



CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS SCIENCE INSTITUTE

St Eustatius

Midterm evaluation

English summary

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24 December 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

The basis for the establishment of the Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute (CNSI) at St Eustatius is a MoU¹ between the Executive Council of Saint Eustatius and the State secretary of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) of 20 April 2012, and an Additional Covenant² of 22 May 2014. This Covenant was necessary because in the setting up of CNSI, a number of changes were made compared to the MoU (name, site, governance structure). The expectations of the Executive Council and OCW with regard to the CNSI were laid down in a Vision Document, which has been summarised in Annex 1. OCW invited the Board of NWO to take responsibility for CNSI and transferred the budget of € 2,5 mln for 5 years to NWO. At the request of the Board, the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research NIOZ accepted the responsibility for the setting up and management of CNSI. On 1 June 2013 Dr Johan Stapel was appointed director of CNSI. The official opening of CNSI was on 24 April 2014.

On 21 August the NIOZ commissioned Dr John Marks to conduct the Midterm Evaluation. The ToR of for the Midterm Evaluation can be found in Annex 2.

The starting point for the Midterm Evaluation has been a Self-assessment³ prepared by the director of CNSI. In the period end of September to mid-November, 34 persons were interviewed in the Netherlands and 30 in the Caribbean. Between 20 and 29 October interviews were held on St Maarten, St Eustatius en Curacao. Interviewees (Annex 3) were researchers, representatives of Dutch government ministries, members of the Executive Council of St Eustatius and (potential) stakeholders. The interviews were recorded, but it was agreed with interviewees not to publish transcripts.

In Chapter 2 of this report, an overall assessment and the main recommendation on the continuation of CNSI is presented. Chapter 3 deals with the question to what extent CNSI is on track towards meeting the goals formulated in the Vision document. In Chapter 4 the question of the governance is discussed and recommendations are presented to increase its effectiveness. Chapter 5 is the interim advice on the 2nd Call of the NWO research programme Science in the Caribbean and its connection to the CNSI. Chapter 6 makes a recommendation on the final evaluation, which is currently planned to take place in the first half of 2016.

The more than 60 persons who were interviewed were, without exception, gladly willing to make time to discuss CNSI. The frank conversations were very helpful in obtaining a good picture of the functioning of CNSI and its perspectives. They were essential for the development of the recommendations in this Midterm Evaluation. The evaluator is very grateful to his interlocutors. The representation of their views and the translation into recommendations are his sole responsibility. In the interviews several valuable suggestions were made and ideas proposed. When they could not be included in the report itself, they have been summarised in Annex 4, with an indication of who could take action.

¹ [http://www.cnsi.nl/Organisation Documents](http://www.cnsi.nl/Organisation_Documents)

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

2. OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE CNSI

On the basis of more than sixty interviews and his own observations during a site visit, the evaluator concludes that the CNSI is well on track towards meeting the expectations in the Vision document. This Midterm Evaluation is future oriented and addresses which improvements are desirable and possible in order to continue meeting the expectations. These recommendations should be read in the overall positive context of the main recommendation below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The main recommendation to OCW is to decide to continue funding CNSI for further period of five years, starting in 2017. A decision should be taken as soon as possible. Only then can the benefits of the investment in this new research infrastructure be fully reaped. Such a decision by OCW will create a clear and stable perspective for partners considering using CNSI for their purposes. It is recommended that OCW at the same time gives a clear indication about its intentions with the funding of CNSI beyond 2022.

Such a decision by OCW should be connected to an approval by OCW and the Executive Council of St Eustatius of SMART goals for the CNSI to be reached by 2022. A proposal for such SMART goals should be drafted by the governance of the CNSI.

A decision about the continuation beyond 2022 can then be taken on the basis of an evaluation in 2021.

This main recommendation is widely supported by the persons who were interviewed. Many interviewees said that CNSI has had insufficient time to prove itself and to become embedded, both in the Caribbean region and in the Netherlands. Stopping the funding after 2017 would mean a loss of the investment made with in addition a negative impact on the reputation of the Netherlands in the Caribbean region.

2. Should OCW consider stopping the funding after 2017, a quick decision is desirable as well. With high priority the governance should then develop and implement an exit strategy, which currently does not exist. Only then can unnecessary damage and loss of capital be avoided as much as possible.
3. These main recommendations are explicitly connected to the implementation of the recommendations which follow.

3. IS THE CNSI ON TRACK IN MEETING THE GOALS DEFINED IN THE VISION DOCUMENT?

3.1. Operations of CNSI and rationale of its position

The institute CNSI

A vast majority of interviewees consider CNSI a valuable investment in the knowledge infrastructure of St Eustatius and the Caribbean Netherlands, with potential added value for (much) Caribbean research.

Several interviewees question the wisdom of St Eustatius as the location of an institute which is to play a role as a node in a network for the Caribbean region. There are concerns about the logistic complexities and the travel cost. Some people raise this question on scientific grounds.

There is general agreement that locating CNSI on any other island in the Dutch Caribbean would pose other specific limitations and that it would not solve the problem caused by the weak collaborative relations among the islands in the Caribbean Netherlands and the Caribbean lands in the Kingdom.

The majority of interviewees point out that CNSI is really only operational for 1.5 year, that it is on track and that, certainly in the Caribbean context, it should be allowed sufficient time to prove itself. There is unanimity that stopping the funding in 2017 would mean serious capital loss on the investment, which would in addition have a negative impact on the reputation of the Netherlands in the region.

The CNSI staff

The staff of CNSI consists of a director and two locally recruited assistants. The evaluator found a good team spirit and a high motivation. Interviewees in all categories say that the director does things well and that he does the right things. He has good entries on the island and is well known. His flexibility and talent for improvisation are praised.

The director spends about 50 % of his time on the day-to-day running the CNSI. The evaluator considers this too high a percentage, with as a consequence too little time for the strategic tasks and for developing the network of CNSI outside of St Eustatius.

In the interviews it was noted several times that it would help if the director would put more structure and planning in his external contacts (on the island, with strategic partners, with the Steering Group) and would be more explicitly responsive to suggestions and questions.

These remarks should be read in the context of a need for a strategic repositioning of CNSI and the need to set priorities to achieve this.

3.2. Strategic positioning

The ambitions in the role of CNSI, as outlined in the Vision document (Annex 1), are so high that the director will have to set priorities in what he wants to achieve by 2017. For him to be able to do so, first of all OCW should indicate to NWO what should as a minimum be realised. NWO is advised to make a proposal to OCW for realistic goals. In such a proposal at least the following topics should be addressed: what will be the geographical focus?; on what content should CNSI focus? Finally it should be considered whether the funding model fits those ambitions.

Geographic embedding

Achieving an embedding of the CNSI in the Caribbean region is generally considered as an important assignment, especially by interviewees in the Caribbean. There is no unequivocal opinion as to the best way to achieve this. Social scientists and people connected to the government tend to put a focus on the Caribbean Netherlands Kingdom; natural and environmental scientists see advantages in a focus on the NE Caribbean. Currently the CNSI is hardly known outside of St Eustatius and plays little role in the inter-island networks. The collaboration with local organisations on St Eustatius is well on its way.

A choice, for instance, for a focus on St Eustatius, the Caribbean Netherlands, the Kingdom and/or the NE Caribbean, requires different approaches and leads to different priorities. Priority setting is necessary because of the very limited staff capacity for strategic matters (the director) and because of the available budget. In Section 3.3 the local and regional embedding is addressed in more detail.

The CNSI is not widely known in Netherlands' universities and research institutes which could benefit from the CNSI. The same is true for the ministries for which the CNSI could be of interest.

The embedding in the Netherlands' knowledge infrastructure has two components. On the one hand the question arises whether NWO will aim for a bigger role in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom, especially in the context of NWO 2.0, and how the CNSI would fit in such a role. On the other hand the awareness of the existence and the potential value of the CNSI for researchers in the Netherlands should be increased by dedicated actions.

From the interviews, the conclusion can be drawn that the envisaged role of the Steering Group members in promoting the CNSI in their networks has not yet been successful. At the same time, the institutes represented in the Steering Group do utilise the CNSI for their own projects.

Profile

The CNSI has a very broad mandate (covering in principle all scientific disciplines and topics relevant to the Caribbean). However, many people (on the island, in the region and in the Netherlands) perceive the CNSI as an institute primarily for marine biology and nature research.

On St Eustatius as well as in the region, a need is felt for mechanisms to influence the programming of research that is of interest to the region by Netherlands' organisations. The current research, both via NWO and via the ministries, is seen as too much dominated by a Dutch view of what is relevant. People expressed hope that the CNSI could change this. Another role which many people would like to see for the CNSI is in the policy translation of research results for the island authorities.

From the interviews roughly four directions emerge in which CNSI could evolve:

- Concentrate on the role on St Eustatius as a 'research hotel' with (limited) lab facilities.
- Concentrate on areas where CNSI has so far been most successful, i.e. biodiversity and nature research.
- A knowledge institute focused on the questions from St Eustatius and the region which require scientific knowledge, in combination with education.
- Maintain the current broad mandate, with a possible focus on the fostering of interdisciplinary research projects with an outreach to the region through knowledge transfer to policymakers and the population.

In each case the appropriate geographic focus should be chosen.

Funding model

In the current funding model all baseline operating cost of the CNSI are funded from the OCW budget of 500 k€ per year. The CNSI itself has very limited financial and personnel resources to contribute to projects and activities, even if they support the core business of the CNSI. Because of the dollar exchange rate change since the budget level was set, the spending power of this budget has decreased by about 300 k\$.

The expectations in the region with regard to a role of the CNSI in coordinating the articulation of research questions and in the setting up of collaborative research projects, would require a dedicated budget for the funding of such activities, as well as access to research funding.

3.3. Local and regional embedding and outreach, role in agenda setting

Local organisations are pleased with the presence of CNSI, which they consider a welcome strengthening of the knowledge infrastructure on St Eustatius. The services of the island Executive Council and the CNSI find each other easily.

To strengthen the administrative embedding, the *Rijkvertegenwoordiger* suggested the possibility of including the CNSI explicitly in the multiannual plans which are currently being drafted for each of the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands.

According to the Vision document, CNSI should become a node in a Caribbean knowledge network. Such a role could take shape through collaboration with relevant organisations on the other islands in the Kingdom. One can think of collaboration with DCNA and its member nature parks and with SECAR and similar organisations on the other islands. Some people suggested that the CNSI could connect to regional academic structures. One can think of the universities in the Caribbean Kingdom. In a wider regional context one can think of connecting to universities in the NE Caribbean. So far the regional embedding in the Caribbean is weak, despite some initiatives by the director.

The added value of CNSI for the Netherlands as whole could increase significantly if there were more coordination in the research projects in the Dutch Caribbean, funded by the various Netherlands ministries, and if other ministries than OCW were to strengthen their relation with the CNSI.

At present *outreach* to the island is mainly through the Science Cafes. However, the local population of St Eustatius is hardly reached by these Cafes. At the same time interviewees on St Eustatius praise the role of the director as an organiser and moderator of the Science Cafes. The curriculum development project of Naturalis is positively valued. The CNSI could and should play a bigger role in the *outreach* of the projects of the NWO programme Science in the Caribbean. This however requires dedicated (financial) instruments in the programme.

The most important instruments for *outreach* beyond St Eustatius are the website, the de Newsletter and Facebook. This is insufficient to build a reputation as a trusted source of scientific knowledge.

In the structure of the CNSI, an Advisory Panel is foreseen with membership from organisations with relevance for the mission of the CNSI on the six island of the Caribbean Kingdom. This could be an effective mechanism to develop the network role, provided the strategic advice of the Panel is given a key role in the CNSI policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. OCW and the Executive Council of St Eustatius should agree to SMART goals which the CNSI must have attained in 2017. Base the SMART goals on the expectations in the Vision document. The director should prepare a proposal for the Steering Group. Address at least the geographic focus, the scientific focus and the funding strategy. The governance (currently the NIOZ Board), via NWO, decides on the recommendation of the SMART goals to OCW and the island Executive Council.
2. Let the NIOZ Board ask for a proposal for a business plan to realise those SMART goals by 2017, including a strategic budget document. Preparation of the proposal by the director in collaboration with the Steering Group.
3. Create as soon as possible the Caribbean Advisory Panel (see also recommendation 4 in Chapter 4). Give this Panel a formal role in advising the governance and use the Panel to assist in embedding the CNSI in the Caribbean region. The director should prepare a proposal, together with the Steering Group. The formal governance (currently the NIOZ Board) appoints the members.
4. Experiment with a sufficiently diverse Platform to assist in articulating the research needs on St Eustatius. Implementation: the director in consultation with the island representative in the Steering Group.
5. Let the director develop an *outreach* strategy to strengthen the involvement of the local population of St Eustatius in CNSI.
6. Let OCW take the initiative to bring together the ministries with responsibilities in the Caribbean requiring knowledge development, to discuss increasing the synergy of that research through the involvement of the CNSI. Is it desirable to develop a coordinated research agenda? Can the CNSI play a role in its articulation? OCW might consider involving the 'Caribisch Nederland Tafel' of Secretaries General of the ministries concerned.
7. Let OCW explore how the 'Rijkvertegenwoordiger' can be involved in the administrative embedding of the CNSI in the Caribbean Netherlands.
8. Let the Executive Council of St Eustatius make more and better use of the CNSI for its own knowledge needs, as is already foreseen in the MoU.
9. Pay more attention to the embedding of the CNSI in the Netherlands research community. The Steering Group members, including NWO should play a key supporting role in this.
10. The continued availability of a research budget for Caribbean research is an important boundary condition for the long-term viability of CNSI. In this light, continuation beyond the second call of the NWO programme Science in the Caribbean (of course if proven successful) should be considered by NWO and OCW. At the same time, the possibilities for CNSI to play a role in the access to EU funding should be explored more in-depth. For the latter a collaboration of researchers from the Netherlands with researchers from France and the UK could be an important vehicle. It may be worth exploring the possibilities of the ERA-NET instrument. The implementation of these recommendations should be initiated by the director, but assistance of NWO is essential.
11. Because realising the majority of the recommendations mentioned before will require time and considerable effort, it is crucial that OCW decides on the continuation of CNSI after 2017, as is recommended in Chapter 2.

4. GOVERNANCE AND THE COMMITMENTS LAID DOWN IN THE MoU

The evaluator concludes from the interviews that up to now the Steering Group, the NIOZ Board, the Board of NWO and the Earth and Life Sciences Council have demonstrated too little real engagement for ensuring that the strategic goals of OCW for the CNSI and the strategic connection of the programme Science in the Caribbean to the CNSI are met.

4.1. CNSI and Science in the Caribbean: coherent projects

OCW intended the research programme Science in the Caribbean to play a role in building the basis for the scientific activities for which the CNSI was created. However, the Board of NWO delegated the responsibility for the CNSI to the NIOZ Board and for the research programme to the Earth and Life Sciences Council of NWO without ensuring the coherence between the two.

4.2. The legal status of the CNSI and the governance

The NIOZ shaped the CNSI as a project, not as an institute, with a contents determined by the wishes of OCW and NWO. The new NIOZ Board never discussed the strategic aspects envisaged by OCW for the CNSI. The Steering Group is seen by the NIOZ as the formally responsible body for the governance, yet the Rules and Regulations limit the role of the Steering Group to an advisory one. The engagement of the Executive Council of St Eustatius in the CNSI is limited at most, as is recognised by most interviewees from St Eustatius.

4.3. The Steering Group of the CNSI

From the interviews with the chair and members of the Steering Group, the evaluator concludes that they see their role as no more than advisory (without formal obligations). In their view the integral responsibility lies with the NIOZ Board (and not just the responsibility for the operations). They certainly do not consider themselves responsible for the contents and strategy of the CNSI, a role that the NIOZ Board and the CNSI director expect from the Steering Group members.

4.4. The Caribbean Advisory Panel

In the Rules and Regulations of the CNSI, a Caribbean Advisory Panel is foreseen, advising the director in matters related to the policy development, in particular concerning the regional goals and the embedding in local and regional bodies and communities.

The proposed members were recently approached by the director to check their willingness to become involved. The proposed members with whom an interview was held, were enthusiastic about the idea, but had little notion of what would be their role.

4.5. The MoU between OCW and the Executive Council of St Eustatius

The commitments of OCW and the Executive Council of St Eustatius are agreed in the MoU and the 'Aanvullende Convenant'. Almost all commitments have been met. Not yet realised is the commitment by the Executive Council to make 2 fte support capacity available to the CNSI.

It is not clear to what extent the Executive Council has implemented (MoU penultimate bullet):

Het waar zinnig en aangewezen is, via of in relatie tot CNSI bijeen brengen van alle kennisfuncties waarvoor het eilandbestuur nu of toekomstig verantwoordelijkheid draagt en die voor eigen rekening en risico van het Openbaar Lichaam tot stand gebracht moeten worden, waarbij gedacht kan worden aan de verplichtingen die voortvloeien uit de Archiefwet of het Verdrag van Malta.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assign unambiguously the board responsibilities (*bestuurlijke verantwoordelijkheid*) for overseeing the coherence between the CNSI project and the project Science in the Caribbean (action by the Board of NWO).
2. Clarify and assign the board responsibilities (*bestuurlijke verantwoordelijkheid*) for the CNSI, in particular the responsibilities for the strategic aspects and the content (action by the Board of NWO after consultation with the Board of the NIOZ). Aspects to be considered in this context:
 - If the present structure is maintained, at least the roles of the various bodies should be defined unambiguously: the Steering Group either with an advisory role (hence not responsible) or with a Board role (and hence responsible). A Steering Group with an explicitly advisory role cannot have the Board responsibility. In the case of an advisory role of the Steering Group, the NIOZ Board should take full responsibility, not just for the operational aspects of the NIOZ project.
 - The question can be asked whether governance by stakeholders is the most suitable form for an institute with a national (even extending to the whole Kingdom) role, which goes beyond the mandates of the institutes participating in the Steering Group.
 - It would be appropriate for an institute with such an explicitly Caribbean Netherlands role to have a more balanced representation of the Caribbean region in the governance than is the case at present.
 - Investigate simpler and more unambiguous governance models. Simpler because with an annual budget of 500 k€ and 3 staff, the CNSI is a very small institute. More unambiguous because mixing board responsibilities and advice do not go together. A model could be a board of three independent (not stakeholders) professionals, with the qualities and time availability to be able to give strong support to the CNSI director. At the same time it is important to make sure that the valuable and even crucial engagement of the stakeholders is not lost.
3. The legal status of the CNSI as a project of the NIOZ should be revisited. In the present governance, the initiative for this action lies with the NIOZ Board, but it certainly requires consultation with the Board of NWO as the contractor of OCW. The revisiting is linked to governance and operational aspects, as well as to the external image of the profile of the CNSI and also to the possibilities of the CNSI to participate in consortia for project funding outside the marine domain. The NIOZ itself indicates that the broad mission of the CNSI does not necessarily mean that the NIOZ Board could not carry the governance responsibility. Options could be a separate legal status (foundation under local law) with its own Board, for example under the NIOZ Holding or under another umbrella organisation (the new institutes foundation of NWO?). If the broad scientific profile of the CNSI is considered important, the latter option is certainly worth considering.
4. The CNSI Advisory Panel consisting of representatives of relevant organisations on the Caribbean Netherlands islands should be established with high priority. Give this Panel an important role in the drafting of a strategic plan and in the embedding of the CNSI in the region. In the current governance structure, creation of the Advisory Panel is a responsibility of the Steering Group, even though this has only an advisory role! A practical advice to the CNSI director: organise a well prepared strategic meeting of the Panel on St Eustatius. Reimburse the participation cost of the members.

5. ADVICE ON THE 2ND CALL OF THE NWO PROGRAMME SCIENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN

5.1. Introduction

The recommendations which follow are based on an analysis of the relevant correspondence between the ministry of OCW and NWO, the documentation received from NWO concerning the successive steps in the first Call and on interviews with the chairs of the GB-ALW, of the Programme Committee Science in the Caribbean, of the International Proposal Review Committee and with the programme coordinator in the NWO-ALW Office. In addition, researchers in successful projects, as well as unsuccessful applications and stakeholders in the Caribbean region were interviewed.

The ministry intended that the programme would create an important basis for the CNSI activities, that it would address research questions from the Caribbean and that it would contribute to capacity building in the region. The general opinion of those interviewed is that the relation between the programme and the CNSI has been weak. If there is a link in projects, it is more by accident than by design or it is a result of interventions afterwards. The whole process of formulating the text of the Call, the design of the formats for proposal submission, the composition of the Programme Committee and the International Review Panel, as well as the selection and instruction of external referees should be revisited for the 2nd Call.

A positive element of the first Call is that excellent researchers who had not worked previously in the Caribbean were attracted by the programme.

It should be emphasised that strengthening the relation of the programme Science in the Caribbean and the CNSI does not mean that ALL project must make use of the CNSI. Interviewees in the Caribbean suggest that projects should create collaboration among the islands of the Netherlands' Caribbean and focus on valorisation of knowledge for the region. In all cases researchers should be required to investigate whether a useful role for the CNSI can be defined. The value for society of projects from the first call, could be increased by organising a meeting of PIs to discuss first results, the potential for collaboration among projects, as well as exchange ideas for *outreach* en local *capacity building*.

5.2. The second call

NWO-ALW reports that OCW and stakeholders in the Caribbean have indicated that they would like to see more emphasis in the second Call on the applicability of research results in the region and that this could be achieved by closer involvement of institutes for applied research in research projects.

The programme manager of NWO-ALW has indicated that in preparation of the 2nd Call a number of persons in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, among others identified by OCW, have been consulted on themes with relevance for the region. The director of CNSI has also been consulted. He in turn consulted the proposed members of the CNSI Advisory Panel (which does not yet exist officially). The evaluator has spoken with several of the persons who were consulted. It became clear that the perceptions of what was asked are rather diverse. Also the depth of the reflection about the real priority of the themes which were suggested differed. This means that the inputs cannot be considered as THE list of priority themes from the region. A more systematic consultation process should be considered in the future. It has been suggested in several interviews to connect to the UNESCO priorities for SIDS (Small Island Developing States) as a basis for developing collaborative research projects in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SHAPING OF THE SECOND CALL

On the basis of the findings in the interviews and the analysis of the documents, the evaluator makes detailed recommendations for the shaping of the second Call of the programme Science in the Caribbean in the full report. These recommendations are also inspired by his experience in thematic and policy relevant research programmes in a national framework in OCW and ALW and in an international context in ESF, the EC, the French ANR and the Belmont Forum. The recommendations follow the different steps in the process of the 2nd Call. The recommendations assume that the strategic goals of the ministry of OCW for this programme must get a stronger and more explicit translation in the Call.

These strategic goals are summarised by OCW as follows:

- *Promote collaboration among researchers in various parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*
- *outreach and capacity building in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom*
- *relevance for problems on the islands and*
- *role in building a knowledge network, in particular for the CNSI*

These recommendations are addressed to the Earth and Life Sciences Council of NWO, which is responsible for the programme Science in the Caribbean.

1. Theme selection

Design a transparent and clearly structured consultation process in the region to collect ideas for themes to be addressed in the Call. Make sure that representative organisations are involved. Provide feedback on what has been done with the inputs.

In addition detailed recommendations are made on:

2. The text of the call
3. The criteria for the proposal review
4. The proposal submission forms
5. The composition of the International Review Panel
6. The selection and instruction of international referees
7. Instruments in the programme to support the strategic goals of the programme
8. Doing the launch of the Call from CNSI with a video link to the Netherlands, as an opportunity for connecting the programme to the Caribbean region

6. THE MIDTERM EVALUATION AND THE FINAL EVALUATION OF THE CNSI

Originally, the Midterm Evaluation was foreseen to take place in the first half of 2015. A retrospective and prospective final evaluation was foreseen in 2017.

Meanwhile, the ministry of OCW wishes a final evaluation to take place in the first half of 2016, because of the budget planning in relation to a decision on the continuation of CNSI beyond 2017. The period between the present Midterm Evaluation and a final evaluation in the first half of 2016 is so short that it is unlikely that substantial new insights will emerge or that many new persons or organisations to be interviewed will be identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The NWO Board is advised to propose to the ministry of OCW to cancel the final evaluation in 2016. A decision about the continuation of the CNSI after 2017 could then be based on the present Midterm Evaluation.
2. One could consider a limited evaluation in 2016 of the implementation of the recommendations of the Midterm Evaluation. This should be focused on the new strategic orientation of CNSI, the business plan and on the new governance.
3. Support of the director of CNSI in the development of a new strategy and the business plan following from this strategy would be desirable.

Annex 1 Vision document: CNSI expectations

Positioning

1. CNSI positions itself as a sustainable institution at the intersection of research, education and outreach. Where possible and relevant it contributes to policymaking, management and surveillance. The unique geographical location between Europe and the Americas, the richness of culture and nature values and the embedding in the Netherlands' existing political order offers excellent opportunities for the centre to develop into a sustainable, inspiring meeting place and an international centre of expertise in relevant domains.

Operations and relation to the island

2. CNSI intends to give a sustainable socio-economic impulse to Statia and thus contribute to societal values on the island (such as emancipation, security, employment and health)
3. The centre will operate as much as possible as an independent organisation, with a governance suitable to that purpose. This structure must ensure that the island interests are fully taken into consideration in a timely manner and that the interests of research, education and outreach will have a balanced position in the development of the centre.
4. Whenever feasible and fitting in the mission of CNSI, the centre will collaborate with the existing organisations on the island and promote facility-sharing.

Role for the other islands of Caribbean Netherlands

5. CNSI aims to position itself as a node in the Caribbean knowledge network through collaboration with relevant organisations: regional on the north-eastern lesser Antilles (in particular, but not exclusively St Maarten), within Caribbean Netherlands in collaboration with organisations on Bonaire and Saba, and within the Kingdom in collaboration with organisations on Curacao (in particular Carmabi) and Aruba.
6. In addition, the centre will strengthen the collaboration among the islands in the Caribbean in the area of nature conservation, nature education, nature management and nature research. The proposed multifunctional facility will thus be able to contribute to the legal management and surveillance tasks and provide support for remediation activities on the Caribbean Netherlands' islands.

Principal task

7. The principal task of CNSI is to support activities in the area of research, education and outreach. For this, CNSI offers suitable infrastructure to researchers, students, island organisations, inhabitants of the islands and visitors. In this way the centre serves as a workshop with accommodation for researchers, students and visitors.
8. The centre connects research and society and hence hosts permanent and temporary exhibitions in selected topics or supports outreach of knowledge in other ways.

Balance between the interests of Statia and Netherlands' research

9. Statia expects that the activities supported by the centre will bring very practical solutions for very practical problems. It is of utmost importance that the ambitions of researchers and the demands of the island are connected. In the start-up phase the management of CNSI should be very conscious of this and consider it as its primary duty to unite these two strands.

Annex 2 Terms of Reference for the Midterm Evaluation of CNSI

The general ToR for the mid-term evaluation will be:

1. Is CNSI on track towards meeting the goals summarised in the attached Vision document?
 - a. Recommendations for actions to meet the goals in the remainder of the initial five year period
2. Is the governance of CNSI appropriate for supporting the realisation of the goals?
 - a. Recommendations for modification of the governance for the remainder of the initial five year period, in order to increase its effectiveness
3. Is the NWO programme Caribbean Research, announced in the MoU, which had its first Call, sufficiently tailored to being able to 'lay an important foundation for the scientific activities for which CNSI is able to provide the facilities'?
 - a. Recommendations for modifications in the 2nd Call of the programme to improve the tailoring
 - b. Recommendations for CNSI to be (even) more supportive to the NWO programme

The mid-term evaluation will specifically address the following topics:

1. To what extent have the ambitions in the Ambition document (in particular points 2-6) been met?
2. What has been the role of the Steering Group and the NIOZ Board?
3. Are the facilities and operations of CNSI adequate?
4. Are the organisation and staffing of CNSI adequate?
5. How and to what extent has the relation been developed between CNSI and (i) Statia, (ii) Caribbean Netherlands, (iii) the Dutch Caribbean, (iv) the Caribbean and (v) the Dutch scientific community
6. What has been the relation with the relevant Dutch ministries OCW, EZ and I&M
7. What has been the relation with the NWO programme Caribbean Research, in particular the supporting role by and for the CNSI

Annex 3 Interviewees in the Midterm Evaluation of the CNSI

Name	Organisation and position
NWO	
Hans de Groene	General Director NWO/Stuurgroep
Jacob Fokkema	Chair GB-ALW
Josef Stuefer	NWO-ALW/Stuurgroep deputy member
Rob Govers	Chair PC Caribisch Onderzoek
Paul Andriessen	Chair BOC Caribisch Onderzoek
NIOZ	
Harry Baayen	Chair NIOZ Board
Henk Brinkhuis	NIOZ Director/observer Stuurgroep
Peter Smit	NIOZ Controller
Jack Gootjes	NIOZ Projectcontroller
Steering Group	
Corinne Hofman	Archeology/Stuurgroep Chair
Han Lindeboom	IMARES/Stuurgroep
Gert Oostindie	KITLV/Stuurgroep
Raymond Schorno	NWO/Stuurgroep deputy member
Edwin van Huis	Naturalis/Stuurgroep
Jos Rokx	OCW/Stuurgroep
CNSI	
Johan Stapel	CNSI Director
Pepita Cannegieter	CNSI
Masru Spanner	CNSI
Statia	
Gerald Berkel	Lt Governor
Reginald Zaandam	Commissioner
Astrid McKenzie -Tatem	Commissioner
Koos Bartelds	Eilandsecretaris
Louis van Ameijden Zandstra	Griffier Eilandraad
Roy Hooker	Hoofd Directie Economie & Infrastructuur
Anthony Reid	Hoofd LVV
Steve Piontek	Monitoring Officer St Eustatius
Darlene Berkel	Independent Consultant
Walter Hellebrand	Historical Foundation
Teresa Leslie	Health Foundation
Gay Soetekouw	SECAR
Ruud Stelten	SECAR
Jessica Berkel	STENAPA
Hannah Madden	STENAPA

Caribbean Netherlands Kingdom	
Gilbert Isabella	Rijksvertegenwoordiger
Paul Hoetjes	RCN-EZ Bonaire
Kalli de Meyer	DCNA director Bonaire
Glenn Thodé	Rector U van Aruba
Francio Guadeloupe	Rector U of St Maarten
Francis de Lanoy	Rector U van Curaçao
Liesbeth Echteld	Universiteit van Curaçao
Mark Vermeij	CARMABI Curaçao
Jasper de Goeij	CARMABI Curaçao
Adriaan Schier	Curaçao Sea Aquarium
Jan Ebbing	TNO Aruba
Jay Havisier	SIMARC St Maarten
Claire Hooft Graafland	VROMI St Maarten
Netherlands Ministries	
Jasper Dalhuizen	Min EZ
Astrid Hilgers	Min EZ
Guus Schutjes	Min EZ
Luit-Jan Dijkhuis	Min I&M
Aaldrik in 't Hout	Min OCW
Users	
Martin Scholten	IMARES Director
Erik Meesters	IMARES
Martin de Graaf	IMARES
Lisa Bekking	IMARES
Bert Hoeksema	Naturalis
Berry van der Hoorn	Naturalis
Dolfi Debrot	IMARES/Van Hall Larenstein
Marlous Heemstra	Van Hall Larenstein
Fleur van Duyl	NIOZ
Jacintha Ellers	VU Dierecologie
Henk Dijkstra	UU IMAU
Maarten Eppinga	UU Aardwetenschappen
Rosemarijn Höfte	UL KITLV

Annex 4 Suggestions and ideas put forward in the interviews

	Suggestion	Action by
1.	Which lessons can be learnt from the way CARMABI has been embedded on Curacao? Can lessons be learnt from the way CIEE operates on Bonaire?	Director CNSI
2.	Consider strengthening the academic profile of the CNSI by creating a scientist in residence position for a leading scientist on a rotating basis	Steering Group
3.	Use research projects (comparative research or integrating research) to develop connections among the islands in the Caribbean	NWO GB-ALW
4.	A project which could make these connections, is the digitisation and making available in Open Access of the Caribbean book collection of the KITLV.	Director CNSI
5.	There are more and more EU research funds for overseas territories of the EU members states. Explore the possibilities for developing research projects with EU funding together with French and British islands in the Caribbean. Could NWO funding through the programme Science in the Caribbean be used to prepare the road or for co-funding for example in the ERA-NET frame?	Director CNSI and NWO GB-ALW
6.	An example of a regional organisation which could assist developing a regional role for CNSI is the International Association for Caribbean Archaeology IACA (president Jay Havisier)	Director CNSI
7.	Investigate whether there is potential for using the submarine vessel of the Sea Aquarium Curacao for Dutch projects in the NE Caribbean	Director CNSI and NWO GB-ALW
8.	Van Hall Larenstein investigates the possibilities of a minor course Caribbean coastal zone management at the CNSI. Is this a model to follow by other schools? The same for offering trainee posts. The CNSI should then be able to guarantee continuity	Director CNSI and Steering Group
9.	Explore the possibilities of a joint knowledge campus for the CNSI, SECAR and STENAPA and possibly other organisations, making use for example of the building of the former Medical School	Director CNSI
10.	Several interviewees suggested that the CNSI could offer trainee positions to students from St Eustatius who received their academic training elsewhere. In this manner, CNSI could contribute to attracting back higher educated Statians. Such trainee positions could be for priority knowledge projects for the island.	Director CNSI
11.	Develop a homestay programme (researchers staying in the homes of Statian families) for researchers who wish to work on St Eustatius. On the one hand this helps increasing the visibility of CNSI on St Eustatius and on the other hand it contributes to solving capacity problems due to increasing demand for accommodation.	Director CNSI and Executive Council
12.	Analyse the possible consequences of a mixing of roles of the CNSI, in particular between the management of research projects and an independent advisory role	Steering Group
13.	A focus on nature and coastal construction on tropical islands could be of interest as a testing ground and showcase for the Netherlands' construction companies which are active in the tropics. Such knowledge is also of interest for the islands, especially in relation to the impact of climate change. Such a focus must be developed jointly with TNO, NIOZ and Deltares (Topsectoren?)	Director CNSI and Steering Group

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| 14. | Innovative agriculture appears to be an interesting topic for St Eustatius. The ministry of EZ considers this a topic for implementation, rather than a research topic. However, there are serious research questions, in this case which lie in the socio-cultural domain: agriculture is associated with old-fashioned and connected to the slavery past, not with technological innovation. | Director CNSI |
| 15. | The Caribbean Netherlands islands have monitoring obligations in which the CNSI could play a role. These tasks must be financed from the island budgets | Director CNSI and Island Governments Caribbean NL Kingdom |
| 16. | Explore the possible role which NUSTAR could play for the CNSI | Director CNSI |
| 17. | Transfer the educational model which Naturalis is developing for St Eustatius to other islands. | Director CNSI |
| 18. | Utilise the youth foundation MegaD, as well as the primary and secondary schools to involve youths on St Eustatius in the CNSI. | Director CNSI |