

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute

Strategic Plan 2006–2010



INTRODUCTION

CANARI's twenty-year history of researching and promoting participatory processes is well documented in its publications. Yet some of the most rewarding and enduring aspects of its work are difficult to capture in print: a fisherman's sense of pride at helping to map the coral reefs on which his livelihood has depended for more than fifty years; the renewed enthusiasm and self-confidence of a resource user involved in developing a forest policy that he feels is "good... because it is a policy for the resource and for ordinary people"; or a breakthrough in mutual understanding between parties in conflict over resource use or the way an organisation is run.

Such examples reinforce CANARI's core belief that a wide range of stakeholders can play an effective role in managing the natural resources of the Caribbean, once avenues for equitable participation can be established. Through its applied research and analysis, capacity building and other dissemination of lessons learned, CANARI has worked in collaboration with government, private sector and civil society stakeholders to address two interrelated challenges: designing innovative forms of governance that facilitate equitable and effective participation; and managing the region's natural resources to meet increasing human needs.

CANARI's recent review of its strategic objectives for 2002-2005 indicates that the role of participation is better understood by natural resource managers, and participatory processes are increasingly used to develop and/or are enshrined in policies and legislation affecting natural

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resource management.¹ However, there is a continuing need to research and quantify the socio-economic and environmental benefits being derived from participation. And there is frequently still a gap between policy and practice, with government and civil society resources often too overstretched to effectively lead or play a full part in participatory processes. The need for focused and strategic action remains critical.

In developing its strategic plan for the period 2006 – 2010, CANARI solicited and received input from many of its regional and international partners representing a variety of sectors and disciplines. They have helped both to review the impacts of CANARI’s past activities and to suggest areas of focus for the future. In determining its core areas of activity over the next three to five years, CANARI has sought both to address the current and emerging challenges which the region faces and to build on its existing body of research and the strengths and experience of its staff, Board and Associates.

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

For many people around the world, the Caribbean conjures up visions of paradise-like islands with sun, sea, sand and laid-back locals. But this image, perpetuated by how the region’s tourism product is sold, belies the geo-political, social, economic, linguistic and environmental complexities of the Caribbean and ignores the vulnerabilities that come from these small island states’ openness to external economic and environmental shocks. Indeed, while images of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 are seared in the minds of most television viewers around the world, few saw on their screens the equally devastating impacts of Hurricane Ivan on Grenada or Jamaica a year earlier.

¹ A copy of the Strategic Review report is available from CANARI’s website at <http://www.canari.org>

Interdependence between economic activity and the environment

There is a high degree of interdependence between economic activity and the natural environment in the Caribbean. The narrow resource base means that there is often competition, and sometimes conflict, between seemingly divergent interests and uses, such as conservation and resource use or livelihood strategies and economic development. This competition is taking place against the backdrop of the continued deterioration of the region's natural resource base, with escalating development pressure being placed on marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Integrated planning and management

There are few examples in the Caribbean of effective integrated planning or the development of National Sustainable Development Strategies. Inter-sectoral dialogue remains weak, with planning at both the national and regional level continuing to take place largely along sectoral lines.

Poverty and inequality

The imperative for economic development stems from the need to establish stable economies and do away with persistent pockets of poverty in the region. The adoption of national average income levels as the main poverty indicator relegates the Caribbean to a low level of global priority and masks significant levels of poverty, particularly in rural areas. But for people in the region, poverty and its effects are all too real. For example, oil and gas-rich Trinidad and Tobago, the United States' largest supplier of natural gas, has consistently reported well over 30 per cent of its 1.2 million people living on less than US\$2 per day. The widening gap between the rich and the poor, in Trinidad and elsewhere in the region, is widely considered to be a contributory factor in the rapid increase in serious crime over the past decade.



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Threats to rural livelihoods

The decline of traditional agriculture in the face of global trade liberalisation has exacerbated rural poverty. Few viable sustainable alternatives for rural livelihoods have been implemented to date, whether in new niche agricultural markets or other sectors such as community tourism. While most countries continue to rely on tourism as their main engine of growth, both 9/11 and the increased incidence of natural disasters have highlighted the fragility of the sector.

Vulnerability to natural disasters

Climate change is increasing the region's vulnerability to natural disasters. But in many islands, preparedness for natural disasters remains relatively weak and there is low, but growing, appreciation of the value of natural ecosystems in mitigating impacts of natural disasters, such as the coastal protection function of mangroves. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and placing it within strategies to address poverty are much discussed, but there are few explicit examples of policies or institutions that have effectively done so.

Natural resource management and poverty reduction

Although the links between natural resource management, sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction are strong, they are not necessarily straightforward and are often poorly understood. There is little regional, national or local research in this area. One perception is that poverty is a root cause of environmental degradation in the region, but CANARI's research has demonstrated that this is not necessarily the case.² Environmental degradation, can exacerbate poverty. And access to resources doesn't automatically translate into the capacity to use them for economic gain.

² Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI). 2003. The sea is our garden: a report on a study of institutional and technical options for improving coastal livelihoods in Laborie, Saint Lucia. CANARI, St. Lucia. CANARI technical report no. 322: 146pp

Research and development

Research relevant to Caribbean development is being conducted both within and outside the region but is frequently inaccessible and/or not applied in decision-making. Development decisions are also taken without the necessary baseline data to assess their impacts. Research within the region is insufficiently co-ordinated resulting in both duplication and gaps.

Public advocacy and awareness

Public awareness of the potential impact of environmental degradation on livelihoods, the provision of environmental services and the wider economy remains limited in spite of an increased emphasis on environmental awareness programmes. In the absence of public pressure, economic development projects continue to be approved with inadequate regard for environmental and livelihood impacts.

Regional responses

Regional efforts to address the challenges of sustainable development have included a proliferation of national and regional commitments to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Specific actions include the adoption of the St George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Caribbean states have also recently renewed their commitment, at both national and regional level, to implementing the 2005 Mauritius Strategy which superseded the largely unimplemented 1994 Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). And with the increasing adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a framework for development, states are using the global poverty reduction agenda as the context for their development efforts. For the MDGs to work for the Caribbean, however, they need to be adapted to the region's reality, and this includes addressing the environmental challenges that have an impact on poverty.



While poverty and the environment may be on the regional agenda, few countries currently have the organisational or institutional capacity to fulfil all their MEA obligations and the region as a whole is stretched to fulfil its international commitments.

Both the formal processes of regional integration, leading to the inauguration of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) in January 2006, and the less formal exchanges between civil society actors catalysed by CANARI and others, have contributed to some improvement in information exchange and collaboration within the region. However, regional collaboration remains an underutilised approach and there is scope for much more to be done.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Why is participation needed?

Participation can lead to better management by facilitating the inclusion of locally-based knowledge and techniques. Participatory processes can contribute to more sus-

tainable and durable solutions and reduce environmental degradation by identifying and bringing in a wide range of concerns. Additionally, participation can build ownership and responsibility, making it easier to mobilise support for interventions. The transformative nature of participatory processes can contribute to and meet broader social development objectives.

Meaningful participation of stakeholders is fully achieved when all stakeholders who have rights to, interests in, and formal and informal responsibilities for a natural resource have access to avenues for their equitable and effective participation in decisions about the use and management of the resource.

Participation and livelihoods

Participation can enhance livelihood security. The concept of “livelihoods” encompasses more than just the economic means to earn a living and in particular is taken to include access to natural, social, human, physical and financial assets. A sustainable livelihoods approach puts people at the centre of development strategies and focuses on influencing natural resource management policies and institutional arrangements in support of a poverty reduction agenda.

Institutions for participatory natural resource management

Decisions about the use and management of natural resources often involve trade-offs between competing uses and values and negotiation between conflicting claims, necessitating institutional responses at various levels. Institutions include both formal and informal interactions between individuals and groups in society.

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Institutions include:

- the stakeholders (individuals and organisations) who play a role in the use and management of a natural resource;
- the relationships between the stakeholders;
- the laws and the policies that govern the stakeholders, their interactions and the natural resource; and
- the practices of the stakeholders.

CANARI'S VISION

- A socially cohesive Caribbean region with a reinvigorated sense of community and collective responsibility for its natural and cultural assets, forged through equitable participatory processes of visioning, decision-making and management.
- Institutions, policy and practice which reflect a Caribbean model of development based on sustainable use of natural resources to meet the livelihood needs and aspirations of Caribbean people.

MISSION STATEMENT

CANARI is a regional non-profit organisation whose mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing the natural resources critical to development.

CANARI seeks to achieve its mission through:

- applied and action research on, and analysis, monitoring and evaluation of, innovative policies, institutions and approaches to participation in and governance of natural resource management;
- sharing and dissemination of lessons learned, including capacity building; and
- fostering partnerships, particularly those that build on regional assets and talents and contribute to closer regional cooperation.



PROGRAMME FOCUS

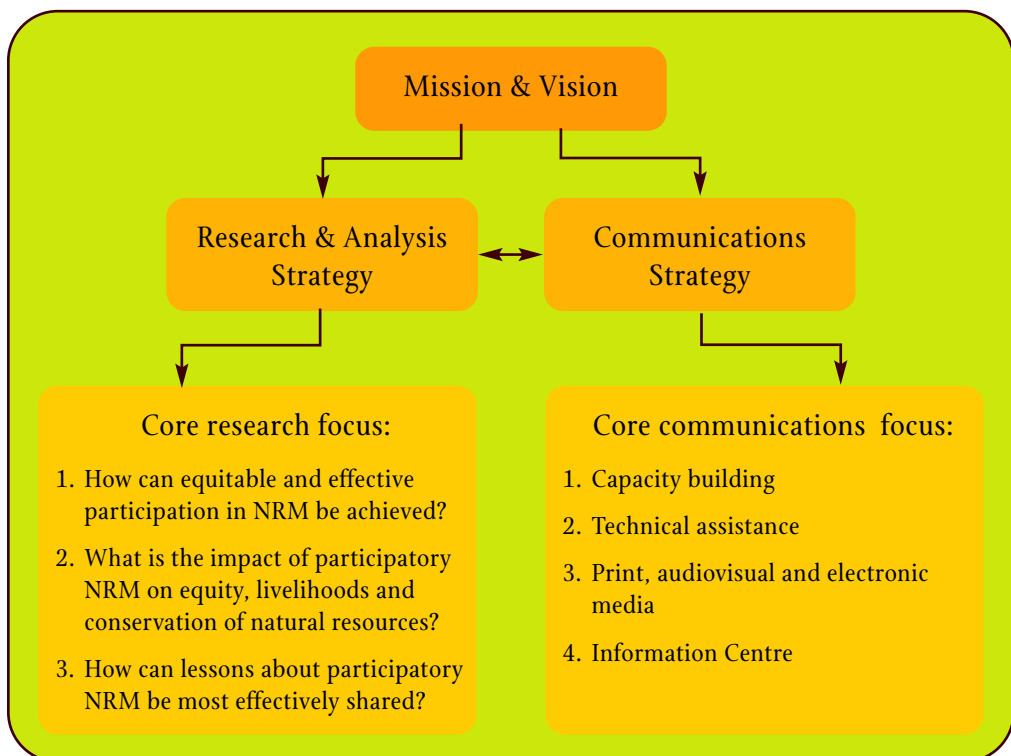
Programme areas

CANARI's programmes address participatory natural resource management (NRM) through two main programme areas:

1. Research and analysis; and
2. Communications, notably sharing and dissemination of lessons learned.

The structure of CANARI's proposed programme areas for 2006 – 2010 is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: CANARI's main programme areas & specific areas of focus.



CANARI's research and analysis of the application of participatory NRM will focus particularly in the sectors of:

- reducing vulnerability and adaptation to natural disasters and climate change;
- integrated management of natural resources at the ecosystem level (including watershed management and coastal zone management);
- optimising the livelihood benefits from protected areas (including Biosphere Reserves);
- sustainable land management;
- use and management of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs);
- community-based tourism that capitalises on natural resource assets;
- integrating poverty and environmental concerns into the development and implementation of National Sustainable Development Strategies; and
- understanding the poverty-environment nexus.

Key cross-cutting elements of the research will include:

- creation of strong, sustainable and effective civil society organisations and networks;
- the role of the private sector;
- the role of women and youth;
- integrating traditional and scientific knowledge;
- new technologies that facilitate participatory NRM, such as participatory Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping; and
- participatory research, including monitoring and evaluation.

Core Research Focus

CANARI has three core research questions that guide the development of its research programme:

1. How can equitable and effective participation in natural resource management best be achieved?

This programme area seeks to address the institutional, governance and capacity requirements for participatory NRM through examining questions such as:

- what are the components and indicators of institutions that support effective and sustainable participatory NRM and how do they interact and evolve?
- what are the barriers to, and facilitating factors for, adoption of participatory approaches to NRM?
- what capacities (including skills and methods) do stakeholders require to engage effectively in institutions that support effective participatory NRM?
- how can inter-sectoral collaboration within the public sector and between the public sector and the private sector and civil society be strengthened to improve integrated planning and management of natural resources?
- how can regional and international commitments facilitate the development of livelihoods and conservation of natural resources at national and local levels?
- how can participatory approaches be integrated into the policies and operations of institutions?
- how do participatory approaches affect the development and evolution of institutions?

2. To what degree does participatory natural resource management:

- a. facilitate equitable decision-making about priorities and trade-offs?**
- b. improve livelihoods?**
- c. contribute to conserving natural resources?**

Participatory and collaborative approaches have a role to play in facilitating equitable decision-making about priorities and trade-offs between competing uses of natural resources. However, there is still inadequate research on the relationship between different types of participatory processes and institutions and their impact on equity and decision-making

Although some progress has been made in understanding the social, economic and environmental impacts of participatory approaches to NRM, more research is needed to quantify the impacts of various types of participatory arrangements on both livelihoods and the natural resources.

A better understanding of all these relationships will advance the assessment of what types of participatory arrangements best facilitate equitable decision-making about NRM to optimise benefits to livelihoods and the environment.

Areas of focus include:

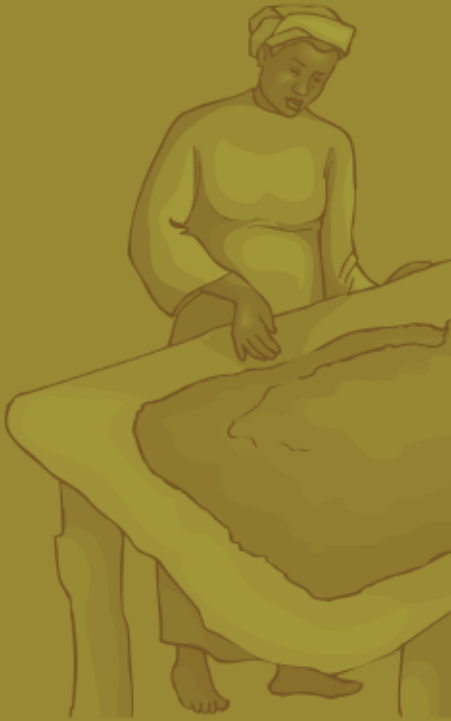
- the application of environmental economic tools such as the valuation of environmental services;
- the development of criteria and methods to measure equity and impact in non-economic terms; and
- the use of participatory research methodologies in conducting impact assessments.

3. How can lessons learned about participatory natural resource management and development be most effectively shared to influence decision-making?

This research area will focus on analysing who are the key target audiences for the findings from CANARI's research and on determining the most effective approaches in order to influence decision-making and practice. It will involve finding strategies and appropriate media to share the complex lessons learned about participatory NRM to a wide range of audiences. The communications research will directly inform CANARI's communication strategy and should also be of value to other organisations in the region. The communications research will be conducted as action research, in that it will be used to continuously adapt and refine CANARI's communication tools and methods.

In this programme area, specific activities under consideration include:

- evaluation of the longer-term impact of CANARI's communications activities, including training, technical assistance and small grants programmes, website and publications;
- exchange of lessons on process of implementing a small grants programme;
- exploration of the value of, and avenues for, certification of its training programmes; and
- review of existing CANARI methods and tools.



Core Communication Focus

CANARI will develop a comprehensive communication strategy to share and disseminate lessons learned to all its target audiences. This communication strategy will focus on the following areas to build on CANARI's existing strengths and develop new approaches.

1. Capacity building

- a. Training:** CANARI will continue to offer regional, national and community-level interactive workshops on methods and tools for participatory NRM. These have the important added benefit of promoting and catalysing regional, national and local networking and collaboration among participants. Target audiences for this type of capacity building will be decision-makers at the policy and technical level in government, the private sector and civil society. CANARI's training programmes are generally conducted in English with provision of multi-lingual staff to support non-native English speakers whenever possible.
- b. Study visits:** Hands-on field experience of participatory NRM continues to be an effective way to share lessons. CANARI will facilitate study and exchange visits between innovative organisations and/or to relevant case study sites around the region. Community-based organisations, as well as stakeholders from government, the private sector and civil society, will be targeted.
- c. Small grants:** The provision of small grants has been found to be an effective way to catalyse and implement participatory projects in the Caribbean. Projects have included facilitating national participatory policy development processes, facilitating participatory strategic planning in government or civil society organisations, strengthening civil society governance and networks, and seed funding for community-based initiatives.

2. *Technical assistance:* CANARI will continue to play an important role in assisting organisations and institutions in the region through the provision of facilitation services on a short-term project basis, ranging from policy development processes to one-off workshops or strategic planning exercises. Such work will be undertaken when it falls within and contributes to the achievement of CANARI's mission and vision.

3. *Print, audio-visual and electronic media:* CANARI will continue to disseminate lessons through various types of print and audio-visual material including technical reports, case studies, guidelines, policy briefs, brochures and information sheets. Subject to the availability of funding, these materials will be translated into other languages of the region.

The increasing accessibility of information technology has made electronic media an effective avenue for disseminating information to a wide range of target audiences. CANARI will utilise its website to disseminate its publications and other information and explore the use of e-lists and virtual discussion fora as additional mechanisms to facilitate information exchange.

4. *Information Centre:* CANARI will continue to develop a specialised information centre on participation, development and natural resource management in the Caribbean. The materials will be available to its target audiences and will be a research and information resource for the region.

Geographic Focus

CANARI's programme focus will remain the islands of the Caribbean. In selecting case studies for research and analysis, attention will be paid to their relevance to current programme priorities and their potential to yield lessons for the region as a whole.

STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Legal Status

CANARI is a non-profit organisation registered in St. Lucia, St. Croix and Trinidad and Tobago, with its main office in Trinidad. It has 501(c) (3) status in the United States and charitable status in Trinidad and Tobago. The legal governing body is a Board of Directors. Elected Board members hold the positions of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

Internal Governance

In 2001, CANARI established an experimental internal operating structure, the Partnership, designed to more effectively leverage the collective skills of elected Board members and senior staff and improve the working relationship between the two groups. Under the Partnership structure, Board members are designated as “Elected Partners”, the Executive Director as “Managing Partner”, and senior technical staff with management responsibilities can be appointed as “Staff Partners.”

Partners have collective responsibility for oversight of the Institute and for ensuring the appropriate use of the Institute’s funds. Partners are authorised to represent the Institute with the approval of the Managing Partner. CANARI will continue to test and refine the Partnership concept.

CANARI has also created the position of Associate for individuals who have a strong commitment to CANARI’s mission, have previously been staff or Partners or who have worked closely with CANARI, and whose expertise adds value to the project team.

In addition to Staff Partners, CANARI employs technical, professional and administrative staff to support its pro-



programme as needed. Every effort is made to adopt a team-based approach that fosters linkages between programme areas and encourages the participation of all staff in programme planning and implementation. CANARI has a strong commitment to being a continuous learning organisation and encourages staff both to develop new programme areas which reflect their individual interests and to pursue formal programmes of training and development.

Strategic Alliances

CANARI's strategic alliances with other institutions and organisations – international, regional, national and local – further expand its capacity to carry out its mission. Such alliances, which encompass both formal partnerships and informal collaboration, enhance the quality of research in the region, reduce duplication and optimise the use of limited human and financial resources.

CANARI's partners include academic institutions; multi-lateral and bi-lateral institutions; international, regional and national NGOs; community-based organisations; and individual consultants.

Funding

CANARI's programmes are supported by a diverse funding base, including grants from multi-lateral and bi-lateral institutions and private foundations. CANARI supplements its grant funding through training fees and short consultancies that are consistent with its vision and mission. Over the next five years, CANARI would like to develop an endowment fund to further secure its financial stability and ability to pursue the type of regionally-relevant, independent research on which its reputation is based.



CANARI is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for over 20 years.

Our mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing the natural resources critical to development.

Our programmes focus on research, sharing and dissemination of lessons learned, capacity building and fostering regional partnerships.

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