

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute Strategic Plan 1996-2005

VISION



The challenge is development. In the insular Caribbean, as indeed in any other part of the world, the urgent task is to shape and give life to a form of development that is equitable, just and sustainable.

Natural resources are critical to this process of development for economic, social and cultural reasons. They provide goods and services which are essential to human survival and economic growth, and the relationship between people and their natural milieu shapes many essential aspects of social organisation and cultural expression. Beyond its direct benefits to human societies, nature also has its intrinsic value. The conservation and management of natural resources are therefore an economic, social, ecological, cultural and moral imperative.

A wide range of policies and instruments is needed to achieve the goals of sustainability and equity. Central among these is participation, defined as a process of planning and decision-making which facilitates dialogue among all concerned parties, and which leads to a more equitable distribution of power among them. Participation is needed to ensure that planning processes benefit from local and popular knowledge, respect and build upon traditional systems, integrate resource management efforts into their larger context, improve effectiveness and efficiency, and contribute to broader goals of community empowerment and development.

Participatory processes of planning and decision-making can lead to the definition and adoption of collaborative forms of management, where the authority and the responsibility are effectively shared among state agencies and community institutions. Collaborative management, or co-management, as it is called, is particularly appropriate to resources which are held or may have historically been managed under some form of common property regime, namely forests, seas, rivers, coastal zones, wildlife and rural landscapes. In most instances, the

management of these resources supports, and benefits from, collective action at the community level and collaboration between the various concerned parties.

But human institutions, particularly those at the local level, are restricted by processes of state control and by the dominance of large market forces which discourage collective action. There are many factors which now threaten social structures and prevent the participation of civil society in the development process. In the face of such disintegration, there is a need to rebuild a sense of community, to restore social cohesion, to protect cultural integrity, to raise a sense of ownership and control over the processes of development, and to strengthen individual self-esteem.

The region is therefore faced with two converging challenges, the challenge to manage natural resources for sustainable use to meet growing human needs, and the challenge to design and implement new modes of governance which enhance community participation, personal self-esteem and collective action. These challenges converge, because participation and collaboration can make natural resource management more effective, and because the management of natural resources provides an ideal terrain for the promotion of collective action, the rebuilding of communities, and the creation of meaningful partnerships.

Over the past decades, there has been a growing consciousness of environmental issues and of their relevance to human development in the Caribbean, and there is now an acceptance of the need for participation in all the processes of development. The context is, in many respects, now favourable for the adoption of policies and measures which can lead to increased participation, enhanced collaboration, and effective resource management for sustainable use.

There are, however, a number of factors which militate against the acceptance of these policies and measures, and there is a danger that a number of influences, many of them external, could distract the region from some of its most pressing priorities. We must also be concerned that concepts and principles are not always translated into action, and that the real implications of sustainable development may not be accepted by all key actors.

There is therefore a demand for concrete responses, and for a conceptual framework which can guarantee that these responses meet the broader objectives of sustainability, equity and justice. There is an urgent need for action, and an imperative for those who wish to support that action to be strategic and focused. Starting from the real experiences of Caribbean peoples and institutions, there is a need for new policies, and there is a need to reconcile policy and practice.

In all these efforts, as indeed in any other field of human endeavour in the Caribbean, there is also an imperative to build on regional assets and talents, to develop closer links and forms of cooperation, to cross the borders of geography and history that have prevented closer integration. All regional initiatives, however modest they may be, must embrace this vision of a strong, united and cohesive region.

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a non-governmental environmental organisation with a long history of service to the region, and with specific interest and extensive experience in the identification and promotion of participatory and collaborative forms of natural resource management. Its achievements and its resources make it well suited to build on the region's diverse and rich experiences in order to address, in a focused and strategic manner, some of the most critical issues of environmental management and development that the region faces.

DIRECTIONS FOR CHANGE



In order for the region to realize this vision of participation and collaboration in its development, through and for the sustainable use of natural resources, fundamental changes have to occur at all levels, and in a number of ways:

- all sectors of society must have a better understanding of the role of participation and collaboration in natural resource management;
- governments and other institutions must make greater use of participatory processes in policy development, planning, and management;
- institutions in the region must improve their human, technical and organisational capacities to implement collaborative and participatory arrangements;
- institutions committed to information exchange, participation and collaboration in natural resource management in the region must work together;
- public policies which support participation and collaboration in natural resource management must be widely adopted.

Policy reform is therefore critical, both as a factor and as a product of change. The ingredients and indicators of participation and collaboration in processes of decision-making and management include the following:

- intentional and systematic consultation with civil society and all concerned interest groups in the assessment of needs and issues, and in the formulation of policy;
- provision of legal and economic incentives to encourage the direct involvement of resource users and other stakeholders in the management of resources;
- establishment of a legal framework which facilitates and guarantees consultation in decision-making, the option of vesting some of the authority for management in non-governmental and community institutions, access to resources, and representation of stakeholders in management institutions;

-- creation of conditions favourable for the development and strengthening of community institutions and organisations, through dissemination of information, financing, transfer of technology, cultural action and group formation;

-- adoption of institutional structures that support the sharing and decentralisation of authority, that are transparent and that allow flexibility in the formulation and implementation of management decisions;

-- integration of environmental policies into a broader policy framework guided by the principles of environmental sustainability, equity, social justice and cultural integrity.

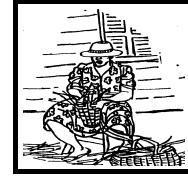
MISSION

The mission of CANARI is to create avenues for the equitable participation and effective collaboration of Caribbean communities and institutions in managing the use of natural resources critical to development.

TIME FRAME

The strategic plan has been formulated for a period of ten years, beginning in 1996, and is implemented through a series of short-term programmes.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME GUIDELINES



To ensure that the programme remains focused, that the activities contribute fully to the mission, and that the Institute builds on its strengths and advantages, the development of the institution and its programme will be governed by the following strategic principles:

Programme

The programme of the Institute will be:

- driven by the mission;
- centred on the demonstrable results of multi-disciplinary research that is based on concrete experiments;
- oriented towards policy development and reform in support of greater community empowerment.

Collaboration

The Institute will cultivate a network of partners and collaborators to facilitate the implementation of its programme and to build a constituency of support for its mission.

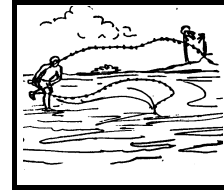
Geographic scope

The Institute will serve the entire insular Caribbean, and programme activities will be designed to encourage the recognition of common issues and problems and to facilitate the sharing of technologies, ideas, and experience among all the countries of the region, regardless of language, cultural heritage or political status.

Institutional development

The Institute will use its own operations and development as a subject and object of its research and advocacy.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE



The central aim of the programme is to foster the development and adoption of policies that support increased participation and collaboration in managing natural resources. The starting point is research and analysis, in order to understand the institutional arrangements, skills, technologies, support mechanisms, and processes of policy formulation and reform required for the adoption of participatory and collaborative approaches. The knowledge gained from this analysis is used to promote policies, through a systematic process of advocacy. The programme of the Institute is structured in such a way that the links between its three elements, namely applied research, analysis, and advocacy, are reinforced. Mechanisms for doing this include a staffing structure which encourages programme integration, and activities that cut across the three programme elements.

For each programme period, specific objectives and questions will be identified and coherent work plans developed, detailing the focus and range of activities to be carried out during the period. The following structure is used in the preparation of programmes and workplans.

Applied research

The goal of CANARI's applied research is to define the interventions required to achieve effective management at an optimal level of participation in any given situation. To meet this goal, the Institute endeavours to understand:

- a. the relationship between the level and form of participation in management and the effectiveness of management;
- b. the economic, ecological, organisational, cultural, technical and policy factors and conditions which shape the level of participation in a given management regime; and

c. the factors and conditions that result in or contribute to change in the level of participation in management, whether positively or negatively.

The Institute recognises that the most appropriate and effective form of management varies, from centralised management to community management, according to specific conditions. Applied research interventions that stimulate change in the management regime make it possible to understand the mechanisms which can be used to enhance participation in management, as well as the methods and criteria that are most appropriate for assessing the effectiveness of management.

Most of CANARI's applied research is carried out through a series of field cases from the region, selected on the basis of their ability to yield relevant information and lessons. These cases must have the potential for the formulation and implementation of management plans and approaches which have community involvement, government support, and the collaboration of other relevant institutions. The number of cases will be limited, with each case explored over the longest possible time frame following a clearly defined research plan which includes the following elements:

- fieldwork by the Institute and its partners in collaboration with appropriate groups and institutions;
- management and analysis of data;
- dissemination of results, both to the participants in the case and more widely;
- development of management plans incorporating the results of the research;
- assessment of the impacts of the management intervention on the resource, the user groups, and policy.

Some of the key questions to be examined in the field cases include the following:

- effectiveness of the management regime, particularly in relation to the sustainability of resource use and to the level of participation and collaboration;
- ecological, social and economic impacts of existing use and management regimes;

- optimum level of exploitation, and appropriate form of resource use;
- evolution of popular perceptions of management issues;
- impacts of management interventions on the biological status of the resource and the socio-economics of its use;
- forms of resource user representation and mechanisms of participation;
- roles of the various actors and stakeholders, and mechanisms available to identify and strengthen these roles;
- strategies and interventions for conflict resolution;
- impact of management interventions on policy formulation and decision-making.

Analysis

This programme element uses the results of CANARI's applied research, as well as the experience of other experiments in participatory and collaborative resource management from the region, as the basis for the development of the tools needed to achieve the vision of this Strategic Plan. These tools are of two types - technical (procedures and skills) and institutional (policies and legislation).

The activities within this component depend largely on comparative studies that test policies, institutional arrangements and skills in different situations and conditions. In addition to the Institute's own cases, the comparative approach demands an extensive and in-depth knowledge of other experiences in participatory resource management in the region, and the application of similar methods of analysis to ensure that results are indeed comparable.

Design and testing of management procedures and skills: The lessons and experiences of field research, as well as the recommendations from surveys and assessments of training needs, are used to identify the skills and techniques needed to implement collaborative management and participatory planning. Experience indicates that the areas in which new skills and techniques are needed include the following:

- resource assessment and monitoring;
- assessment of popular perceptions of management issues;
- public education, mobilisation and communication;
- mediation and conflict resolution;
- integration of social issues and factors, including gender;

- formation and monitoring of groups, and understanding of group dynamics;
- improved and sustainable use of resources;
- evaluation.

Policy analysis: The purpose of CANARI's work in this domain is to define the policy measures and policy formulation processes that can support and increase collaboration and participation. This is achieved through a range of case studies and analyses, including seminars and conferences, focusing on the following elements and steps:

- description and analysis of current policy contents;
- study and analysis of policy formulation processes;
- identification of the conditions favourable and unfavourable for participation and collaboration;
- comparative evaluation of management effectiveness, utilising cases developed in this programme as well as other management activities and interventions from the region;
- design and testing of policy measures.

Advocacy

The third major element of the Institute's programme is the advocacy of participatory processes and collaborative arrangements in natural resource management, based on the research and analysis activities described above. This advocacy takes a number of forms and is directed at a wide range of audiences.

The term "advocacy" is used here in a very broad sense, to include all actions which build a foundation for the acceptance and use of participation and collaboration in the management of natural resources. These actions can be categorised as follows:

Information: The Institute collects, manages and disseminates information on subjects and issues related to its mission, based on the results of its own research and analysis, and on the research and experiences of others.

Capacity-building: CANARI transfers the skills and techniques for participatory management developed through its research and analysis, to

those institutions and individuals in a position to use them, including the business and commercial sectors.

Constituency building: Through the development of active partnerships with institutions that share CANARI's vision and support its mission, the Institute establishes a core constituency for participatory and collaborative management.

Promotion: The Institute actively and consistently champions policies, concepts and methods for participation and collaboration, in appropriate public fora.

Direct action: In its field projects and its partnerships, and through the provision of technical advice and assistance, the Institute directly supports initiatives in participatory planning, decision-making and policy reform.

In order to support the development both of participatory approaches on the ground and of policy reform at the level of the state, advocacy activities must be directed simultaneously, in the appropriate form, at all stakeholders and actors. It is particularly important that these activities result in a "leveling of the field" in order to assure that the least powerful groups are able to participate equally with other parties. It is also critical to build, incrementally, a strong and mutually supportive constituency for the Institute's mission. Finally, it is critical to sensitise society, both from the bottom up and from the top down, on the need for and benefits of participatory and collaborative management. To achieve these objectives, the Institute serves the following audiences:

Resource users: Those who extract or exploit natural resources for their livelihood include traditional users, such as artisanal fishers and timber harvesters, as well as commercial users, such as those involved in the tourism industry (e.g., scuba dive operators and hoteliers). In order to participate effectively in management, resource users often need encouragement, information, skills, and assistance in group formation.

Community institutions: Institutions involved in community development have a stake in the management of locally important resources. These institutions, while generally lacking in financial and technical assets, are critical because they provide the most accessible structure for community involvement. Institutional strengthening is usually their primary need.

Governments: Governments are the focus of policy reform and hold the key to the success of most exercises in participatory or collaborative management. In many cases, their structure, orientation and policies

make it difficult for them to support or even accept such approaches. Governments are not monolithic, but are made up of various groups, from technocrats through administrators to the political hierarchy. Advocacy work must aim at making all these groups more receptive to participatory approaches and more functionally and technically capable of implementing them.

Non-governmental organisations: NGOs working at the regional, national, or sub-national levels on matters related to environment and development can be critical facilitators for and advocates of participatory and collaborative management. Most of CANARI's partners and constituents are in this category.

Donors and international assistance organisations: Institutions providing financial and technical support in the areas of environment and development have a significant influence on the manner in which these issues are perceived and addressed. They are often subject to external considerations which have little to do with the actual context in the region. In order to make useful contributions, they need compelling arguments in support of participatory and collaborative management, sound advice on resource management needs and opportunities, and encouragement to respect local agendas.

Universities and other research, training and policy institutions: These institutions have resources that can be marshaled in support of participation and collaboration, and they play a central role in the dissemination of ideas, information and methods. Advocacy with this group is for the purpose of encouraging and facilitating the incorporation of these issues into their agendas, programmes and curricula.

General public: Lasting policy change cannot occur without public support and demand at all levels. To reach mass audiences, CANARI works primarily with and through the media. More targeted approaches are used with individual interest groups such as the business sector.

A strategic review of this list of audiences will be made from time to time, to assure that the Institute's objectives are being met.

Some of the mechanisms which form the core of CANARI's advocacy work include the following:

Documentation and information sharing: The Institute strives to be an important repository of information on the issues and fields on which it works. It

systematically builds its extensive collection of relevant literature and documents its own work as well as selected experiences of relevant institutions in the region, with a view to sharing lessons from the field. Documentation and information sharing occur at several levels, from the technical to the popular, to ensure that relevant information is effectively communicated to a range of audiences. Particular emphasis is placed on the widespread dissemination of this information across the region through CANARI's publications, publications of other organisations, the mass media, and presentations by CANARI staff at conferences, seminars, and other meetings.

Training: The Institute conducts training activities and prepares training materials informed by its research and past experiences, in order to transfer the skills needed to implement participatory and collaborative processes. Research activities help to identify those areas in which training is most needed by CANARI's audiences.

Technical support: Technical support encompasses the range of other mechanisms for transferring skills and techniques for participatory management. Activities include the provision of advice and assistance on project design and implementation.

Conferences and seminars: The Institute convenes conferences and seminars to share the findings of its work and to analyse issues of regional and national concern related to participatory management. It also participates in such fora hosted by other organisations both within and outside the region. CANARI's conferences and seminars target a range of audiences, including policy makers, research institutions, community-based organisations, and other non-governmental organisations.

Networking: Through formal and informal mechanisms, CANARI brings together organisations from across the region for the purposes of information sharing and collaboration.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS



Board of Directors

The Institute's programme requires the full and active involvement of its Board of Directors, working as a legal body and as a cohesive group of individuals in support of CANARI's mission and objectives. Members of the Board of Directors serve in their personal capacities. They are selected on the basis of their skills, experiences and affiliations, in order to cover the range of issues, disciplines and partnerships which is needed by the Institute.

The Board is actively involved in the Institute's programme and operations through the participation of members in programme planning, monitoring, evaluation, and fundraising, as well as through regular meetings. CANARI's institutional structure, which limits legal membership to the Board of Directors, requires that the Board represent the Institute's constituents and collaborators to the maximum extent possible, to assure accountability.

Institutional collaboration

CANARI's constituency is made up of those institutions that most actively support its mission and objectives. The Institute endeavours to continuously expand this network of institutions. A number of the activities described in Section on Advocacy address this objective.

The Institute collaborates with a diverse range of international, regional, national and local organisations in aspects of programme implementation. In selected cases, it establishes formal partnerships with institutions both within and outside the region which can provide the expertise and support necessary to achieve the objectives of CANARI's programme and of this Strategic Plan. Collaboration between CANARI and other institutions must be consistent with the mission and operations of the Institute, contribute to institutional development, and guarantee that standards of programme implementation are maintained or enhanced.

Communication

Effective communication is critical to the success of the programme and to the development of the institution. CANARI recognises that communication is a two-way process which must involve all its partners, and which is essential for building mutual understanding, fostering changes in perceptions and attitudes, and informing action. Communication is therefore an integral activity in all aspects of the programme, from applied research to advocacy to institutional development. It is as much a tool for programme delivery as an element of internal operations.

CANARI is a regional, multilingual institution, which makes every effort to conduct its operations in the prevailing language of the country or area in which it is working. Main institutional documents are prepared in English, French, and Spanish, and technical documents or their abstracts are translated as appropriate.

Staffing and personnel matters

The Institute's mission and programme require an approach to staffing that fosters linkages between programme areas, that allows for shared decision-making, and that encourages the involvement of collaborators in programme implementation. There is no set and inflexible staffing structure for programme staff. Positions and job titles are based on programme needs, work experience, quality of performance, and area of expertise. Supervisory responsibilities are shared among more experienced staff as appropriate. Administrative personnel is involved in programme planning and implementation to the maximum extent possible.

The Institute's policy on recruitment is to limit employment to suitably qualified and experienced nationals or long-term residents of the insular Caribbean. In its recruitment and hiring, it strives to achieve gender equality at all levels of its staffing structure, and to reflect the cultural diversity of the region. Personal advancement of staff is supported through a policy that encourages individual training and initiative. Staff participate along with the Board in the development of personnel policies that define the rights, responsibilities and benefits of employment.

Offices

The Institute maintains a permanent base of operations in St. Lucia. The location of other offices, which are established over long time frames in one or more country within the region, is based on strategic programme considerations and operational efficiency.

Funding

CANARI pursues a fundraising strategy aimed at providing financial security, flexibility in programme implementation, and balanced, long-term, and mutually supportive relationships with donors. To reduce reliance on donor support, occasional short consultancies are undertaken, and fees are charged for goods and services provided by the Institute to the maximum extent which is consistent with the achievement of programme objectives. Financial support is neither sought nor accepted from sources whose policies, orientation or actions are antithetical to the Institute's mission and objectives.

Becoming a learning organisation

The Institute is committed to a process of ongoing reflection and review, in order to learn from its work and to share this learning with the wider community. This requires that an emphasis be placed on the monitoring and evaluation of programme activities and institutional operations. The lessons learned through the implementation of the programme are analysed and disseminated through publications and training activities. The experiences of other institutions also contribute to this body of knowledge.