MODEL DISASTER MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE TOURISM SECTOR IN CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

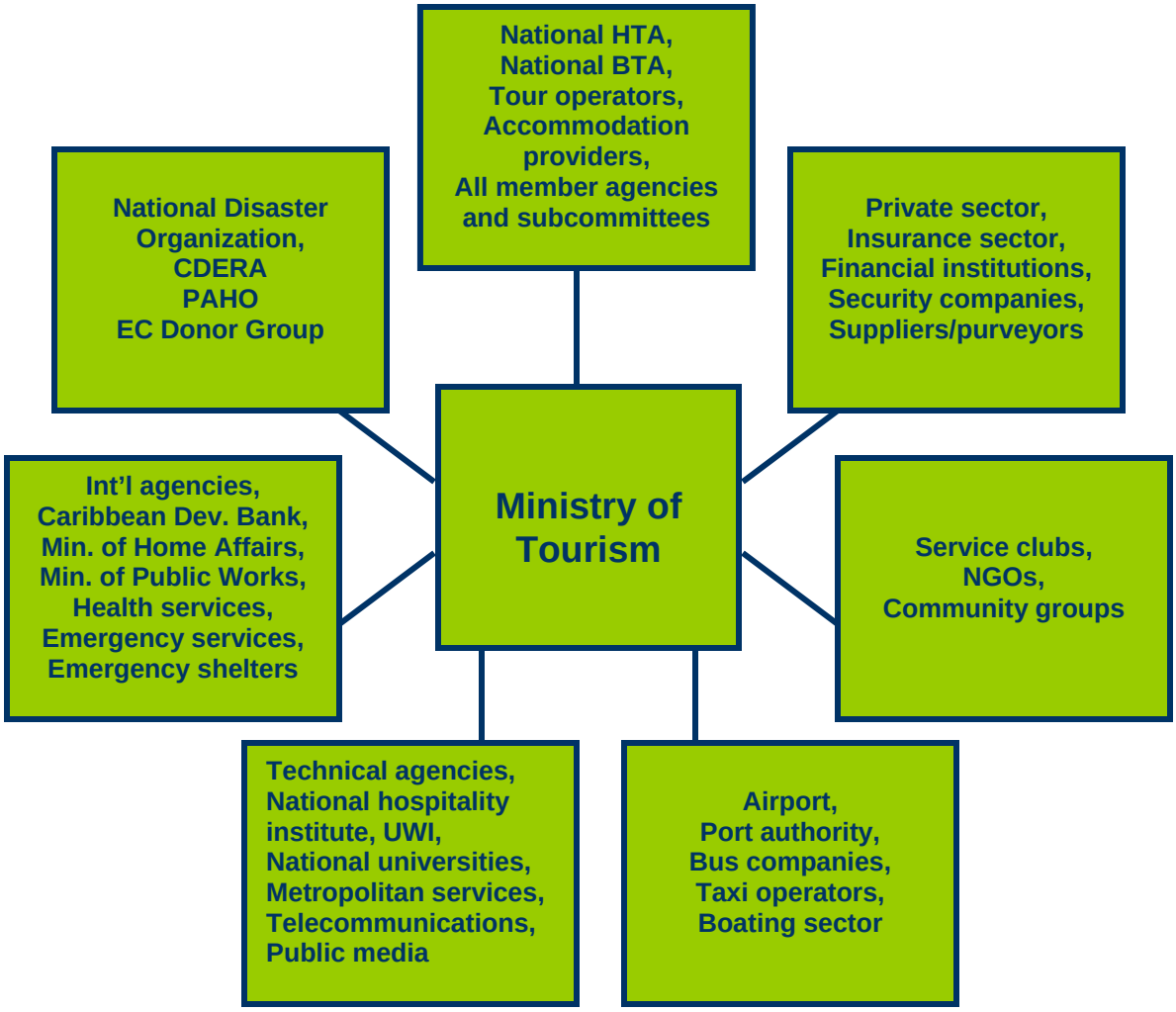
Model Institutional Framework

Developing an effective multi-hazard plan for a country's tourism industry will require the creation of an institutional framework for managing disasters. This structure should include organizations and agencies at the national level, as well as at the tourism sector and tourism venue levels (i.e. hotel, resort, restaurant, etc.). Linkages among public sector agencies and private sector players are vital in effective disaster management, as are partnerships among government, private enterprise and civil entities. It is essential that the Ministry of Tourism maintain links with the National Disaster Office (NDO), which is the focal point for disaster management in a country, and other key governmental agencies (see Figure 1 next page). **Disaster mitigation and preparedness organizations** at each level should be continuously operating at all times during normal operations. These organizations are responsible for general coordination of disaster management at their specific level, with a focus on vulnerability assessment, mitigation and preparedness. Another set of **disaster response organizations** will need to be convened during emergencies and disasters, to coordinate response and recovery at their specific level of operations (see Table 1 below). These organizations will be described in more detail in the following sections.

Table 1: Organizations involved in tourism disaster management

	Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Organizations	Disaster Response Organizations
National level	*National Disaster Committee (NDC).* This committee should include a tourism sector representative.	*National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC).* This should include a tourism sector representative.
Tourism sector level	*Tourism Emergency Management Committee (TEMC).*	*Tourism Emergency Operations Center (TEOC).*
Tourism venue level	*Emergency Committee (EC).*	*Hotel Command Center (HCC).*

Figure 1: Important stakeholder and agency linkages[1]



[1] Adapted from: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). *Outline Framework for Multi Hazard Plan Tourism Sector*. Designed by Ms. Eleanor Jones. Environmental Risk Management Specialist. Barbados. June 2006.

Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Organizations

National Disaster Committee (NDC)

All countries should have a National Disaster Office and a National Disaster Committee or Council in which several organizations from the government, the private sector and civil society are represented and participate in the country's overall disaster management process. A representative from the tourism sector should participate in all regular NDC meetings and decisions.

In relation to the tourism sector, the NDC should ensure that specific disaster scenarios for threats that could impact the sector are designed and used as the basis for vulnerability assessments and mitigation and emergency response plans. Any national mitigation and emergency plans should include input from the tourism sector and activities to reduce the vulnerability of the tourism industry and increase its preparedness and ability to respond to disasters. The national emergency response plans should be compatible with the tourism sector emergency response plans (multi-hazard planning), and vice versa.

Tourism Emergency Management Committee (TEMC)[2]

A specific committee to coordinate disaster management activities within the tourism sector should be established in every country by the Ministry of Tourism. The TEMC should develop and approve its own terms of reference, which would include functions and responsibilities, composition and structure of the committee, and the establishment of a **Tourism Emergency Operations Centre (TEOC)** to coordinate response activities during emergencies and disasters.

The functions and responsibilities of a TEMC should include:

- ✓ Coordinating disaster management activities in the tourism sector;
- ✓ Establishing and maintaining communication and coordinating activities with the National Disaster Office and other organizations (public and private) that can contribute to disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness and response within the sector;
- ✓ Monitoring decisions made by the NDO, particularly actions undertaken by the National Disaster Committee/Council;
- ✓ Identifying and prioritizing hazards that could impact the tourism sector;
- ✓ Assessing the vulnerability of the tourism sector to specific hazards, based on specific disaster scenarios;

[2] Adapted from: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). *The Barbados Tourism Sector Hurricane Plan*. CDERA. Barbados. July 2006. Designed by Arturo López-Portillo.

- ✓ Ensuring that disaster risk reduction is considered in tourism development planning;
- ✓ Reducing the vulnerability of the tourism sector and its members through specific mitigation plans based on the results of vulnerability assessment activities;
- ✓ Ensuring that members of the tourism sector create their emergency committees and design specific mitigation and emergency response plans;
- ✓ Facilitating the development of and periodically reviewing a Comprehensive Multi-Hazard Disaster Plan for the Tourism Industry;
- ✓ Facilitating the implementation of the Multi-Hazard Disaster Plan;
- ✓ Facilitating the provision of centralized coordination and control of disaster response within the tourism industry, through the formation of a Tourism Emergency Operations Centre (TEOC);
- ✓ Providing and supervising ongoing training of personnel in emergency procedures;
- ✓ Keeping abreast of any potential hazards that may pose a threat to the tourism industry via relevant agencies, media and the internet;
- ✓ Declaring internal (in the sector) emergency alerts if an emergency has been declared by national authorities; and
- ✓ Activating the TEOC in coordination with the NDO, if a threat or impact of a hazard occurs in the country, and ensuring that the TEOC coordinates the overall tourism sector response to the event.

The TEMC should include representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- The Ministry of Tourism (this person should act as chair of the committee).
- The National Tourism Authority
- The National Hotel and Tourism Association
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Ministry of Health
- The Immigration Department
- The defense force
- The police force
- Airport(s)
- Sea port(s)
- Airline Association(s)
- Tour operators

Other organizations (NDO, governmental, private, NGOs) could be invited to participate in meetings related to specific hazards or specific activities, such as disaster scenario design, early warning systems design, vulnerability and risk assessment, mitigation, or others.

Leadership of the TEMC should include a chairperson (from the Ministry of Tourism), a deputy chairperson and a secretary, with all other members expected to actively undertake the functions and responsibilities of the committee.

Meetings should be held quarterly or monthly, as required, with recorded minutes and communications of the meetings distributed at least one week prior to the next meeting. Members of the committee should provide a written summary of their activities for distribution to other members, as required.

Members of the TEMC can form working groups and sub-committees as required. At the very least, the committee should have the following sub-committees:

Vulnerability Assessment and Mitigation Sub-committee, in charge of identifying threats and disaster scenarios and assessing and reducing vulnerability of the tourism industry through specific mitigation plans;

Damage and Needs Assessment Sub-committee, in charge of planning and conducting damage and needs assessment of the sector and its members after the impact of hazards;

Relocation, Evacuation and Shelter Sub-committee, in charge of identifying safe areas to relocate or evacuate guests during emergencies and disasters, thus ensuring their safety during those events;

Public Information Sub-committee, in charge of gathering information about permanent and emergency activities carried out by the sector and releasing it through approved channels; and

Telecommunications Sub-committee, in charge of ensuring that the tourism sector has enough, adequate telecommunications equipment available and in good working condition, to operate efficiently during emergencies and disasters to coordinate the sector's response.

Each sub-committee should have a designated head, who can assign specific responsibilities for preparation and response during emergencies and disasters. Each committee should also have written emergency procedures for each activity under its jurisdiction.

Venue-specific Emergency Committees (EC)

Each individual tourism establishment should create an internal Emergency Committee (EC) to serve as the overall coordinating and executing body for all disaster management activities at the venue, including reducing vulnerability and managing and implementing emergency preparedness, response and recovery procedures.

The members of the EC should be appointed by senior management. An Emergency Coordinator, usually the General Manager or Director of Operations, should head the committee, with an Alternate Emergency Coordinator

designated in the event that the Emergency Coordinator is absent. The committee should also include a public relations person, an environmental person (if one exists) and at least one representative from each of the departments or areas of the hotel or resort. Smaller tourism-related businesses, such as restaurants or small crafts markets, may want to join together to create a joint Emergency Committee, with representatives from each business.

For more on Emergency Committees at hotels and other venues, please see the sections on hurricane and terrorism preparedness, below.

Disaster Response Organizations

National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC)[3]

All countries should have a National Emergency Operations Center to provide standard national coordination and control of emergency and disaster response and relief operations on a 24-hour-per-day basis if necessary. The NEOC has four functional areas: executive policy, operations, communications and emergency public information.

The **Operations Group** of the NEOC, headed by the Director of Operations, is responsible for directing emergency response and relief operations. The rest of the group should include chairpersons from different national disaster sub-committees, including telecommunications, shelter management, damage and needs assessment, health and welfare, transport and road clearance, and supply management. There should also be representatives from the defense and police forces, and The Red Cross.

The Ministry of Tourism, through the TEMC, should appoint a representative to the NEOC, thus allowing for accurate exchange of information and a tourism sector response that is in line with the national response.

The release of public information is coordinated by the Chief Information Officer from the NEOC. Information about the status of the tourism sector before, during and after a disaster or emergency should be prepared in the TEOC and sent to the NEOC for dissemination through the media and abroad, as agreed within the NEOC.

[3] Adapted from: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). *The Grenada National Emergency Operations Emergency Procedures*. CDERA/CIDA/IVAN Project. Designed by Arturo López-Portillo. Based on: Caribbean Disaster Emergency response Agency (CDERA). *Model Emergency Operations Centre Standing Operating Procedures*. Barbados. 1995.

The NEOC is also responsible for carrying out a damage and needs assessment for the county after a disaster or emergency. This assessment should be carried out in three phases, in keeping with the expectations and practice in the international donor community. At each stage, the NEOC's reports would include input prepared and submitted by the tourism sector, through the TEOC:

1. **Initial Damage Assessment.** Within four to eight hours after the "All Clear," the NEOC conducts an initial overall assessment of the situation.

2. **Intermediate Damage and Needs Assessment.** At 48 hours after the "All Clear," the NEOC produces an intermediate report. Daily updated reports are produced each day following, with a comprehensive report released on day 7.

3. **Detailed Sectoral Assessment (DSA).** Within 21 days after the "All Clear," The NEOC compiles the results of detailed surveys conducted by individual sectors, including energy, water supply, housing, education, agriculture, health, tourism, and others, to determine detailed damage and economic costs.

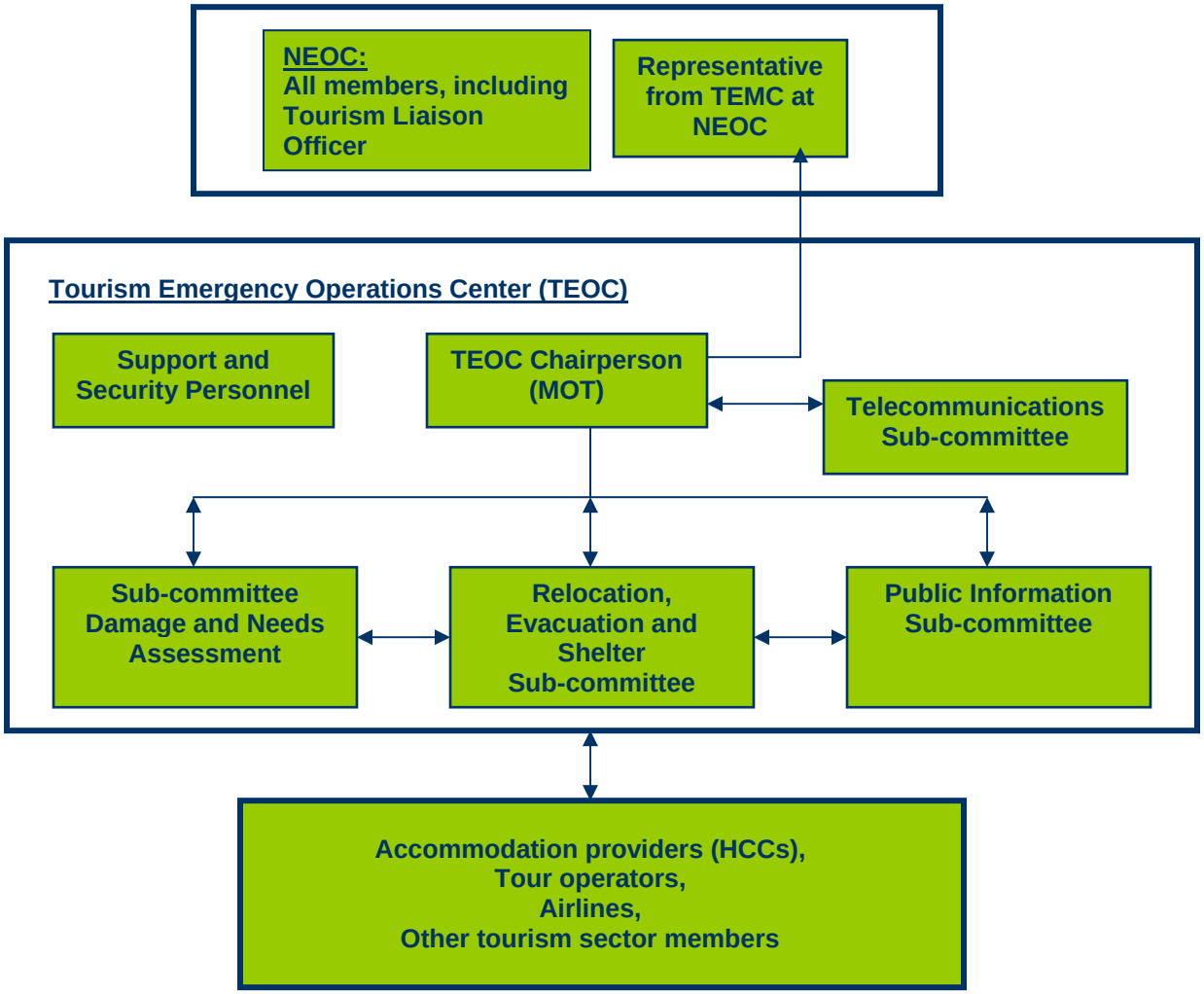
Tourism Emergency Operations Center (TEOC) [4]

The TEMC should establish a Tourism Emergency Operations Center (TEOC) to serve as the emergency organization in charge of coordinating the tourism sector's response during emergencies and disasters. The TEOC should have members from the MOT, the country's hotel and tourism association, the country's tourism authority, police and tour operators. All members of the TEOC should have specific roles, as assigned in tourism sector emergency plans and procedures (see Figure 2 below).

The TEOC should have its command center established in a location that has minimal vulnerability to the most common hazards in the area, quick access routes, reliable communication facilities (including telephones, fax, radio transmitter and receiver, television, and radios with commercial and civil bands and ham radio frequencies), and a back-up power system. The location should also have adequate equipment and furnishings, appropriate transportation, computer equipment, one week's worth of food and medical supplies, and detailed plans of all systems and copies of the emergency plan and other pertinent documentation. There should be 24-hour security provided by the defense or police forces.

[4] Adapted from: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). *The Barbados Tourism Sector Hurricane Plan*. CDERA. Barbados. July 2006. Designed by Arturo López-Portillo.

Figure 2: Coordination of the response from the tourism sector (TEOC structure)



Hotel Command Center (HCC)

Individual Emergency Committees in every hotel should determine beforehand if they will continue operations during an emergency or disaster. When possible, this decision should be based on any available information about the hazard's characteristics (for example the strength of a hurricane) and on the vulnerability of the facilities to that specific hazard.

If the hotel is planning to continue operations, a Hotel Command Centre (HCC) should be established to coordinate operations during and after the impact of specific hazards. The HCC should be in a safe room or area from which the EC

members can coordinate all hotel operations to protect staff and guests, assess damage and needs, and begin rehabilitation and reconstruction activities.

The HCC should have telecommunications equipment and enough supplies for the EC members while they remain there. If there is enough space, there can be a separate telecommunications room, where the telecommunications equipment would be located and from which all messages would be received and sent.

The decision about which members of the EC should remain in the HCC or go there immediately after the ”all clear” should be determined ahead of time by the EC itself. In general, however, at least the Emergency Coordinator and personnel in charge of security, engineering/maintenance and staff and guests should remain in the HCC. The rest of the EC members could arrive after the main impact of the hazard, as the situation allows to.

All these decisions and the description of the operations of the HCC should be detailed in the hotel’s emergency response plans.

For more information on HCCs, please see the sections on hurricane and terrorism response procedures, below.

Coordination Mechanisms

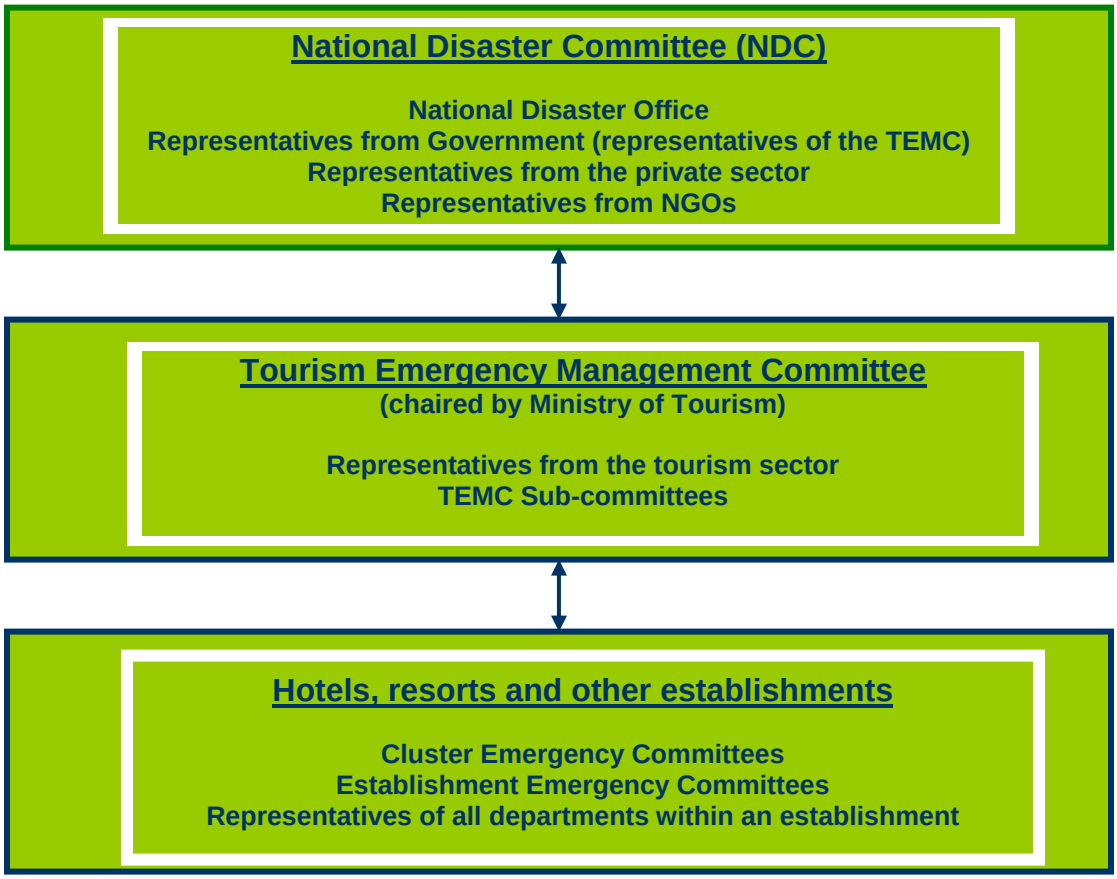
Coordination during normal times

During normal times, when there is no immediate emergency or disaster, the disaster mitigation and preparedness organizations (NDC, TEMC and ECs) should remain in constant communication and coordinate their contingency planning activities (see Figure 3, as well as Figure 1 above). Each organization should ensure that its emergency response plans and procedures are complete, up-to-date and ready for immediate implementation.

The tourism sector can coordinate with the National Disaster Office through participation in NDC meetings for emergency planning. At the same time, the TEMC should ensure that all members of the tourism sector have designed their own emergency response plans and procedures. Within each hotel or tourism venue, the ECs should be ensuring that emergency plans are written and that every department has been involved in the planning process.

The TEMC should ensure that information about decisions made at all levels is communicated to all the sector members, to ensure that activities are effective and compatible with all those implemented by other sectors at different levels.

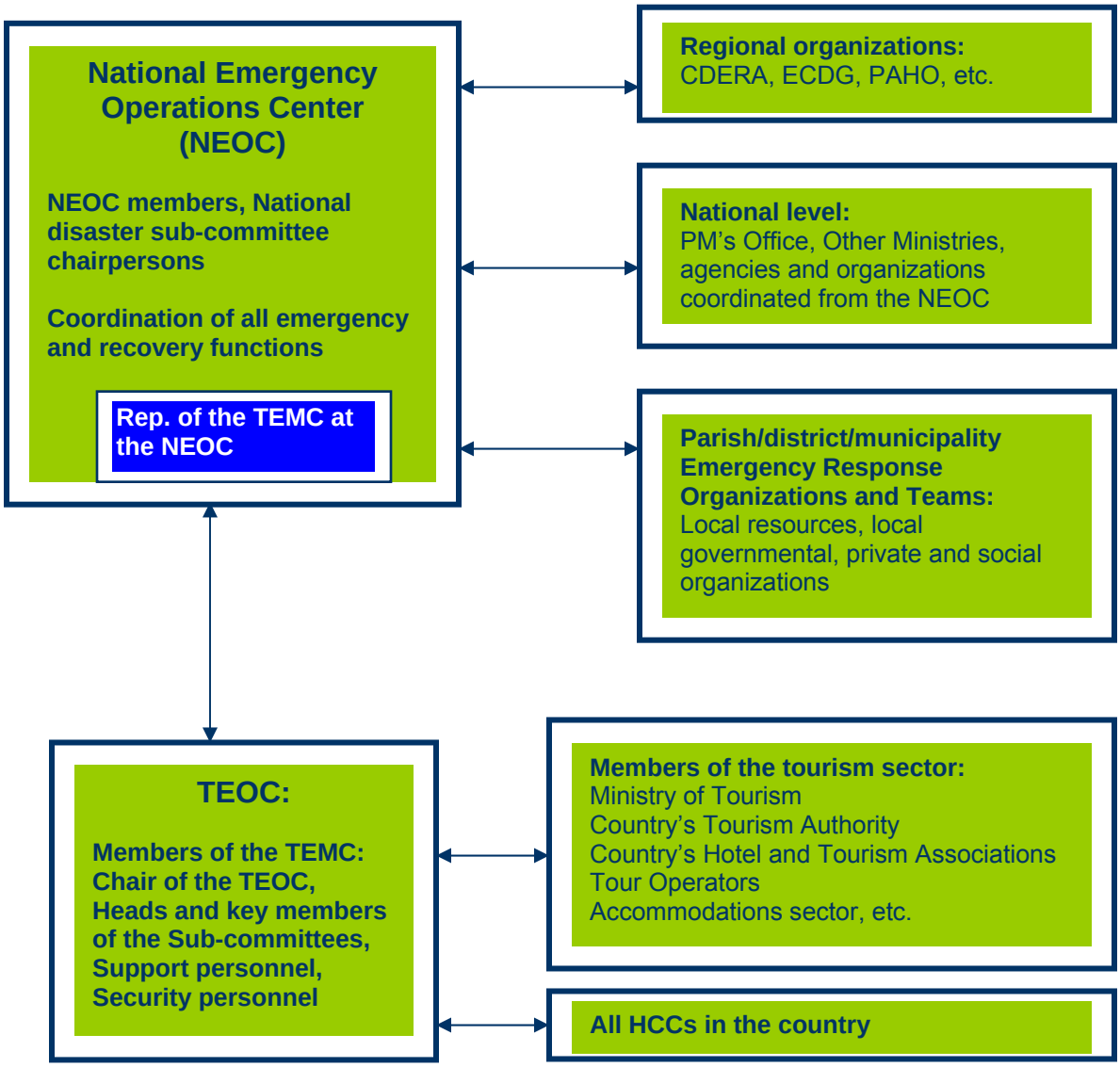
Figure 3: Coordination among disaster mitigation and preparedness organizations during normal times



Coordination during emergencies and disasters

During emergencies and disasters, there should be a coordinated response at all levels, with the NEOC, TEOC and HCCs in constant contact with each other, sharing information to improve decision-making and reporting. The NEOC should also coordinate closely with other national organizations and regional and international response mechanisms (see Figure 4). The activation of all emergency centers and their specific response activities should always be guided by pre-written emergency plans and procedures.

Figure 4: Response and coordination among disaster response organizations during emergency/disaster times[5]



[5] Modified from: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). *The Barbados Tourism Sector Hurricane Plan*. CDERA. Barbados. July 2006. Designed by Arturo López-Portillo.

Networks among tourism establishments

During a critical incident, access to one part of an island may be severed. Tourism establishments may find that the only resources available to them are those, including other nearby tourism establishments, which they can reach by foot or bicycle. In addition to planning for how they should manage emergencies internally, tourism establishments should also determine how they can work together "on the ground" with other tourism businesses within a close geographic area during a critical incident.

Depending on their size, type and location, establishments may be able to offer significant resources to others during a critical incident, such as:

- Facilities (e.g. physical shelter, meeting space, sleeping areas);
- Personnel (e.g. labor, translators, first-aid assistance);
- Equipment (e.g. vehicles, food preparation, computers);
- Supplies (e.g. water, food, electricity, fuel, plastic tarps); or
- Communications (e.g. telephones, email access, mail forwarding).

Other establishments may benefit greatly from having these resources available to them during the preparedness period as well as during an actual response to and recovery from a terrorist event. For example, some small establishments staffed by only a few employees may find it easier to write their own establishment Emergency Plans together instead of on their own. In other cases, one or more establishments may wish to use the same emergency rally point for evacuation, so that their evacuation leaders can more easily communicate with each other. A larger establishment, such as a hotel, may be able plan to work with smaller establishments, such as neighboring restaurants, to provide physical shelter in return for food supplies during response and recovery periods.

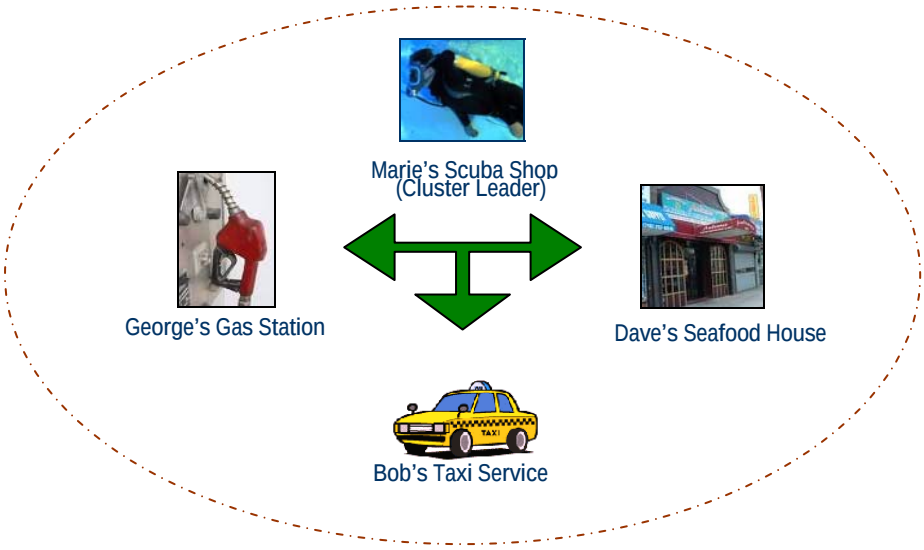
Tourism Emergency Response Clusters

A **Tourism Emergency Response Cluster** (Cluster) is comprised of multiple tourism establishments that are physically located nearby to one another (see Figure 5 for a sample cluster). The members of the Cluster can work cooperatively and collaboratively to assess, organize, combine and control their collective capabilities and resources to prepare for hurricanes and terrorist threats, and to respond to and recover from such critical events.

Each Cluster should establish a **Cluster Committee**, made up of the Emergency Coordinators from each establishment in the Cluster, to facilitate its meetings and activities. One of these Emergency Coordinators should be designated as the **Cluster Leader**, who will interface with the national **TEMC** and appropriate TEMC Sub-committees, chair the Cluster Committee, direct all committee activities and meetings, and coordinate the efforts of the Cluster during critical

incidents. This individual should also be responsible for the administrative aspects of the committee business, including conducting the meetings

Figure 5: Sample Tourism Emergency Response Cluster



Cluster Committee Meetings

Cluster Committee meetings should focus on tourism sector risks, capabilities resources and planning needs relating to critical incidents. These meetings also provide an opportunity for Emergency Coordinators to discuss concerns, especially those that may be unique to their Cluster, such as its specific geographic location. Each Emergency Coordinators should come to Cluster meetings prepared and with all the relevant materials and completed forms, to encourage the achievement of tasks and objectives for each meeting.

The following table shows a recommended schedule for Cluster Committee meetings to complete a process of critical incident planning activities, including collecting various types of internal data by each Emergency Coordinator, building out individual establishment emergency plans and, finally, a collaborative and cooperative effort among Cluster members to combine these elements into a single Cluster Emergency Plan.

Meeting Schedule	Cluster Meeting Tasks	Suggested Materials for Completion
Meeting 1	**Introduction to the Tourism Emergency Response Cluster Committee** • Meet other Cluster establishment Emergency Coordinators • Establish and understand the collective customization process you will engage in together • Share past experiences with critical incidents, and discuss what you wish to accomplish during the customization process. • Select a Cluster Leader	Establishment Information Form (see Form 1 at the back of this manual)
Meeting 2	**Assessing Your Establishment's Infrastructure and Personnel** • Learn how to gather various types of information on establishment facilities, buildings, supplies and equipment, and specific characteristics about employees (multi-lingual, first-aid trained) and complete forms • Discuss the Tourism Site Vulnerability Assessment Tool to obtain information about actual capabilities and resources, as well as existing vulnerabilities to natural threats, terrorism threats and business disruptions	Tourism Site Vulnerability Assessment Tool (see Form 15, Annex A)
Meeting 3 and Meeting 4	**Customizing Your Tourism Stakeholder Emergency Plan** • Using information collected with the Tourism Site Vulnerability Assessment Tool, discuss customizing Establishment Emergency Plans to address the necessary critical actions required to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural threats, terrorist threats and business disruptions. • Access the guidance provided in the rest of the manual. • At Meeting 3, focus on customizing sections on hurricanes • At Meeting 4, focus on customizing sections on terrorism • Discuss how to use available resources in an effective manner.	This manual
Meeting 5	**Assessing Your Cluster's Infrastructure and Personnel** • Upon completing individual Establishment Emergency Plans, work together to gather, discuss and assess the comprehensive information available about the Cluster's collective physical infrastructure and personnel. • Discuss how establishments organized resources in their Establishment Emergency Plans for the purposes of customizing a Cluster Emergency Plan at Meeting 6	Findings from Tourism Site Vulnerability Assessment
Meeting 6	**Customizing Your Cluster Emergency Plan** • Upon gathering all the information about the collective infrastructure and personnel, and discussing how these are organized within Establishment Emergency Plans, customize a Cluster Emergency Plan. • The Cluster Emergency Plan should include sections on how establishments will function cooperatively and share resources during hurricanes and terrorist events	Establishment Emergency Plans
Meeting 7	**Conducting a Tabletop Exercise to Test the Cluster Plan** • Meeting 7 will provide the opportunity for the Cluster membership to conduct a tabletop exercise to evaluate the Cluster Emergency Plan against a simulated scenario.	Final Cluster Emergency Plans