

**Concept Document**

# **THE C-SERMS PLATFORM**



**The CARICOM Secretariat  
Georgetown, Guyana**

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## PREFACE

In April 2008, the CARICOM Secretariat commenced the Energy Programme as one of the programmes within the Directorate of Trade and Economic Integration. The Energy Programme was assigned the responsibility of implementing a programmatic approach to energy sector developments in the Region. This established a departure from the traditional “project approach” and facilitates greater responsiveness in carrying out the Community’s energy related mandates through a harmonized approach to the region’s energy issues.

In March 2013, after a gestation period of ten years, CARICOM Member States adopted a regional energy policy. The Policy calls for a transformation of the energy sector in the region and identifies a number of common strategic objectives. Key among these are energy efficiency; secure energy supplies; and trade in energy, especially as this related to “the impact on relative competitiveness in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and purchasing and transportation arrangements”. Alongside the Policy, Member States also adopted the Caribbean Sustainable Roadmap and Strategy (C-SERMS). The C-SERMS has recommended regional sustainable energy targets for renewable power capacity and energy efficiency in the short (2017), medium (2022), and long (2027) terms, viz. 20 %, 28% and 47% renewable power capacity by 2017, 2022, and 2027 respectively; a 33 % reduction in energy intensity by 2027 was also proposed.

There is broad consensus that the regional energy system, *despite the progress already made*, has to undergo significant additional changes in order to urgently meet the demands for modern, secure, reliable, efficient, cost-effective energy services, in general, and the C-SERMS targets, in particular. A continuing challenge in the regional energy sector is the need for improving the coordination among the multiplicity of energy initiatives, both at the national and regional levels. In particular, the level of information and knowledge sharing, as well as the linkages among actors, has been limited; this has resulted in some amount of duplication. This document describes the C-SERMS Platform. The expectation is that the improved coordination that results from the Platform will enhance the utilization of resources (human and financial), to include reductions in the amount of duplicated efforts, and will benefit all actors, including development partners, operating within the region. Most critically, the C-SERMS Platform will strengthen the information and knowledge base of the region, thereby enhancing the quality of the decision-making process within the sustainable energy sector.



## 1. THE C-SERMS PLATFORM

With a wide range of organizations and agencies providing assistance to national and regional sustainable energy initiatives in the Caribbean, it is recognized that there exists a need for a mechanism to support, track and strengthen the coordination of activities and programmes; this is necessary for ensuring that the desired strategic impact is achieved and that national, regional and global goals, objectives and targets within the Community are supported by the various actions and actors. Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have approved a regional energy policy and approved also the Caribbean Sustainable Energy Roadmap and Strategy (C-SERMS) which is intended to *guide, encourage* and *expedite* implementation of the sustainable energy (renewable energy and energy efficiency) aspects of the Energy Policy. The regional strategy on energy has now been anchored within the CARICOM Energy Policy (CEP) and the C-SERMS.

The **C-SERMS Platform** will serve as the vehicle for integrated planning and knowledge exchange for Regional sustainable energy matters. Designed to function as a “mix” of virtual and physical interactions, the C-SERMS Platform will be the mechanism through which national governments and regional leadership will be able to track and meet the stated goals on sustainable energy while simultaneously securing the input of various actors, involved in (and critical towards supporting) the process of sustainable energy transformation within the Community. The Platform will therefore focus on *participation from* the development partner community, financial services sector, academic institutions, and civil society and their *interaction with* national and regional policy-makers, as well as institutions of the Community. Thematic Working Groups, which are designed to address the major barriers to sustainable development within the Region, form the backbone of the Platform [**Figure 1**].

The Platform is also expected to share information and exchange knowledge with experts, especially within Small Island Developing States (SIDS), by linking with **Communities of Practice** [**Figure 2**], which represents an interaction of global technical experts on island energy issues. The Communities that have so far emerged are related to areas that have been identified, through a series of experts’ meetings, as the priority pillars for addressing the barriers to clean energy development within the Caribbean. The Communities of Practice that have so far been identified – Electric Utilities, Buildings, Sustainable Transport and Education – represent an initial set. The expectation is that the Communities

will be *demand-driven* and new areas of focus will be represented as the need emerges.

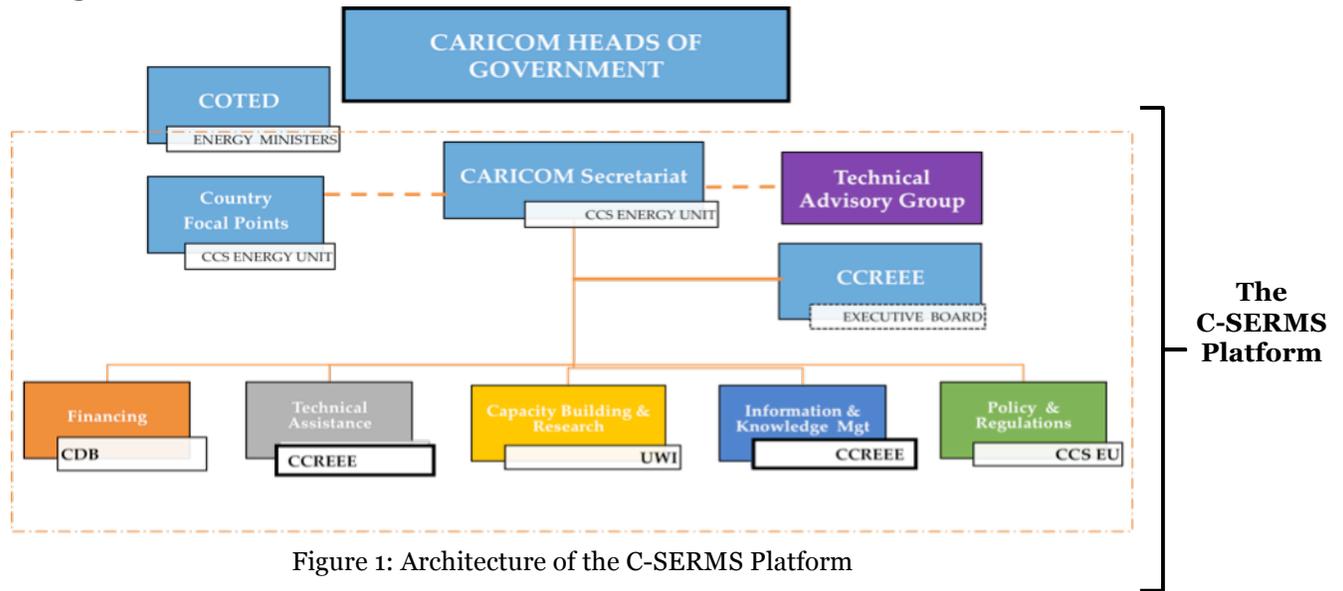


Figure 1: Architecture of the C-SERMS Platform

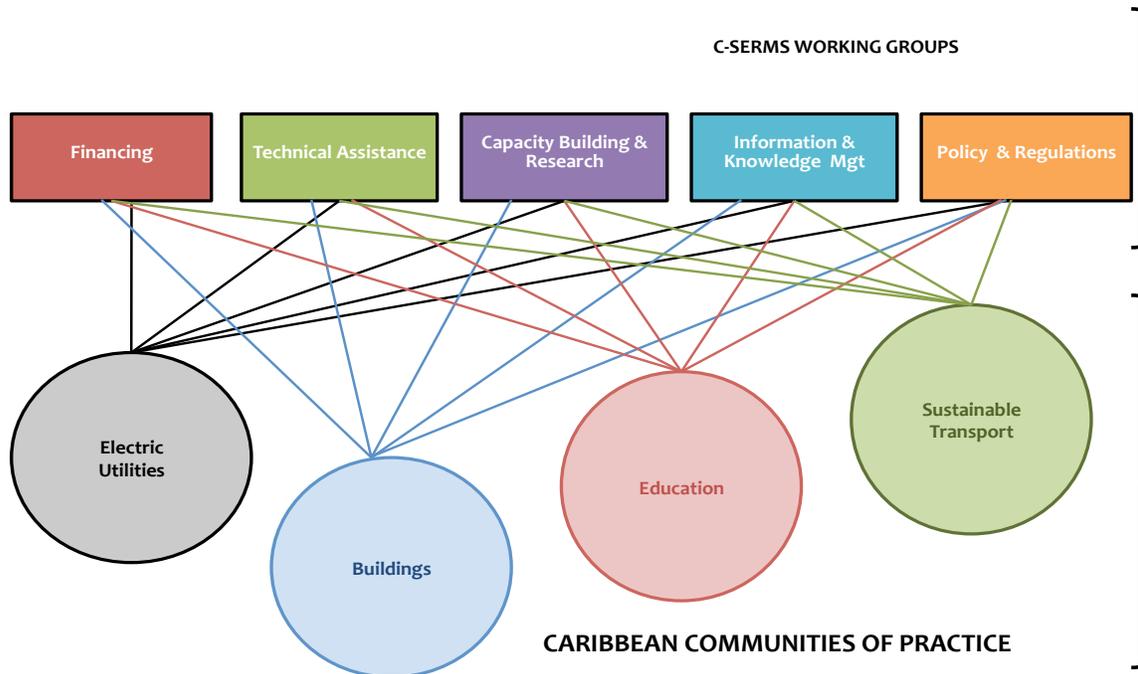


Figure 2: Interaction between the Working Groups of the C-SERMS Platform and the Caribbean Communities of Practice

## 2. MAIN FUNCTIONS OF THE C-SERMS PLATFORM

As an integrated planning, communication, information sharing and knowledge exchange tool, the C-SERMS Platform offers a formal basis through which broad-based stakeholder inputs can inform the national and regional sustainable energy agenda, thereby serving as a critical link between the strategy and operating processes. Critically, the Platform also serves as a mechanism through which national and regional actors coordinate activities and plans in order to optimize sustainable energy development and deployment within the Community. As national issues often have an impact on regional policy and strategy, the ability of the Platform to identify “multi-country relevance” and facilitate the sharing of experiences and lessons is of high importance. This is therefore suggestive that, in the pursuit of regional actions, the Working Groups may – at times – address national issues on the basis of their transferability to the region.

In essence, the C-SERMS Platform provides the basis for:

- Providing information on the technical, financial and other resources that are available for supporting activities, projects and programmes within the region;
- Achieving stronger harmonization of the different national implementation approaches, thereby strengthening the respective country contributions to the C-SERMS objectives and targets;
- Coordinating the harmonization of regional Work Programmes for development partners and institutions that are tasked with transforming the regional energy sector through support for the C-SERMS objectives and targets; and
- Improving the **quality** and **transparency** of planning and implementation within the regional energy sector.

A key aspect of the Platform is that it provides a mechanism for “new” development partners, including donors and institutions, desirous of contributing to sustainable energy development within the region, to plug into the existing regional frameworks for cooperation on clean energy. Critically also, by **linking strategy to operations**, the Platform requires that “actors work in concert” to deliver performance through a results-oriented approach that tracks and reports on the regional impact of their actions and contributions.

### 3. COMPOSITION

The C-SERM Platform is designed to engage, and receive contribution from, the diverse group of energy stakeholders operating within the Caribbean Community. This includes the CARICOM Secretariat; regional institutions with energy responsibilities and mandates, such as the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); Member States; and development partners, including donors, development agencies and international financial institutions. The Platform will also tap into interest groups, such as civil society, professional associations, academia and the private sector, thereby ensuring the *inclusiveness* of the contributions to its tasks and functions.

### 4. KEY GOVERNANCE MATTERS

The C-SERMS Platform is intended to serve as the major interlocutor within the governance framework for energy matters within CARICOM. Managed by the CARICOM Secretariat, the Platform will connect the Strategy and Policy development process, coordinated by the CARICOM Secretariat, with Implementation, coordinated by the emerging CCREEE. This is expected to be achieved through the “translation” of regional strategies and policies into an execution framework within a process of *integrated planning* among key actors [Figure 3].

A major focus of the C-SERMS Platform will therefore be the exploration of potential partnerships and opportunities for enhancing the *planning of*, and *allocation of funding towards*, regional activities and projects, as well as national initiatives that are intended to contribute to the C-SERMS objectives and targets. Consequently, the Platform is expected to serve as a cohesive and coordinated regional architecture that frames, inter alia, the relationship among the key stakeholders. This mechanism is, if successful, can: (i) enable actors, operating within the sustainable energy sector within CARICOM, to optimize the addition of value; and (ii) enhance opportunities for the region to achieve its sustainable energy goals most efficiently and cost-effectively.

Most importantly, the Platform **will** operate on the principle of regional ownership, supported by respect and mutual accountability among stakeholders.

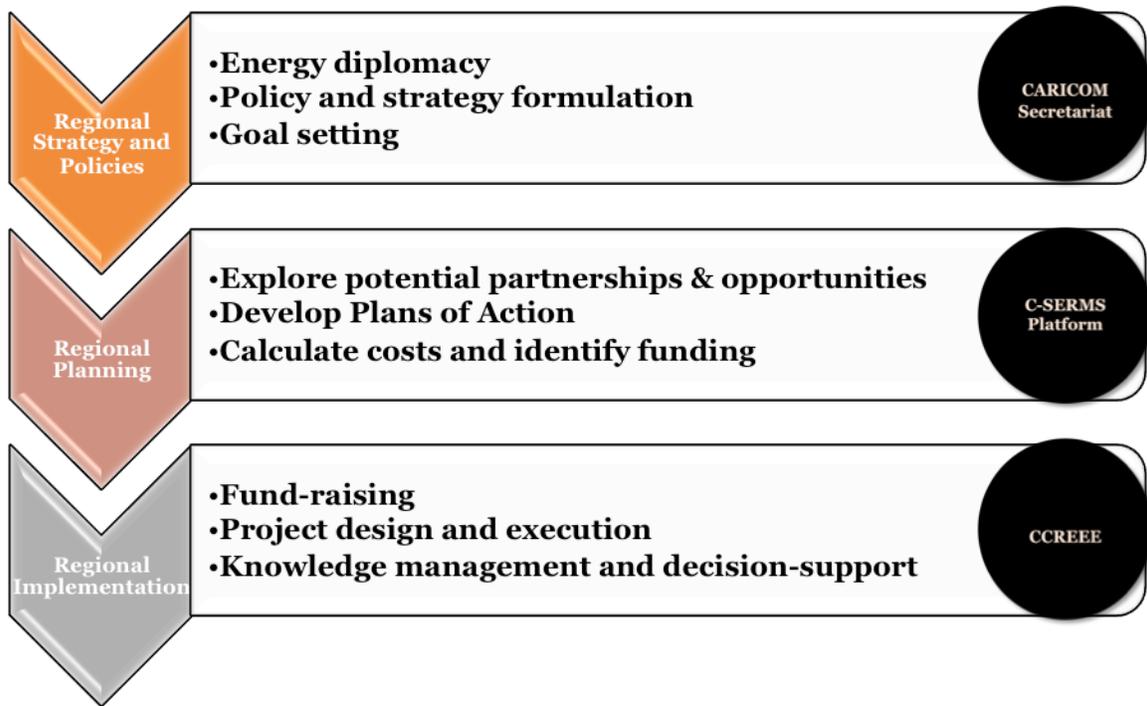


Figure 3: The **connection approach** to the coordination of Regional energy matters

The major conduits for stakeholder input reside in the **Thematic Working Groups (TWGs)**, viz.: (i) Policy and Regulations, (ii) Information and Knowledge Management, (iii) Capacity Building and Research, (iv) Technical Assistance, and (v) Financing [**Figure 1**]. The Caribbean Renewable Energy Development Project (CREDP), in 2008, identified the stated thematic areas as barriers to the expansion, development and deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency across CARICOM; this finding was later corroborated by recent studies, including a Needs Assessment that was conducted in preparation for the establishment of the CCREEE. As part of the regional ownership that is embedded within the principle of operation of the Platform, the respective TWGs will be chaired by the CARICOM Secretariat and regional institutions, viz. CCREEE, CDB and the University of the West Indies (UWI). Among the tasks of the TWG Chairs is the responsibility for ensuring that proposed areas of focus suitably **align** with regional and, where possible, national needs, objectives and strategies.

The bridge between regional energy planning and implementation is expected to be strengthened by a design in which the CDB and UWI function as Regional Thematic Hubs for the CCREEE in relation to Finance and Capacity Building respectively.

Another critical part of the Platform structure is the **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**; the TAG will include a mix of regional institutions with energy-related mandates, viz. Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation (CARILEC); Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC); CCREEE, CDB, and UWI. The TAG will include, also, regional civil society representation and the development partners that are *most deeply involved* in the support of sustainable energy initiatives within the region. The expectation is that there will be representation from donors, development agencies and international financial institutions within the development partners' cadre in the TAG.

The TAG is expected to utilize the recommendations of the TWGs to design the framework for the work to be done in support of, as well as to track the impact of historic work on progress towards, the C-SERMS objectives and targets on an annual basis.

## 5. THE THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS

**ROLE:** The primary mission of the Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) is to guide and inform the implementation of national and regional energy action plans. This is intended to support the agreed energy goals and benchmarks of the Community. Working Groups are therefore expected to support the broad objectives and targets of the C-SERMS, as well as develop specific goals and targets for activities, projects and programmes within the respective thematic areas. The expectation too, is that the groups will have technical competence, derived through the reliable, dedicated participation in its work by experts from development partners, institutions and Member States.

Five key areas that have been identified as being critical to advancing national and regional energy strategies and targets; these are the thematic areas around which the working groups shall base their work:

- Policy and Regulations
- Information and Knowledge Management
- Capacity Building and Research
- Financing
- Technical Assistance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Members of the Thematic Working Groups are expected to work collectively toward the promotion of sustainable energy development within the CARICOM region, through the expert advisement, guidance and strategic support to for implementation matters. Member of the respective TWGs

are also expected to contribute a diverse set of skills, experiences and thinking to the deliberations and work of the TWGs. The success of the TWGs is therefore dependent on this “cross-fertilization of thinking” and requires the sharing (and generation) of information and knowledge. This may allow the TWGs to test the boundaries of possibilities as it regards the use of innovative technologies, regulations, financing and other mechanisms to increase the penetration of sustainable energy use in CARICOM Member States.

The TWGs will function may be best described as a *fluid and flexible* operating process that allows regular inputs into its work through the solicitation of contributions from non-Members. In particular, the interaction of the TWGs with the technical experts of the Communities of Practice can provide a critical linkage to the wider Caribbean, in particular, and SIDS, in general. Working Group Members are therefore expected to serve as “bi-directional conduits” for regional information exchange and global knowledge sharing globally, thereby providing **decision-support** to the policy, strategy formulation and goal setting process and **guidance** to implementation.

The TWGs, as a part of their work, are expected to develop communication and outreach strategies for managing and maintaining regular communication with the wider group of regional stakeholders, informing on and identifying the major issues that are relevant to their respective thematic areas. The TWGs are also expected to periodically share material related to their work through such media as internet websites and publications and develop matters for consideration by Meetings of the CARICOM Energy Ministers, which will be advanced through the Technical Advisory Group.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Working Group members will be selected from the pool of main actors, which are most “actively involved” in the sustainable energy sector within the region. They are, essentially, Parties that can bring something uniquely valuable to the table, be it from the basis of individual knowledge or agency interest. The Working Group members within the respective thematic areas are expected to have: (i) expertise and competence in, or in areas related to, the theme; (ii) dedicated, reliable historic contributions within the theme; and (iii) current allocation of resources to support work in, or in areas related to, the theme. Each TWG will develop its own operating rules and procedures and is expected to constitute: (i) two Member States; (ii) two regional institutions; and (iii) two development partners. Members shall serve on a three-year rotational basis. In addition, the CARICOM Secretariat shall be an *ex officio* member in all TWGs.

**LEADERSHIP:** Working Groups will be led by Chairs who will be tasked with “driving the agenda and work” of the respective Groups. In each case, the Chair shall be selected from among the regional institutions who are Members of the TWGs. Working Group Chairs have the responsibility of setting, and guiding the drafting of, the meeting agenda in advance of each meeting. It is also the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that: (i) the meeting agenda are covered; (ii) members are given ample opportunity to participate in the work the Group; (iii) expertise that is external to the group is identified and utilized to support the work of the Group, including meetings and deliberations, as necessary; and (iv) outcomes from the Group are suitably communicated to stakeholders and advanced for deliberation at the Technical Advisory Group.

**WORKING METHODS:** It is expected that the TWGs will meet as often necessary but no less than once per quarter (or four times per year). Meetings of the Groups are to be held virtually and in-person; in-person meetings are expected to be convened within the margins of major regional energy stakeholders meetings, such as the Caribbean Clean Energy Technology Symposium (CCETS), Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum (CREF) and Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum (CSEF).

**INVITED EXPERTISE:** The TWGs, through the Chair, may invite **subject experts** and **special interest stakeholders** to attend and participate in meetings and contribute to the respective areas of work of the Group as, and when, necessary. In particular, the participation of experts and interest groups in sub-committees of the Group is strongly encouraged.

## 6. THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

**ROLE:** The primary role of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is to provide inputs, through recommendations from the TWGs or otherwise, on key areas of policies, technologies for renewable energy deployment and energy efficiency application, and the actions necessary to create an enabling framework for supporting the C-SERMS objectives and targets. The expectation is that the TAG will draw from the experience of the respective members, *gained through their dedicated reliable operation within Member States*. The TAG is intended to, primarily, recommend proposed areas for prioritization within the C-SERMS to the CARICOM Energy Programme, as well as provide insights on how the identified areas identified can be strategically supported; the calculation of costs and the identification of funding for the supporting actions are therefore central to its tasks.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** The primary mission of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is to review the outputs of the TWGs and to, as required, identify the concrete regional actions and funds that can best support CARICOM Member States in their effective implementation of national and regional energy policies and strategies. In addition, the TAG is expected to develop and manage processes for monitoring and identify areas for quality improvement in the implementation of the respective actions, thereby tracking and assess the effectiveness of programmes in supporting the C-SERMS objectives and targets.

**MEMBERSHIP:** The Group will consist of the following: (i) CARILEC; (ii) CCCCC; (iii) CCREEE; (iv) CDB; (v) UWI; and (vi) six development partners. The develop partners shall be selected so that the Group comprises of an equal number of donors, implementation agencies, and international financial institutions – two each. The CARICOM Secretariat shall be an *ex officio* member. The Group will develop its own operating rules and procedures and select a Chair from among its members. Members shall serve on a two-year rotational basis.

**LEADERSHIP:** The TAG will be managed by a Chair, selected from among its members, who is to be tasked with “driving the agenda and work” of the Group and, *in particular*, work closely with the Chairs of the respective TWGs to advance their recommendations. The Chair is responsible for setting, and guiding the drafting of, the meeting agenda in advance of each meeting. It is also be the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that: (i) the meeting agenda are covered; (ii) members are given ample opportunity to participate in the work the Group; and (iii) outcomes from the Group are suitably communicated for consideration by Meetings of the CARICOM Energy Ministers, which will be advanced through the CARICOM Secretariat.

**WORKING METHODS:** It is expected that the Group will meet twice per year. Meetings of the Groups can be held virtually and in-person; in-person meetings are expected to be convened within the margins of major regional energy stakeholders meetings, such as the CCETS, CREF and CSEF.

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE C-SERMS PLATFORM

It has been stated elsewhere that the C-SERMS Platform will function primarily as a virtual operation. Nonetheless, the coordination of meetings of the Platform and management of information generated from Platform activities, are significant undertakings. Consequently, there is need for the recurrent allocation of resources to support implementation of Platform. The expectation is that the

improved coordination, resulting from the Platform, will minimize the amount of duplicated efforts and optimize the way in which resources (human and financial) are used to support sustainable energy activities within the Community. This will benefit all actors, including development partners, operating within the Region and provides justification of the costs associated with its implementation.

The effective functioning of the Platform requires **staff support**, which will be provided through, inter alia:

- The short-term contracting of a Knowledge Management Expert, who shall be responsible for establishing the communication systems and protocols that are necessary for the efficient management and operation of the Platform;
- The hiring of a Platform Coordinator, who shall be responsible for meeting scheduling and documentation, as well as the management of information and communication among the actors involved within the Platform and its various processes; and
- The engagement of Research Assistants and short-term Technical Experts to provide support on technical tasks, such as analytics and assessments, that are required to support the work of the TWGs and TAG as, and when, necessary.

It is necessary to note that the aforementioned staffing requirements needn't be exclusive to the Platform. The respective roles may, in instances, be best served through integration with staff assignments that are already (or expected to be) based in either the CARICOM Secretariat or the CCREEE; this is particularly important as the administrative structures for supporting the necessary staff functions already exist within these institutions.

In addition to staff, the following **information and communication technology requirements** are necessary for the efficient, robust operation of the Platform, in particular, and the CARICOM Energy Programme, in general. These are, inter alia:

- The development (or adoption) of an online portal to support the virtual collaboration space, necessary for the meetings, file sharing and information management that is related to the effective operation and function of the C-SERMS Platform; and
- The integration of the portal for the C-SERMS Platform into the CARICOM Energy Portal, which is being developed as a single online knowledge management and collaboration portal for providing easy access to regional energy information and data sought after by users.

The expectation is that the **CARICOM Energy Portal** will function as the primary knowledge management tool for the CARICOM Energy Programme and will be based on a state-of-the-art online platform. The Portal is intended to contain knowledge, categorised in a manner that allows the user to easily locate and extract information. The Portal will also contain links to the various other support services and products, including reports and publications, and serve as an entry point for much of the analytical work that is required to support the successful functioning of the C-SERMS Platform. As growing amounts of data, information and analysis become available through the CARICOM Energy Portal it is likely to become an important regional and global resource, thereby enabling rapid access to information to the satisfy specific needs of the multiple users, including the TWGs and the TAG.

Funding is also needed to support face-to-face meetings and awareness activities of the C-SERMS Platform.

## 8. SOME KEY TIMELINES FOR 2016

<b>✓</b>	<b>January 2016</b>	<u>Endorsement</u> of the C-SERMS Platform by the Sixtieth Special Meeting of the COTED (Energy)  Georgetown, Guyana
<b>✓</b>	<b>May 2016</b>	<u>Official Launch</u> of the C-SERMS Platform at the Second Caribbean Energy Security Summit  CESS, Washington DC, USA
<b>✓</b>	<b>July, 2016</b>	<u>First Meeting</u> of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Planning Meeting with Donor Partners  Washington, DC
	<b>October, 2016</b>	<u>First Meeting</u> of the Thematic Working Groups (TWG) Policy & Regulations & Capacity Building & Research  EU Energy Conference, Bridgetown, Barbados
	<b>October, 2016</b>	<u>First Meeting</u> of the Thematic Working Groups (TWG) Finance & Information & Knowledge Management  CREF, Miami, Florida
	<b>October, 2016</b>	Ad-Hoc Working Group on Geothermal  CREF, Miami Florida

<b>November 2016</b>	<u>Second Meeting of the Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)</u> <sup>1</sup>  <b>CSEF V</b> , Nassau, Bahamas
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<sup>1</sup> The Meetings will take place during the Fifth Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum (CSEF V), which is scheduled to be held in November 2016 in Nassau, Bahamas