and there probably would be no objection to adopting a hybrid approach in this case.

Capable, interested and connected firms will likely take their own actions. On the other hand, architectural associations will need to be provided with information on the contract system and its possibilities for dissemination to members. This could take the form of simple document in presentation format followed by blog postings.

Another critical linkage that could be exploited concerns the financial services sector. Establishing linkages with banks involved in financing projects or involved in their own expansion in the Caribbean opens up possibilities for architectural work in those other markets. In practice, it is recognized that this might be an option more accessible to architects from Trinidad and Tobago due to the export and financing activities of Trinidad and Tobago-based banks and other financial institutions.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.roofsteel.com/eurons.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mimarlarodasi.org.tr/UIKDocs%5C4.pdf>

## **VII. Maintaining Contacts**

An ongoing issue will be to maintain contact, interest and momentum. At the close of the forum, several members of the Group agreed to continue the discussion on a common database and a point of communication at the next FCAA meeting, scheduled to be held in the Dominican Republic on 20 February 2009.

Since the closure of the forum there likely has not been any contact in this connection with participants. They likely are feeling, as has been informally communicated to this observer, that this was merely another “talk shop”. This current project will hopefully dispel that notion but in the interim, there is a priority to establish a mechanism to rekindle interest.

It is therefore proposed that a blog should be established for the group. This would also have the advantage of opening up the process to those who were unable to attend the business forum and keep some of the contacts developed alive.

## **VIII. Graphical Representation of Critical Elements of the Roadmap**

Below are graphical representations of three critical elements of the roadmap:

Figure 1: Mutual Recognition





Figure 2: New Business Development

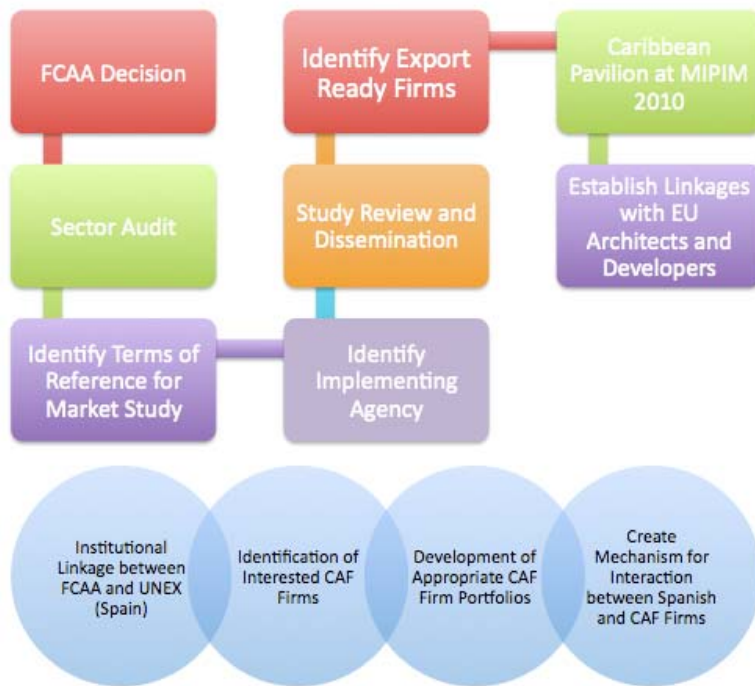
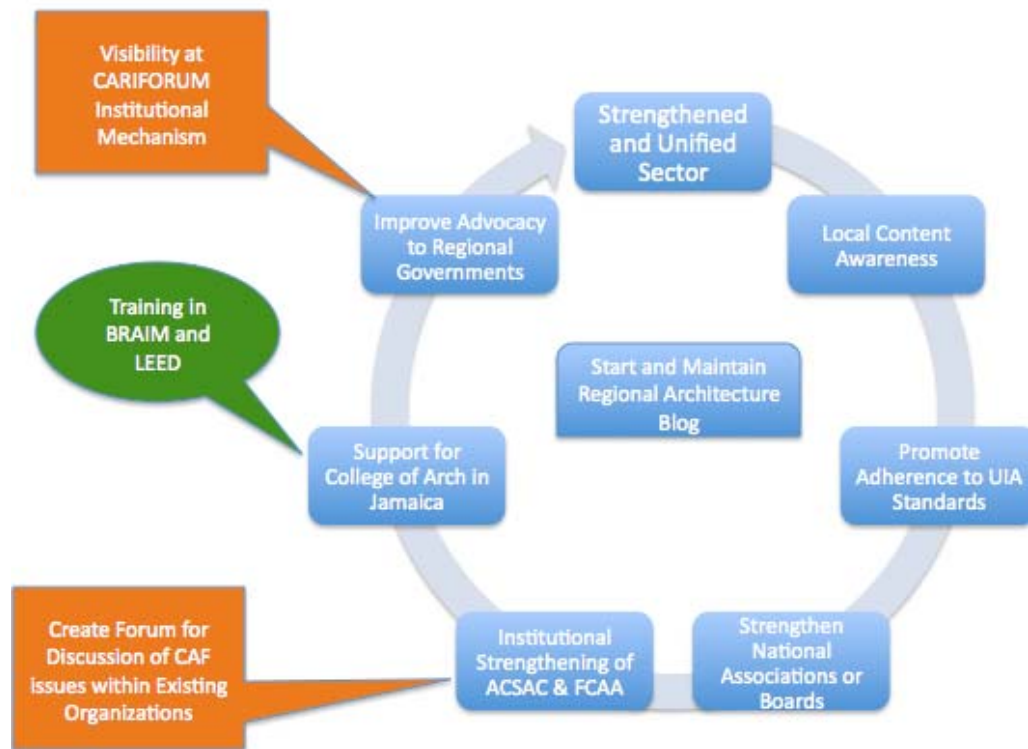


Figure 3: Sector Development



## IX. Conclusion

The Architecture sector in the region seems appropriately set at the moment to play a pivotal role in the development of interaction between Europe and CARIFORUM. Initially, there appears to be need for some institutional support while the existing associations are strengthened. It is proposed that Caribbean Export be requested to carry out this function in the initial period. Thereafter, existing organizations can take responsibility for different aspects of the enterprise.

Creating stronger linkages between firms and associations in the CARICOM with the Dominican Institutions and Firms is critical. Consideration might also be given to promoting exchanges at the educational level, particularly in areas related to continuous improvement and skills upgrading. This will necessitate collaboration between educational and professional associations within the partners to ensure certification of programmes and acceptance of newly-gained competencies. These increased contacts will hopefully lead to new business linkages and cooperation in seeking out new business opportunities in the Caribbean and with Europe



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