CARIBBEAN NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE
(CANARI)

Next steps for Nature Seekers:
Report on an organisational evaluation of
Nature Seekers Incorporated

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Executive Summary

Nature Seekers Incorporated (NSI), is a civil society organisation based in north-east Trinidad, which was established in 1990 to conserve the turtles nesting on the local Matura beaches. After nearly 12 years of operation, NSI identified the need for an organisational evaluation and strategic planning process to develop a five-year strategic plan. This process was undertaken with technical assistance from the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) under a project entitled *Improving governance through civil society involvement in natural resource management in the Caribbean* funded under the European Commission's NGO co-financing budget line (B7-6000). with support from the Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries (Hivos) based in the Netherlands.

CANARI's input into the evaluation and planning process comprised:
- facilitation of an initial strategic evaluation and planning meeting;
- conducting with NSI a stakeholder identification and analysis;
- conducting a perceptions study to assess the opinions of key stakeholders on the performance of NSI and its capacity for improvement;
- a review of NSI financial procedures;
- review of and feedback on NSI's interim progress report;
- involvement of NSI members in a range of training programmes including organisational development, conflict management, and information management; and
- facilitation of a second strategic planning meeting at which the study and review findings were fed back to Nature Seekers and strategic options were discussed and evaluated.

Although the evaluation was originally intended to last for only 12 months, the process extended over the period from March 2002 – September 2004. Additionally, because of the geographic proximity of CANARI and NSI, informal processes of seeking advice and support continued throughout this period and beyond.

The stakeholder analysis resulted in the identification of the following categories to participate in the perceptions study:
- partners and funding organisations;
- government agencies and other collaborating organisations;
- other civil society organisations;
- private sector tour operators;
- associate members; and
- the community of Matura.

The perception study revealed widespread admiration of and confidence in the conservation work of NSI with the following being identified as particular strengths:
- knowledgeable staff;
- good interpretation of scientific and other knowledge;
- professional approach;
- focus and commitment: and
- strong fundraising skills.

The identified weaknesses and areas of concern were:
- communication and information dissemination;

- creating benefits for the wider community;
- networking with other groups in north-east Trinidad; and
- organisational sustainability due to over-reliance on a few key people and underestimation of the real operational costs of running NSI.

Stakeholders were also asked to comment on NSI's performance in relation to its stated objectives:
a) to provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members;
b) to protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs;
c) to improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Development;
d) to assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote Community efforts.

Stakeholders rated NSI highly in relation to its positive impact on members' livelihoods, self-esteem and growth and its contribution to the conservation of the sea turtle population with a consensus that the organisation might usefully expand its role to biodiversity conservation of Matura's terrestrial natural resources. They also acknowledged NSI's contribution to community development in Matura through the creation of a library and computer facility and the promotion of host homes. However, community stakeholders in particularly felt NSI could make greater efforts to increase visitor spending within the community and the spread of benefits.

While most funding partners, donor organisations and government agencies deemed NSI to have good linkages with other civil society groups, this perception was not so strong amongst civil society stakeholders, some of whom perceived commitment to community development as an organisational weakness.

The financial study identified the following key weaknesses:
- inadequate record-keeping, particularly in relation to cash transactions;
- no bank reconciliations;
- weak financial controls, including the absence of an audit;
- no record of fixed assets and no depreciation mechanism;
- lack of transparency, accountability and credit control of loans to members; and
- failure to meet statutory requirements in relation to national insurance and Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE),

A series of financial recommendations were developed and were largely implemented by the time of the final meeting in September 2004. By that stage, all accounts had been computerised in Peachtree and accounts audited.

At the September 2004 meeting, the following were also noted as areas of significant progress in relation to the status at the initial evaluation:
- more transparent and accountable management style, with space for differing views;
- improved internal and external communications;
- improved vehicle management;
- greater understanding by members of each other's roles with a concomitant reduction in conflict; and
- increased opportunities for all members to benefit from training with skills being built in areas such as tour guide training, forest conservation, shrubs and medicinal plants, bird watching, first aid and life saving techniques, training design.

At the conclusion of the project, Nature Seekers had the broad framework of a strategic plan as well as an annual workplan from which to operate. While several of the opportunities for organisational expansion and sustainability identified at the start of the process failed to materialise within the anticipated timeframe (e.g. operationalisation of the Green Fund and the Matura National Park), others subsequently emerged (research tourism via Earthwatch and participation in the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme) which have contributed to further raising NSI's profile, locally and internationally, as well as providing a sound financial and operational base for the future.

While the threat of ill-conceived and rapid development of the north eastern coastline of the Trinidad remains, NSI's activities have succeeded in raising the profile of community-based tourism based on conservation which provides an alternative to the prevailing national vision of development based on large scale infrastructure development and foreign investment.

1. Background and overview

Nature Seekers Incorporated (NSI), is a civil society organisation based in north-east Trinidad, which was established in 1990 to conserve the turtles nesting on the local Matura beaches. After nearly 12 years of operation, it identified the need for an organisational evaluation and strategic planning process to develop a five-year strategic plan. This process was undertaken with technical assistance from the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) under a project entitled *Improving governance through civil society involvement in natural resource management in the Caribbean* funded under the European Commission's NGO co-financing budget line (B7-6000). with support from the Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries (Hivos) based in the Netherlands.

CANARI's input into the evaluation and planning process comprised:
- facilitation of an initial strategic evaluation and planning meeting;
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- a review of NSI financial procedures;
- facilitation of a second strategic planning meeting at which the study and review findings were fed back to Nature Seekers and strategic options were discussed and evaluated.

Although the evaluation was originally intended to last for only 12 months, the process extended over the period from March 2002 – September 2004. Additionally, because of the geographic proximity of CANARI and NSI, informal processes of seeking advice and support continued throughout this period and beyond.

2. Rationale for conducting the evaluation

At the outset of the process, NSI presented CANARI with the following rationale for conducting the evaluation (reported verbatim):

I. Need for conducting an evaluation and the development of this proposal

Nature Seekers, in celebrating our 12th year in existence, recognized that an evaluation of the organization would be in our best interest, given that we have developed extensively and that we were facing new challenges and plans for the future. During the past 10 years the organization has developed extensively and very quickly. As a result several challenges have been faced that have called for reorganization, while also implementing several professional standards expected of us. With expansions in funding have come issues of distribution of benefits, responsibilities for tasks, and differences of personal growth. The time has therefore come, as in the life of any advancing organization, to take stock of the organization, reassess our future, ensure practical development, and move forward with direction. This evaluation will therefore be timely and be the crucial next step in our current organizational junction.

We recognize that the evaluation is long overdue. This will be the very first evaluation of Nature Seekers. The only previous reviews done of our activities were when an analysis was done in 1992-1993 of co-management projects run by the government, and also in 1992, when Carol James and Kenneth Fournillier compiled a case-study for CANARI on the development of the Mature Beach Turtle Program. Since then several Nature Seekers members have participated in training programs and workshops on a variety of topics, including leadership and organizational management. While these accounts and training programs have contributed to the growth of the organization to date, a critical review of the organization with strong recommendations for addressing areas of conflict has yet to be conducted.

Discussions on conducting an evaluation began within the organization during the year and we have started familiarizing ourselves with the concept. Initial discussions took place with CANARI as a potential collaborating and funding organization due to their expertise on the issue, as well as CANARI's interest in researching the evaluation process.

We look to this evaluation as a critical step in the evolution of our organization. We therefore recognize that this evaluation process will identify several strengths that we need to promote as well as several weaknesses that we need to resolve. We are committed to a critical review. We hope that our members will commit to participate openly in the process and take responsibility in its implementation. We also hope that we will have the commitment to implement the recommendations identified by the evaluation process. Mr. Tambiah discussed the importance of the evaluation and the need for maximum participation in the process during the one-on-interviews he facilitated.

We look forward to collaborating with CANARI in this valuable activity and to CANARI's support in this effort.

II. Identified Topics
Given the goals and growth of the organization, given the activities it currently undertakes, and given the information shared with Mr. Tambiah during the interview process described above (Section I), we would like the evaluation process to address the following topics:

1. *Organizational Structure (Executive, Board, and Membership)*
2. *Composition Criteria and Terms in Office*
3. *Membership Skills, Participation, and Responsibilities*
4. *Distribution of Benefits, Selection Criteria, and Regulations*
5. *Job Descriptions, Distribution of Tasks, Selection Criteria, and Regulations*
6. *Management of Matura Beach - Forestry Patrols, Taggers, Guides, and Visitors*
7. *Volunteer vs. Paid Services, Associated Criteria, and Regulations*
8. *Incentives, Motivation, Encouragement, and Recognition/Praise*
9. *Professional Behaviour, Personality Management, and Codes of Conduct*
10. *Conflict Resolution, Disciplinary Actions and Fines*
11. *Decision Making, Chains of Authority and Improved Communications*
12. *New Recruitment & Training Opportunities*
13. *Pace of Organizational Growth vs. Pace of Member Growth*
14. *Transparency and Accountability*
15. *Wider Community Perception*
16. *Wider Community Participation*
17. *Wider Community Benefits*
18. *National Stakeholders and Collaborations*
19. *International Stakeholders and Collaborations*
20. *Development of a Scientific, Technical, and Management Advisory Panel*
21. *Collaboration Guidelines for Visiting Researchers and Memorandums of Understanding*
22. *Scope and application of the 5 Year Tourism Plan*
23. *Development of a Strategic Action Plan*

This list is by no means exhaustive. We believe that the evaluation process itself will identify several other issues that we need to address.

III. Evaluation steps

1. *Internal analysis of the issues (NSI)*
2. *Retreat to present and discuss results of the interviews (NSI and CANARI)*
3. *Monitoring of progress (NSI)*
4. *Stakeholder analysis (NSI and CANARI)*
5. *Perceptions Study (CANARI)*
6. *Financial Review (CANARI)*
7. *Visioning Exercise (NSI facilitated by CANARI)*

There would more than likely need to be some follow up to finalise the plan and discuss and refine certain issues of the plan.

3. Evaluation
3.1 First evaluation retreat
The evaluation process commenced with an off-site retreat to provide NSI members with an initial opportunity to:
- evaluate the organisation's performance to date;
- analyse present internal and external challenges being faced by NSI;
- conduct a SWOT analysis;
- review the mission and vision; and
- input into the design of the remainder of the evaluation process.

The retreat was facilitated by CANARI but documented by NSI as an integral part of the development of ownership of the evaluation and planning process. The report of this first retreat is attached at Appendix 1.

The meeting endorsed the suggestion what a wider stakeholder perception study should be conducted to complement the internal SWOT analysis and performance review.

3.2 Stakeholder analysis and perceptions and expectations study[1]
3.2.1 Objectives
The stakeholder perception study was undertaken to solicit from NSI's stakeholders:
- their perspectives on the organisation's performance, strengths and weaknesses;
- their recommendations for improvements;
- their evaluation of the actual and potential challenges facing the organisation; and
- the desired evolution of their relationship with NSI over the next five to ten years.

3.2.2 Methodology
An initial list of stakeholders was compiled by NSI and divided into six broad stakeholder groups. CANARI assumed primary responsibility for designing the questionnaires (attached at Appendix 2) and disseminating them to each organisation or individual.

The organisations/individuals and their sample sizes were as follows:
- Partners and funding organisations: 6
- Government agencies and other collaborating organisations and individuals: 11
- Non-governmental and community-based organisations (NGOs and CBOs): 7
- Private sector tour operators: 5

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[1] This perceptions study conducted by Alana Lum Lock was initially disseminated as a stand-alone document but has now been incorporated with minor modifications into the overall evaluation report .

- Associate members: 4
- The Matura community (excluding members of the group who live in Matura) : 16

Community respondents were randomly selected at popular meeting places in Matura such as small shops and bars, the high school and the guesthouse, and invited to participate in the survey. In this way, it was possible to capture the viewpoints of a wide cross section of the community.

Stakeholder responses to the questionnaires have been compiled and tabulated by stakeholder group and are attached at Appendix 3. Table 1 compiles the responses of partners and funding organisations; government agencies and NGOs/CBOs; tour operators; and associate members. Table 2 is devoted to the responses of the Matura community.

3.2.3 Identification of NSI's stakeholders

As outlined above, the stakeholder identification was conducted by NSI with CANARI providing some input into the analysis/categorisation of stakeholders into groups for the purpose of designing and administering questionnaires appropriate to each of the stakeholder groups.

a) Partners and funding organisations: organisations or individuals that have provided sponsorship in the past for construction, transport costs, equipment, uniforms and stipends or who have contributed to projects such as NSI's Adopt-a-Turtle project.

b) Government agencies and other collaborating organisations that have partnership relationships with NSI as described below:

Wildlife Section of the Forestry Department
The Forestry Department is the State agency with overall responsibility for the Trinidad and Tobago Marine Turtle Conservation Programme. NSI co-manages the Matura Beach with the Wildlife Section of the Forestry Department protecting nesting sea turtles, hatchlings and eggs. Under this arrangement, NSI is responsible for the patrolling of the beach at night, tour-guiding operations and collection of fees for the tours. The Forestry Department collects fees for the permits which must be obtained for all visitors to the beach, except members of the community.

The Tourism and Industrial Development Company (TIDCO)
One pillar of TIDCO's programme is ecotourism and it also promotes the concept of sustainable tourism. TIDCO has provided technical support to NSI whenever possible for the conservation work that NSI carries out.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)
As part of its sustainable tourism and poverty reduction programme, UNECLAC organisation has assisted NSI on an ad hoc basis mainly through capacity building/technical assistance in the area of increasing financial sustainability.

Tet Ansanm Ltd
Tet Ansanm Ltd is an international consultancy which has developed experiential methods to support leaders in taking systemic approaches to transforming their organisations#. Tet Ansanm worked closely with NSI during the period preceding the evaluation.

The Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST)
WIDECAST is a regional scientific network comprised of country coordinators and partner organisations in more than 30 Caribbean states and territories. NSI serves as lead organisation for WIDECAST in Trinidad. It assists WIDECAST to meet its programme objectives by

- monitoring and protecting one of the most significant nesting colonies of critically endangered leatherback turtles in the region;
- serving as a model co-management project;
- serving as a model eco-tourism initiative;
- providing training opportunities for Caribbean colleagues.

c) NGOs and CBOs
A number of other civil society organisations (CSOs) operate in north east Trinidad and in Tobago with objectives also centred on natural resource and turtle conservation. In north east Trinidad, these are mainly village groups that also have a mandate for community development.

d) Private sector tour operators
Turtle watching is one of the attractions forming part of a multi-day tour offered by private tour operators. In comparison to other turtle-nesting locations, Matura's proximity to Port of Spain and its relatively un-disturbed environment make it a preferred destination amongst visitors and tour operators.

e) Associate members
Associate members are those that reside outside the Matura area but provide support to NSI on an ad hoc basis, depending on the specific skills required for a project. A database of human resources not available within the community is kept for this purpose. Associate members also volunteer their time to NSI activities if required.

f) The Matura Community
The relationship between NSI and the community of Matura is different that with other stakeholders because of the day-to-day interactions. Moreover, one of NSI's main objectives is to contribute to the development of Matura through community tourism.

3.2.4 Findings
3.2.4.1.General
Overall, it is clear that NSI' stakeholders have a great deal of confidence in the organisation and its future. **Donors** in particular hold NSI in high esteem, describing NSI's work as "highly effective" and citing the success of its turtle conservation project (particularly its pioneering efforts in turtle tagging and the development of a database for nesting populations at Matura); the number of local and international awards received by the group; and NSI' contribution to domestic tourism. Donors noted that these efforts had been achieved through efficient use of limited financial and human resources. NSI's approach and objectives were perceived to fit well with the programme objectives of donor organisations that seek to support community and environmental conservation. Donors recognized NSI's efforts to execute well-managed projects and intend to continue funding NSI projects in the future.

The various **government agencies and collaborating organisations** that have been working with NSI have all expressed willingness to continue working with the organisation since NSI not only assists them to achieve their organisations' objectives, but also demonstrates potential for growth in areas in which these organisations are willing to assist.

NSI is perceived by other **NGOs/CBOs** as a role model for all CSOs in north east Trinidad because of the organisation's tremendous achievements despite many great challenges. It was felt that NSI's contribution to the inception of the Matura to Matelot (M2M) network, which brings together coastal village groups from the entire north east region in support of a common goal of sustainable development, was a significant collaborative effort that could be built on and

strengthened. Specific issues identified by these civil society groups are outlined in Results Table 1 in Appendix 3

In the case of the **Matura community,** although the community recognises the positive attention that Matura has received as a result of NSI's efforts, the survey showed a level of dissatisfaction that could contribute to negative publicity and even threaten the organisation's viability if not addressed. The dissatisfaction arises as a result of an unfulfilled expectation that the community would derive spin-off benefits from NSI's activities and from being excluded from decision-making and information about the organisation and its activities.

Tour operators were particularly insistent on the need for better communication and information. They felt that better communication flows could have prevented the bad feeling generated when NSI increased visitor fees for turtle watching without prior warning or consultation with tour operators. Because tours are booked as much as six months in advance, operators cannot change the price of their tour and therefore had to absorb the price increase. Tour operators felt this demonstrated NSI's lack of understanding of how the tour industry works. Nevertheless, tour operators were keen to point out that the interpretation skills of NSI tour guides and the location give Matura the edge over other turtle watch tours.

3.2.4.2 Strengths
▪ *Knowledge and interpretation*
NSI's knowledge of turtle biology, behaviour and habitat is viewed as its key strength.

▪ *Professionalism and training*
NSI's workforce is considered to be very competent and professional. Respondents, especially the tour operators, were impressed by the interpretation skills of the tour guides and their ability to communicate this knowledge to members and the public. These are among the main reasons cited for choosing Matura over other turtle nesting tour sites on the island for their clients.

▪ *Focus and commitment*
NSI was commended for its ability to focus on its goals. The success of the organisation is credited to core members' passion for and to the mission of the organisation.

▪ *Conservation and protection*
All stakeholders acknowledged the success of NSI's turtle conservation programme in reducing turtle slaughter to a point where it has been virtually eliminated. Additionally, they commended NSI's ability to leverage its knowledge and experience in advocating for appropriate coastal development for the region. Stakeholders gave as an example NSI's role in the halting of a proposed major hotel development on Matura Beach.

▪ *Recognition for Matura*
NSI's positive reputation has resulted in national, regional and international recognition for Matura.

▪ *Securing funding*
Very few CBOs in Trinidad and Tobago have been able to identify and secure funding as successfully as NSI. This is considered a significant achievement.

3.2.4.3 Weaknesses
▪ *Communication and information dissemination*

Stakeholders repeatedly noted that they would like to have more information about NSI's projects, activities and events, which they perceive as being poorly advertised and promoted. Many community members do not associate NSI with activities other than turtle conservation and other stakeholders are not aware of the full range of activities that NSI undertakes. Tour operators, collaborating organisations and community members felt that information and communication were essential for improved linkages with the wider community which in turn would stimulate increased involvement in the organisation's activities. Associate members also noted that there could be an improvement in the advertising of activities and events.

- *Linkages and networking*

Overall stakeholders perceived NSI to be well networked but cited its relationship with government departments and agencies other than the Forestry Department and waning participation in the M2M network as weaknesses.

- *Succession planning*

Reliance on a few core members and lack of succession planning was a source of concern in relation to the organisation's long-term sustainability. There was also concern that the present situation might lead to "burn out" of key people. Stakeholders therefore suggested that the membership base should be expanded to include members of the wider community and that the capacity of existing members could be better leveraged and build on to enhance the programme (e.g. organisational, managerial or public relations skills).

- *Accurate costing of services*

There was concern that NSI might not be adequately valuing and therefore recouping the true costs of its overheads and staff and members' time, which might jeopardise its long-term financial sustainability. Consistent, reliable sources of financial support were perceived to be necessary.

- *Product development*

Some respondents felt that members' skills and expertise needed to be better developed and the tourism product diversified to include the terrestrial natural resources of Matura.

3.2.4.4. NSI's fulfilment of its objectives
In order to gauge organisational performance and emphasis, stakeholders were asked whether they felt that NSI had fulfilled its four objectives over the past few years. NSI's objectives are:

a) To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members
a) To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs
b) To improve the Matura Community through community tourism development
c) To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote community efforts

a. To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members
Many stakeholders believe that NSI has had a positive impact on its members' livelihoods, self-esteem and growth, as evidenced by the recently-funded research and community library project and training provided to its members. Others were not familiar with what the group had done to develop the membership as a whole and therefore could not comment on its growth and development. Some NSI members felt that training opportunities were only made available to a select few within the organisation, while others who might benefit were excluded.

b. To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs
This was perceived as NSI's strongest achievement with unanimous agreement that the organisation is doing an outstanding job of contributing to the conservation of the sea turtle

population and its habitat through its monitoring, beach patrols and education and awareness. Many stakeholders felt that NSI was now ready to turn its attention to the conservation of terrestrial biodiversity, through the development of hiking and bird watching tours.

c. To improve the Matura community through community tourism development
Opinions were divided on NSI's achievement of this objective, with an overall consensus that there is room for expanding the contribution of community tourism in Matura. Some stakeholders, and in particular the community, felt that the organisation was not promoting community tourism in a way that sufficiently benefited the wider community. However, others such as donors and government agencies saw the building of a library and computer facility as a very positive step towards wider community development. Also, the work in turtle conservation and tourism was credited with bringing international recognition to Matura and consequently increased visitor activity in the area. The promotion of host homes was also seen as a positive development for Matura's community tourism.

d. To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote community efforts

Most stakeholders were not clear about NSI's networking outside of the Matura area. Donors and government stakeholders cited a number of linkages with other agencies and support to other turtle conservation groups. NGOs and the community felt more could be done in this area with local NGOs and CBOs desiring a greater input from NSI to the M2M network.

3.2.4.5 Key issues likely to affect NSI in 5 to 10 years
Persons surveyed were asked to identify a number of challenges that they felt NSI should consider and plan for in the next 5 to 10 years of its operation. Responses have been grouped into three main areas:

a) Environmental issues
- Ill-conceived and rapid development of the north eastern sector of the country would negatively affect biodiversity in Matura and by extension the benefits which the community national community derive from it. Some of the more immediate threats identified by survey respondents included:
  - hotel and beach front development;
  - onshore/offshore oil and gas exploration;
  - industrial development;
  - deforestation; and
  - exceeding the carrying capacity of the beach.

b) Community issues
- Poor involvement from the Matura community in group activities;
- Inadequate support from and linkages with Matura community members and groups in other communities in the area.

c) Organisational Security
- *Diversification of the tourism product*
  Stakeholders felt that there was increasing interest and demand nationally and internationally for nature-based tours and attractions, so NSI would be well placed to offer additional nature-based products in Matura. The organisation is already associated with a quality product so with the right marketing, investment in small commercial enterprises, and promotion of new

activities such as hiking and guided nature tours. A diversified product of this kind could benefit both NSI's members and the wider Matura community.

- *Quality of tourism product*
  There is a need to ensure that the quality of the tourism product is enhanced through sustained professionalism and by ensuring that members are trained in areas such as customer service and interpretation.

- *Security of tenure*
  Currently, no formal co-management agreement exists between NSI and the relevant government agencies. Although NSI owns the land on which its office is built, the land on which the beach facilities have been constructed is state land administered by TIDCO. TIDCO then leases the land to the Forestry Department, which in turn leases it to NSI. Further construction on and development of the land has been undertaken by NSI without formal agreement.   It was suggested that the signing of a formal Memorandum of Understanding between government and NSI would ensure the long term security of NSI's investments and remove the ad hoc informal nature of the current agreement.

- *The need for a more entrepreneurial approach*
  In order to survive as a financially viable organisation, especially in a changing political and economic climate, stakeholders felt that it would be in NSI's best interest achieve greater financial independence in order to sustain its activities in the long term. The need to quantify and cover the organisation's overheads and adequately remunerate members for their services should also be factored into future financial planning.

3.2.5 Analysis and recommendations

3.2.5.1 NSI and its relationship with its stakeholders
The survey indicates that NSI needs to place more emphasis on strengthening its relationship with the community of Matura and the tour operators.

The survey revealed limited support for NSI from the general Matura community. Entrepreneurs and local businesses and other community members felt that they could derive increased benefits from tourist visits if they were systematically informed of visitor arrivals and numbers. They also thought that a concerted effort should be made to develop complementary community tourism products alongside the turtle tours. Finally, some community members stated that they did not know what was happening within the organisation in terms of its successes, news and events. Some also commented that NSI members are not sufficiently involved in village life and that the organisation should play a more active role in the community.

It is possible that some of the perceptions are due to misconceptions about the level of income received by NSI members and the organisation. As mentioned earlier, the survey also revealed that there is a belief among NSI members and others that benefits accrue to a select few within the organisation. This perception of a lack of transparency and favouritism seems to be the root of some of the negative publicity NSI has attracted locally.

Because of the nature of their business, tour operators will continue to patronise NSI once the organisation and the location continue to have an edge over other turtle watch experiences. Frustration about NSI's decision to increase visitor fees without consultation has negatively affected the relationship between tour operators and NSI but this is unlikely to be irreparable. Restoring good relations may require a concerted effort from NSI in terms of communications,

with greater openness about the financial challenges faced by the organisation and a willingness to discuss issues surrounding the tours, products and complaints.   Continued improvement of the quality of interpretation and expansion of the tourism product might also serve to enhance the relationship

3.2.5.2 Information and communication

In addition to the communication issues raised above, stakeholders raised the following:

a. Stakeholders lack knowledge about the full extent of NSI's programme and associate it solely with turtle conservation

b. Stakeholders are not well informed about NSI events and activities as noted in the section above. This suggests that there may be a need to improve communication on programme challenges, activities, outcomes and outputs

c. NSI has not been sufficiently involved in the M2M network and has not communicated its reasons. Stakeholders speculated that this might be an indication of limited human resources. However, in view of some of the identified challenges which NSI may face over the next five to ten years strengthening its links with the M2M network might strengthen its advocacy platform.

d. There is a need to strengthen communication and links with government agencies. Even TIDCO and the Forestry Division need to be made fully aware of the challenges that NSI faces and of the value of the contribution made by the organisation to the management of natural resources and community development.

3.2.5.3 Building the organisation's capacity and its product

Stakeholders cited the need for staff development, succession planning and the identification of consistent and adequate sources of funding for the long-term. There is concern that NSI is doing too much with too few and that a true costing of members' time and effort is a prerequisite for growth and moving the organisation onto a more professional level of operation.

Government and collaborating agencies suggested that opportunities exist for the organisation develop the tourism product around the conservation of Matura's terrestrial biodiversity. It was also suggested that there is scope for improvement and expansion of the community tourism product, for example home stays, art and craft and cultural attractions.

3.2.6 Recommendations

The majority of recommendations in this section were suggested by stakeholders themselves although in some cases they have been elaborated through discussion between CANARI and NSI.

3.2.6.1 Develop a communication plan

It was felt that the participatory development of a communication plan[2] for NSI could help the organisation to identify its main target audiences, the key messages that should be conveyed to each of these groups and the methods of communicating these messages (e.g. through TV, public meetings, a newsletter, regular focus group meetings, electronic media, posters and

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[2] See Geoghegan, T., Y. Renard and N. Brown. 2002: Guidelines for participatory planning: a manual for Caribbean natural resource managers and planners. CANARI Guidelines Series 4: 36 pp. for rationale for developing a communication plan.

tours). Table 1 below lists some suggestions but these should be validated and expanded upon through participatory processes involving the respective stakeholders.

Table 1: Suggestions to improve communication and information dissemination with NS's stakeholders:

The Matura Community	NGOs and CBOs	Tour Operators	Government
• Designation of one or two staff or members who would meet with and talk to the community on a more personal level about NSI projects. • Mingle with the community by taking a more active part in community football, cricket, Best Village activities. • The scheduling of village meetings before the turtle season to inform villagers on expected activities • Keep villagers and other interested persons abreast of issues, visitor numbers, plans etc. during the turtle season • Start a promotional campaign of putting up posters, signs and spreading NSI's message in the schools and community centre • Recruit more young people in the general involvement of the organisation • Develop a programme of community education about Matura's natural resources.	• Delegation of one NSI member or staff person to attend M2M meetings and report back to NSI on the outcomes of these meetings • Inform M2M organisers when NSI is unable to attend meetings and request a (formal or informal) report on the meeting • Conduct a survey (formal or informal) of capacity needs of other turtle conservation groups and community-based organisations to identify areas where NSI might be able to lend support to allow the spread of expertise and capacity building.	• Dissemination of a one-page electronic newsletter to inform tour operators about NSI activities and events immediately prior to the turtle season • In the newsletter, provide data on visitors to the beach for the past season (this would provide information on what percentage of visitors is brought by tour operators to the area) and other information such as visitor uptake of the Adopt a Turtle programme. • Hold two regular meetings with tour operators and other interested tourism parties immediately prior to the turtle season and just after to air concerns, discuss product development, pre-empt conflicts and plan for the next season.	• Dissemination of a one-page electronic newsletter to inform key government agencies such as TIDCO and Forestry about NSI activities and events immediately prior to the turtle season • Hold two regular meetings with representatives from other key agencies immediately prior to the turtle season and just after to air concerns, discuss product development, pre-empt conflicts and plan for the next season. • Take advantage of opportunities to =with the EMA and other agencies responsible for ESAs and the CREP - to obtain funding for technical support, improving links with other NGOs and CBOs, as well as opportunities for capacity- building.

3.2.6.2 Enhance benefits to wider Matura community
Ideas for improving spin-off benefits and developing tourism products that benefit other community stakeholders included:
- expanding the business opportunities for villagers, both by letting them know when tourists will be arriving in the area in significant numbers and by suggesting possible business and entrepreneurial opportunities such as
  - sale of food stuffs;
  - a home stay programme;
  - other small commercial activities; and
  - cultural attractions.
- development of a business plan for improving community benefits, for which expert advice would probably be needed; and
- hosting a community event/festival at the opening of the turtle season.

3.2.6.3 Organisational sustainability
The two main issues of sustainability identified by stakeholders were human resource development and financial sustainability.

Human resource development and growth
Organisational sustainability will require an investment in the organisation's human resources. Currently, there are two main issues: the need to broaden the human resource base by bringing in more people with relevant skills and the need to deepen the existing skills base.

Recommendations towards achieving these goals included:
- providing members with training in new areas of expertise such as leadership skills, administration and marketing;
- additional training in customer service and tour guiding;
- expanding the membership base to include more members of the Matura community with a view both to improving the pool of skills and raising NSI's profile within the community;
- keeping a database of skills within the community similar to the one kept for sourcing associate members' skills from outside of the community; and
- identifying members with leadership qualities and delegating responsibility to them to assess their capacity for further growth and responsibility.

If the organisation finds itself constrained by limited funds for training, it should take advantage of sponsored training and try to work training costs into its grant proposals.

Financial sustainability
The revenue from the Earthwatch volunteers is already contributing to greater financial security which indicates that NSI's financial stability might best be assured by a diversified funding strategy including:
- increasing the proportion of self-generated income, particularly by diversifying its tourism activities outside turtle season;
- securing a longer term commitment from government with regard to the co-management arrangement and negotiating for the fees generated from permits to be used for paying turtle wardens;
- stimulating the development of some cottage industry and small scale commercial activities, which NSI would oversee but not run on a day-to-day basis;
- exploring the potential for deriving revenue from host homes;
- the development of the land on the beach, possibly into camp facilities with an audio visual facility for orientations.

<u>3.3 Review of Financial Management Procedures</u>

3.3.1 Rationale
NSI considered financial management as an area for improvement. The financial review was undertaken to assess the ways in which financial transactions were conducted by the organisation and the accounting procedures used to record them, with the aim of developing a list of recommendations that would guide the organisation towards the implementation of an efficient and effective financial management system.

3.3.2 Methodology
The financial review entailed the following steps:
  i.   A one-day visit by a Technical Officer and Financial Officer from CANARI to the offices of NSI to review and assess the financial procedures and controls. Interviews were also conducted with the NSI Manager, Dennis Sammy and Treasurer, Susan Lackhan.

  ii. Development of an initial list of recommendations.

  iii. Follow-up half day visit to NSI by CANARI's Executive Director.

  iv. Ongoing advice from CANARI staff to NSI on an ad hoc as-needed basis

3.3.3 Findings
Gaps were identified in the following areas of recording, reporting and controls:

  i.   The Manager has a high degree of autonomy in the handling of financial transactions and controls were weak in some areas although vouchers and cheques are co-signed by the Treasurer. Yet financial statements are reviewed by the Board only on a quarterly basis.

  ii. Insufficient distinction is made between petty cash and cash received from revenue generating activities.

  iii. Adequate back up documentation for cash expenditures is not always identifiable (e.g. invoices, receipts)

  iv. Bank reconciliations are not being performed.

  v.   No guidelines exist with regard to frequency/timeframe for routine activities such as data entry, or deposits of cash or cheques to the bank.

  vi. The organisation's accounts are not audited on an annual basis by an independent auditor.

  vii. Fixed assets are neither being recorded on a fixed asset register nor depreciated in the balance sheet. Expenditures on fixed assets are recorded as a one-off expense in the year of purchase rather than being capitalised..

  viii. A few Board members have received loans from NSI to undertake personal emergency activities, which raises a number of concerns:

- source of the money for loans is not identified anywhere and therefore could potentially be grant funding which NSI has no right to expend in this way;
- there are no written signed agreements with members detailing the amount of the loan, duration and repayment terms;
- some loans have been outstanding for a considerable time and no decision has been taken as to whether to write them off or not;
- the loans have been treated in the books as an expense but do not appear on the balance sheet as receivables.

ix. NSI is not paying any taxes on or National Insurance. The company is registered as a not-for-profit organisation but this status does not exempt it from paying corporation tax, green fund levy or business levy. The group has not filed tax returns or paid green fund or business levy since its inception. In addition, Per-As-You-Earn (PAYE), Health Surcharge and National Insurance Scheme (NIS) contributions are not being deducted from the manager's salary. The contract with the manager describes him as an employee of NS and this places the onus of statutory deductions on the employer.

3.3..4 Recommendations

i. Establishment of a separate petty cash system to fund small purchases which need to be made in cash.

ii. All expenditure must be backed up by an invoice or a receipt.

iii. Receipts should be issued for all income received, whether cash or cheques.

iv. Recording within a short time frame (to be determined by the Board) of all expenditure and income (cash and cheques) with deposit to the bank at least once a week.

v. NSI should start to record somewhere the value of in-kind contributions so that these can be used as counterpart funding and justifications for project proposals.

vi. Bank reconciliations carried out on a monthly basis within an agreed period (1-2 weeks maximum) of receipt of the bank statements.

vii. The Manager should report to the Board on a monthly basis both income and expenditure and the balance sheet. The goal should be within a short time frame to develop an annual budget so that the Manager could also present income and expenditure against budget and anticipated cash flow.

viii. Board members should be provided with training in interpreting financial statements, as needed.

ix. A fixed asset register should be established which records the value of the asset, depreciation, serial number, description etc.

x. NSI should have its accounts audited by an independent auditor, who could also help to assess the amount payable to the Boards of Inland Revenue and National Insurance.

xi. The separation of duties and controls surrounding the Manager should be reviewed by the auditor and Board with a view to ensuring they meet generally accepted accounting principles,, e.g. in relation to paying his own salary.

xii. NSI should regularise its situation with the Board of Inland Revenue and National Insurance.

xiii. NSI should review the nature of its contracts with the turtle patrol staff to determine whether it wishes to treat them as staff, in which case NSI is responsible for statutory deductions, or as independent contractors, in which case the onus is on the individual.

xiv. Agreements should be drawn up for all current loans and/or the loan written off. All loans should be correctly recorded on the balance sheet. The Board should discuss what policy it wants to adopt with regard to granting loans in future and what controls need to be in place, both in relation to the source of the money and in terms of repayments (e.g. deductions from salary).

At the time of the initial review, NSI was recording most of its financial transactions manually, with some reports produced in Excel. While none of the above recommendations necessitate a computerised system, it would make the task of the Manager much easier, so CANARI recommended the adoption of either QuickBooks or Peachtree.

3.4 Final evaluation meeting

CANARI and NSI remained in contact throughout the process of conducting the perceptions study and financial review, so many recommendations and planning processes were put in place as they arose. However, it was decided that there should be a final evaluation meeting at which CANARI would formally present the findings from the perceptions study and financial review and NSI would evaluate its progress since the first meeting. As with the first meeting, the notes of the meeting were recorded by NSI and are attached at Appendix 4.

As noted, progress had been made in many areas including:
- more transparent and accountable management style, with space for differing views;
- improved internal and external communications;
- more systematic financial record keeping and reporting;
- improved vehicle management;
- greater understanding by members of each other's roles with a concomitant reduction in conflict;
- increased opportunities for all members to benefit from training with skills being built in areas such as tour guide training, forest conservation, shrubs and medicinal plants, bird watching, first aid and life saving techniques, training design,

4. Conclusions
The technical support from CANARI provided NSI with greater insights into its strengths and weaknesses, both from an internal and an external perspective, which served as a stimulus to address some long-standing concerns as well as to identify and seize new opportunities, such as those in research/volunteer tourism. By the end of the project period, Nature Seekers had the broad framework of a strategic plan as well as an annual workplan from which to operate and had significantly improved its financial and other management procedures. Conflict within

the organisation had significantly reduced and plans were starting to be operationalised to improve the organisation's relationship with the local community.

While several of the opportunities for organisational expansion and sustainability identified at the start of the process failed to materialise within the anticipated timeframe (e.g. operationalisation of the Green Fund and the Matura National Park), others subsequently emerged (research/volunteer tourism via Earthwatch and participation in the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme) which have contributed to further raising the NSI profile, locally and internationally, as well as providing a sounder financial and operational base for the future.

While the threat of ill-conceived and rapid development of the north eastern coastline of the country remains, Nature Seekers activities - and the widespread stakeholder support they enjoy - have succeeded in raising the profile of community-based tourism based on conservation and provided an alternative to the prevailing national vision of development based on large scale infrastructure development and foreign investment.

Nature Seekers

Evaluation Retreat Report

1-3 March 2002

APPENDIX 1

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Nature Seekers Retreat

                        1-3 March 2001

Participants

Suzan Lakhan	Chairman
Solomon Aguillera	Vice Chairman
Marissa Ramjattan	Secretary
Marilyn Superville	Assistant Secretary
Richard Villafana	Board Member
Abiraj Rambaran	Board Member
Dennis Sammy	Manager
Andrew Superville	
Anthon Superville	
Raphael Lakhan	
Anita Theodore	
Natasha Inniss	
Rambachan Teelucksingh	
Francis Superville	
Clifford Superville	

Total: 15 members

Facilitator: Vijay Krishnarayan, CANARI

Rules For Retreat

1. One person speak at a time
2. Talk- don't quarrel
3. Start on time
4. Don't be offended by constructive criticism
5. Full participation of all members present
6. Speak your mind
7. Deal with issues not persons
8. Keep discussions within the group

Expectations of Retreat

1. Binding solutions to problems
2. Enable group to live up to responsibility
3. For the group to move forward together
4. For the group to come together as one
5. Follow the rules

APPENDIX 1

6. Individual change leading to group change
7. Look out for each other in the same way
8. Recognize that people are different
9. See each other as family
10. Confidence, trust, truth included in 'manifesto'
11. Go back to the old days without going backwards
12. More cooperation
13. Punctuality
14. No back stabbing
15. Find root cause of problems
16. Coal pot ****

Achievable Expectation at end of Retreat

We can Begin to:
1. Find root cause to problems
2. Start getting the group to move together as one
3. Start getting the group to come together as one
4. Recognize that people are different
5. More cooperation

We can Achieve to:
1. Find root cause to problems
2. Find solution to problems
3. Individual change leading to group change

Why members joined Nature Seekers

- ➤ Out of a love of nature and concern for the environment
- ➤ A social activity and an opportunity to get out of the house
- ➤ A way of doing something about the number of dead turtles on the beach
- ➤ A chance to learn about the environment
- ➤ A chance to do something for the village
- ➤ To be a part of the group

The Way the Group used to be:

- ➤ Emphasis on voluntary effort
- ➤ Environmental concerns and personal development
- ➤ Family spirit

APPENDIX 1

- United purpose
- Togetherness
- Lack of business like approach
- No methods for collecting data

The way the group is now:

- Introduction of fees, charges
- Organized patrols
- Professional approach
    - Cause members to put their individual interests before those of the group
    - Increase suspicion of those responsible for record keeping
    - Cause quarrels over the way in which paid work is distributed, fuelled by competition for the best jobs
- Relies on grants

Changes that are needed suggested by members

Change the way benefits are distributed
- For one year take all the money that the group earns and divide it equally among all members
- Involve more people in the way that rosters for jobs are drawn up

Change the members' motivation for participating in group activities
- Have some social activities and field trips, especially out of the turtle season

Change the way that members treat each other
- Change the atmosphere in the group so that members feel free to speak their mind
- Make sure that the organization's rules apply to all and not just some
- Improve members' communication skills

Strengths of Nature Seekers

1. Doing something good for the community/for the world
2. Differences within the group
3. Dedicated members passionate about turtles
4. Unity of purpose on the beach
5. The talents and abilities of members

APPENDIX 1

Weaknesses of Nature Seekers

1. Lacking of skills
2. Internal divisions and members pulling the group down
3. Isolated from rest of the village
4. Members not growing at the same speed that the organization is developing
5. Perceptions of favoritism
6. Responsibilities not distributed evenly

Opportunities for Nature Seekers

1. Green fund
2. National Park at Matura
3. Research, education and learning
4. Funding agencies – Evaluation exercise – community support

Threats of Nature Seekers

1. Unsustainable development of tourism in North East Trinidad
2. Uncertainty at home (18-18) and abroad (11 Sept.)
3. Oil exploration off the North East coast of Trinidad
4. Disillusioned members

Differences within Nature Seekers

Board of Directors	Ordinary Members
Experienced members	Newer members
Honorary Game Wardens and those with some qualification	Members without special or paper qualifications
Those who do beach work	Those who don't like or can't do beach work
Members who are active all year round	Members who are active during the turtle nesting season
Men	Women

APPENDIX 1

Responses to Reports

1. Mechanism for distributing benefits is a major problem that needs to be addressed {matching voluntary efforts to paid work}
2. No going back {money is good}
3. Merging money with the family feeling has happened
4. But one group is missing
5. There is a difference between family feeling and family as blood
6. Family ties have been a strength of the group

Collective responses to identified changes

Changes in Matura

➢ Agriculture / Coal pit → Block factory → infrastructure
➢ More public awareness
➢ No freedom to slaughter turtles
➢ Proud of their resources
➢ Secondary/ Primary/ pre-school logo
➢ Major developments: chicken farms   – pollution
                         Sawmills   - logging / wind belt
                         Water
                         Sand mining - loss of natural beauty
                         Up graded roads
➢ Increase in employment
➢ Increase in Business
➢ Increase in awareness (community)
➢ Increase in development (roads, office , houses)
➢ Decrease in turtle consumption
➢ More recognition to community

APPENDIX 1

Impact on Nature Seekers

- Increase our ability to create employment
- Self confidence of members
- Increase in image
- Dedication
- Provision of more services
- Increase in self esteem
- Role model
- Professionalism

Changes in Group's Objectives

- From turtle conservation only to nature tours
- From collecting arbitrary information to accurate data
- From volunteer to money
- Create employment while protecting turtles
- More of the general public assistance
- Scientific aspect of data collection
- More respect from the villages
- Environmental education continued

Impact on Nature Seekers

- Create employment
- Loss of confidence
- Contributing to sustainable livelihood
- Good image in country / world
- Personal growth and development
- Greater commitment – more responsibility
- More money – problems with money
- Longer hours – more commitment on members path

Changes in Group's Activities

- From general membership only to general public (vice versa)
- Less personal activities
- Run for turtle
- Christmas dinner

APPENDIX 1

- ➢ River lime
- ➢ Field trips
- ➢ Increase in data collection
- ➢ Better tour guide service
- ➢ Volunteer to pay

Impact on Nature Seekers

- ➢ Negative impact on togetherness
- ➢ Population of turtles identified
- ➢ Reputation
- ➢ Positive behaviors

Changes in the organization of the group

- ➢ Structure
- ➢ From village council structure to board structure
- ➢ From volunteer to paid
- ➢ Increased membership
- ➢ Increased technology
- ➢ Manager
- ➢ More meetings
- ➢ Office development

Impact on Nature Seekers

- ➢ Administration got better
- ➢ More accountability
- ➢ Increase in transparency
- ➢ Less participation in decision making
- ➢ Personal development
- ➢ A lot of fall out
- ➢ Communication with sponsors
- ➢ More opportunity more money
- ➢ Shared information
- ➢ Transparency

APPENDIX 1

Problems to be solved as recommended by members

1. Public Relations
2. Transportation
3. Proper communication system (among group members)
4. No interest in finding out information
5. Involvement
6. Respect for members
7. Work for all year round
8. Angry for small or petty issues
9. Breaking rules – punishment
10. Participation
11. Working together

Categorizing problems	Solution
Proper communication Angry for petty issues Interest in getting information Public relations	Effective system in place for internal communication.
Transportation A good vehicle	Managed transportation system for members
Participation Work for all Breaking of rules More members being involved in group activities	Participation of all members in group activities
Manager to fill post	Someone to accept position as good or better
Working together Respect for members No back stabbing	Bring the group together as one

APPENDIX 1

Strategies to solve problems and persons in charge

1. Effective system in place for internal communications

   - ✓ Suggestion box ► Secretary
   - ✓ Notice board   ►Secretary
   - ✓ Written excuses ►Secretary
   - ✓ Encourage members to call office   ►Chairman
   - ✓ Elect someone to liaise with members who were absent: a stipulated day and time will be set. Absent members must go to the elected person. The elected person must cross-reference notes from meeting with the Secretary, Assistant Secretary and chairman►general membership
   - ✓ Public relations classes ► Manager
   - ✓ Respect personalities   ►All members
   - ✓ Give them activities together   ►board
   - ✓ Ice breaking activities before meeting   ►board

2. Bring the group together as one

   - ✓ Form a committee of three to talk to the dissident group: committee of three consist of Solomon Aguillera, Clifford Superville and Abiraj Rambaran {open for additional members} These three were chosen because they are approachable. They will report to the board.   They will talk to dissidents individually, brief them on the events and decisions at the retreat and encourage participation.
   - ✓ Having an understanding between the two groups and working together for the benefit of Nature Seekers
   - ✓ Involvement in committees
   - ✓ Develop a system that would recognize participation
   - ✓ Confidence must be a pass word
   - ✓ Try taking the negatives and make positives
   - ✓ Recognition given for work done
   - ✓ Monthly Social Events

3. Participation of all group members in all activities

   Objectives
   - ✓ Encourages teamwork
   - ✓ Encourage initiative
   - ✓ Foster equality- Fair play in Benefit sharing
   - ✓ Encourages participation

APPENDIX 1

- ✓ Potential to increase social activities
- ✓ People are going to reach out {initiative}
- ✓ Encourage communication
- ✓ Bring back volunteerism
- ✓ Identify workers in organization to become Board members

Rules
- ✓ Points should only be issued at meetings
- ✓ Three records of this point system will be made: Note Book
  - Spread Sheet
  - Poster
- ✓ Members cannot nominate themselves
- ✓ Points cannot be subtracted
- ✓ Total benefits issued will be based on total points per person divided by 100 and multiply by the total points accumulated by all members.
- ✓ Points should be awarded to board members as they are elected
- ✓ Only one vague issue can be awarded to a member per month
- ✓ Points should be given for committees/ team effort

Manager needs to fine tune idea. It is flagged for next meeting.

4. Managed transportation system for members

- ✓ Present resources: A Bedford truck to sell
  - 10 licensed drivers {class 3}
- ✓ Options: Land Rover {long base} used
  - Hiace / Kia {rack and cabin} used
- ✓ Special insurance to transport people on open tray
- ✓ Roster drivers: Must reach early
  - Daily checks on vehicle
  - Keep vehicle over night
  - Return to office by 10am unless otherwise stated
  - Once a month servicing by assigned driver
- ✓ Maintenance: Daily wash by members other that drivers
- ✓ Rent of vehicle at small fee to members and higher rates for non-members.

Andrew Superville and Abiraj Rambaran are responsible for sourcing vehicle and members will decide which to purchase.

APPENDIX 2

**NATURE SEEKERS ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE**

PARTNERS/ FUNDING ORGANISATIONS

Name:

_____

Position:

_____

Organisation:

_____

Relationship with NSI

1.   Briefly describe the activity or project(s) that was funded by your organisation or company
_____
_____
_____

2.   How would you assess the NSI' work in Matura and in Trinidad and Tobago?

Highly effective □   Effective □   Not effective □

Please explain
_____
_____
_____

3.   Has NSI helped you to achieve your own organisation's or company's programme objectives? Yes □
     No □

Please explain:
_____
_____
_____

Project management

4.   Please suggest any improvements that NSI could make in the design, implementation or
     administration of projects and activities.
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX 2

5. Is there anything that would dissuade you from funding NSI projects in the future? If yes, please explain

_____
_____
_____

NSI's role

Nature Seeker's objectives are:
e) To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members.
f) To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs.
g) To improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Development.
h) To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote Community efforts.

6. Do you think NSI is fulfilling its objectives?   Yes □   No □

Please explain

_____
_____
_____

7. Do you think that NSI' objectives need to change to meet the environmental and community needs of Trinidad and Tobago and Matura in the next 5 – 10 years?   Yes □
    No □

Please explain

_____
_____
_____

8. What would you consider to be some of the key organisational, environmental and community issues that are likely to impact NSI' work in the next 5 – 10 years?

_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

APPENDIX 2

**NATURE SEEKERS ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS STUDY**

**GOVERNMENT AGENCIES/ OTHER COLLABORATING ORGANISATIONS AND
INDIVIDUALS**

Name _____

Position _____

Organisation _____

Relationship with NSI

1. What is the nature of your/ your organisation's relationship with NSI?
_____

2. Does your work with NSI assist you in meeting your own programme/ agency's objectives?
      Yes □   No □

Please explain
_____
_____
_____

NSI as a partner

3. From your experience of working with NSI, what would you say are the organisation's strengths and weaknesses? (e.g. skills, structure, approach, resources)?

Strengths_____
_____
_____

Weaknesses _____
_____
_____

4. Would you like to continue working with NSI in the next 5 – 10 years?   Yes □   No □

5. If yes, what issues would like to address with NSI and/or what relationship would you like to develop with NSI during this period?

_____
_____
_____

6. If you answered No to question 4, why will you not continue a working relationship with NSI?

_____
_____

APPENDIX 2

NSI's role

Nature Seeker's objectives are:
a) To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members.
b) To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs.
c) To improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Development.
d) To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote Community efforts.

7. Do you think NSI is fulfilling its objectives?   Yes □   No □
Please explain
_____
_____
_____

8. Do you think that NSI's objectives need to change to meet the environmental and community needs of Trinidad and Tobago and Matura in the next 5 – 10 years? Yes □   No □

Please explain
_____
_____
_____

9. What would you consider to be some of the key organisational, environmental and community issues that are likely to impact NSI's work in the next 5 – 10 years?

_____
_____
_____

10. Are there any other issues that you would like to collaborate with NSI or that you feel NSI need to address?

_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

APPENDIX 2

NATURE SEEKERS ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS STUDY

NGO/CBO

Name _____

Position _____

Organisation _____

Relationship with NSI

1.   What is the nature of your organisation's relationship with NSI?

_____

2.   Has NSI helped your organisation in meeting its own objectives?
Please explain:

_____

_____

_____

NSI as a partner

3.   From your experience of working with NSI, what would you say are the organisation's strengths and weaknesses (e.g. skills, structure, approach, resources)?

Strengths_____

_____

_____

Weaknesses_____

_____

_____

4.   Would you like to continue working with NSI in the next 5 – 10 years and are there specific issues that you would like NSI' assistance with?
Yes □   No □

5.   Please explain how you see your relationship with NSI developing in the next 5 – 10 years:

_____

_____

_____

6.   If you answered No to question 4, why will you not continue a working relationship with NSI?

_____

_____

APPENDIX 2

7.   Are there areas in which you feel your organisation could assist NSI?

Please explain

_____
_____

NSI's role

Nature Seeker's objectives are:
  a.   To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members.
  b.   To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs.
  c.   To improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Development.
  d.   To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote Community efforts.

8.   Do you think NSI is fulfilling its objectives?   Yes □   No □
Please explain:
_____
_____
_____

9.   Do you think that NSI's objectives need to change to meet the environmental and community needs
     of Trinidad and Tobago and Matura in the next 5 – 10 years? Yes □   No □
Please explain:
_____
_____
_____

10.   Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with regard to NSI's work or in your
      relationship with NSI?
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

APPENDIX 2

NATURE SEEKERS ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS STUDY

Private Sector Tour Operators

Name _____

Position _____

Organisation_____

Relationship with NSI

1. What is the nature of your relationship with NSI?
_____

2. Has NSI helped in developing your own business and image?
     Yes □   No □
Please explain
_____
_____
_____

NSI as a partner

3. From your experience of working with NSI, what would you say are the organisation's strengths and weaknesses (e.g. skills, structure, approach, resources)?
Strengths_____
_____
_____

Weaknesses _____
_____
_____

4. Would you like to continue working with NSI in the next 5 – 10 years?
     Yes □   No □

5.   If Yes, how do you see your relationship with NSI developing in the next 5 – 10 years?
_____
_____
_____

6. If you answered No to question 4, why will you not continue a working relationship with NSI?
_____
_____

APPENDIX 2

7. Are there areas in which you feel your business could assist NSI?

Please explain

_____

_____

NSI's role

Nature Seeker's objectives are:
a)   To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members.
b)   To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs.
c)   To improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Development.
d)   To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote Community efforts.

8. Do you think NSI is fulfilling its objectives?   Yes ☐   No ☐
Please explain?

_____
_____
_____

9.   Do you think that NSI's objectives need to change to meet the environmental and community needs of Trinidad and Tobago and Matura in the next 5 – 10 years?
      Yes ☐   No ☐
Please explain:

_____
_____
_____

The tourism product

   10. What would you consider to be the key issues regarding Matura's and Trinidad and Tobago's tourism product that are likely to impact NSI' work in the next 5 – 10 years?

_____
_____
_____

Other

   11. Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with regard to NSI' work or in your relationship with NSI?

_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

APPENDIX 2

NATURE SEEKERS ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS STUDY

Associate Members

Relationship with NSI

1. How did you become an associate member of NSI?

_____

_____

NSI as a partner

2. From your experience as an associate member of NSI, what would you say are the organisation's strengths and weaknesses (e.g. skills, structure, approach, resources)?

Strengths_____

_____

_____

Weaknesses_____

_____

_____

3. Have you been regularly involved in NSI activities and events and do you feel that your skills have been adequately utilized by the organisation?

Yes □   No □

Please explain:

_____

_____

_____

4. Are there areas in which you feel you could further assist NSI? Please explain

_____

_____

NSI's role

Nature Seeker's objectives are:
   e.   To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members.
   f.   To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs.
   g.   To improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Development.
   h.   To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote Community efforts.

5. Do you think NSI is fulfilling its objectives?   Yes □   No □
Please explain:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 2

6.   Do you think that NSI's objectives need to change to meet the environmental and community needs of Trinidad and Tobago and Matura in the next 5 – 10 years? Yes □   No □
Please explain:

_____
_____
_____

Challenges

7.   What would you consider to be some of the key organisational, environmental and community issues that are likely to impact NSI' work in the next 5 – 10 years?

_____
_____
_____

Other

8.   Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with regard to NSI' work or in your relationship with NSI?

_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

APPENDIX 2

NATURE SEEKERS ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS STUDY

Community Members

Perception of NSI
1. Have you been involved in/contributed to any NSI activities and events?
        Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes or no, please explain?
_____
_____

2. Is NSI supported by the community of Matura?
        Yes ☐   No ☐

If no, why not?
_____
_____

3.   Has NSI contributed to the development of Matura?
            Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, in what way?
_____
_____

4. How could NSI' contribution to Matura be improved?

_____
_____

5.   How should NSI get more community persons involved in its organisation and activities?
_____
_____

6.   What do you think have been NSI's successes and failures?

Successes _____

_____

Failures _____

_____

NSI's role
Nature Seeker's objectives are:

APPENDIX 2

   i. To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members.
   j. To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs.
   k. To improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Development.
   l. To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote Community efforts.

7. Do you think NSI is fulfilling its objectives? Yes □ No □ Some □

Please explain. If some, please indicate which ones.
_____
_____

8. Do you have any comments or suggestions on how NSI could improve its programme to meet the community's needs?

_____
_____
_____

9. How long have you been a member of the Matura community? _____

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

f

APPENDIX 3: Table 1 Stakeholder responses

		Stakeholders				
		Partners/Funding organisations	**Government agencies/collaborating organisations**	**NGOs/CBOs**	**Private sector tour operators**	**Assoc**
Common Questions	NS' strengths		▪ Membership commitment and dedication to the work of the Organisation and discipline in carrying this out ▪ Possession of great knowledge on the biology and behaviour of turtles ▪ Links with the community ▪ Good community support ▪ Good promotion of the Organisation and good national and regional reputation ▪ Successful co-management and community-based eco-tourism model initiative ▪ Professionalism ▪ Good organisational structure ▪ Ability to grow as an organisation ▪ Effective marketing ▪ Ideas on development and project design ▪ Ability to provide consistent, but narrowly-focused, community employment ▪ Ability to lobby organisations for assistance, funding and equipment ▪ Excellent leadership and competent workforce ▪ Ability to transfer knowledge to members as well as to non-residents ▪ Willingness to share experiences and expertise with others	▪ Ability to focus on core business without getting too distracted ▪ Good administrative structure (breaking away from Village Council-type structure) ▪ High degree of passion and commitment by core members ▪ Good presentation and communication skills ▪ In-depth knowledge of turtles ▪ Ability to attract funding	▪ Knowledgeable guides ▪ Efficient and professional guide service ▪ Good communication skills ▪ Enthusiastic interpretive staff ▪ A good relationship with Forestry Division ▪ Community roots	▪ De vo ▪ Or w ob ▪ We is

APPENDIX 3: Table 1 Stakeholder responses

		Partners/Funding organisations	Government agencies/collaborating organisations	NGOs/CBOs	Private sector tour operators	Assoc
			Stakeholders			
NS' weaknesses			▪ Inability to expand membership base to include members of the wider community ▪ Not completely accepted as an organisation in the community which has led to declining community involvement ▪ Actions do not reflect strong linkages with other agencies. NS needs to be reminded that its growth and development is dependent on its association with other agencies ▪ NS is not fully valued by government for its unique and successful contribution to national biodiversity conservation ▪ Lack of success in identifying consistent, reliable sources of financial support ▪ Insufficient and inconsistent staff development. Members lack training in different areas such as customer service and tour guiding ▪ Measurement of NS' contribution as 'non-use value' as opposed to 'use value' which takes into account the direct and indirect services and benefits of its work. If this dimension of its contribution is not recognised and appreciated, then the volunteers are likely to suffer from low staff morale, program implementation, strategic planning and organisational growth potential will be affected ▪ Inability to develop its full potential in the management of community enterprises such as the sale of food and commercial activities ▪ NS is not aggressive enough to explore new initiatives which may be because it has gotten too comfortable after its initial success	▪ Over-reliance on a few core members which are always over-worked and restricts the group's ability to participate in the M2M Network ▪ Inadequate planning for succession and long-term sustainability ▪ Current lack of involvement in the M2M Network which has led to a perception among some groups that it lacks commitment to the Network	▪ Small percentage of guides need additional training in communication skills. These are not as articulate at getting information across to the visitor and have a tendency to lecture rather that cultivate an atmosphere of relaxation ▪ A lack of infrastructure for interpretation ▪ Lack of diversity in ecotourism product ▪ Rapid personnel turnover ▪ Need for greater efficiency in tour management ▪ Poor relationship with tour operators borne out of poor communication in terms of NS activities and refusal to grant concessions on tours considering the amount of money spent by operators advertising and promoting Trinidad and turtle watching abroad ▪ Lack of prompt responses to enquiries which can cost the organisation interested participants	▪ Lir di ge ▪ Po

2

APPENDIX 3: Table 1 Stakeholder responses

		Stakeholders			
		Partners/Funding organisations	**Government agencies/collaborating organisations**	**NGOs/CBOs**	**Private sector tour operators**	**Assoc**
Willingness to continue working with NS		▪ Yes, projects funded thus far have been well managed and accounted ▪ A strong commitment to issues surrounding the environment and focus on public education meets the environmental criteria for funding	▪ NS has done good work and is expected to continue in this manner with the formalisation of a co-management agreement with the Forestry Department (Forestry Department) ▪ It would be good to work with NS in the future to develop a first class product, facilities and services (Tourism Development Company) ▪ It would be good to continue work with NS to help develop its strengths and address its weaknesses (UNECLAC) ▪ Would like to help develop NS' leadership and transform its perceived value contribution, as well as conduct a Total Economic Valuation exercise (Tet Ansanm) ▪ Would like to help improve NS' use of science-based tools and its ability to manage research programmes as distinct from its eco-tourism programme; assist with staff development and training; increase scientific outputs such as peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations; and promote more effective and enduring community outreach (WIDECAST)	NS can help with some specific issues and projects: ▪ The Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme project ▪ Development of a collective vision and plan for the M2M Network, with identified areas of implementation for local CBOs both individually and collectively ▪ Development of a stronger advocacy role for the M2M Network as a whole	▪ Will continue doing tours with NS but experiencing a level of anxiety at the potential for tour fares to be increased without advance warning as has happened before ▪ There may be room for cultivating a more refined tourism product and a more efficient mechanism for sharing training experiences in the future	▪ Ye

APPENDIX 3: Table 1 Stakeholder responses

		Stakeholders			
		Partners/Funding organisations	**Government agencies/collaborating organisations**	**NGOs/CBOs**	**Private sector tour operators**	**Assoc**
NS' fulfilment of its objectives:						
a. To provide opportunities for the growth and develop-ment of its members		▪ A positive impact has been made through the recent funding of a research and community library project ▪ Some donors are not familiar with what is being done in this area	Yes ▪ Continuous training is provided to its members to improve their skills ▪ Partial fulfilment, could be more effective No ▪ This is its weakest achievement	▪ NS appears to be fulfilling this objective at least with regard to its most prominent members. No comment can be made on the growth and development of the membership as a whole	▪ Only members can answer this question ▪ Some progress made, but the degree of success needs to be quantified	
b. To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs		▪ A positive impact has been made on nesting turtle populations at Matura	▪ There is continuous monitoring of all development in the Matura district that impacts on the environment ▪ There is bias toward the marine side of protection with less aggression on the terrestrial front ▪ This is its strongest achievement ▪ Partial fulfilment, could be more effective	▪ It fulfils its objective very well in the area of turtles, but not enough is known of its activities in the area of overall biodiversity protection	▪ Biodiversity is protected, but not sure about other areas of Matura ▪ Some progress made, but the degree of success needs to be quantified	
c. To improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Develop-ment		▪ Through the efforts of NS Matura has gained public recognition and increased visitor activity and enterprise development related to visitor services	▪ The community can benefit from the development of the library and computer facilities being carried out ▪ The promotion of host homes encourages community tourism ▪ Partial fulfilment, could be more effective	▪ Not enough is known of community development through community tourism to comment	▪ There is speculation that the community is improved as a result of money from visitors ▪ Some progress made, but the degree of success needs to be quantified	▪ D pl tu a
d. To assist and work with other organisa-tions to improve and promote Community efforts		▪ NS is now a household name among environmental groups in Trinidad and Tobago ▪ It supports other organisations in their development	▪ NS works with other organisations to improve and promote community efforts ▪ Partial fulfilment, could be more effective No ▪ This is another poor achievement	▪ Its involvement in the M2M Network could be increased as a demonstration of working with other community organisations ▪ Its relationship with Tobago groups could be improved. This relationship is constrained by geographical location and must rely on telephone communication.	▪ Not sure about the relationship with other organisations, but NS has a bad reputation with the Tour Operators' Association ▪ Some progress made, but the degree of success needs to be quantified	

APPENDIX 3: Table 1 Stakeholder responses

		Stakeholders				
		Partners/Funding organisations	**Government agencies/collaborating organisations**	**NGOs/CBOs**	**Private sector tour operators**	**Assoc**
Need for NS' objectives to change		Yes ▪ If it is to meet the environmental and community needs of Trinidad and Tobago and Matura in next 5-10 years objectives need to adapt to whatever changes present themselves No ▪ Objectives are adequate to address local and national environmental and community needs in the medium term. They simply need to be strengthened	Yes ▪ Objectives should never stay the same but should constantly change in response to trends and needs ▪ Objective need to change as the Organisation expands in order to alter the Organisation's role at the national level ▪ NS needs to take advantage of the opportunity to become self sufficient. Land in possession should be developed, possibly into camp facilities, and audio-visual room for orientations. Entrepreneurship can grow ▪ Objectives may need to change to allow NS to transform itself from a struggling, underpaid NGO into one which is sustainable, self-confident and mature No ▪ While the objectives may stay the same, the method of delivery can be refined and the objectives better implemented	Yes ▪ There needs to be balance between its core mission of focusing on and benefiting the community of Matura ▪ It needs to recognise that some of its objectives can be better achieved on a regional level	No ▪ Existing objectives are appropriate, what is required is development of specific targets associated with these objectives ▪ It is government's objectives which should change	Yes ▪ O ch as co av re th pr fl na
Key issues likely to impact NS in 5-10 years:						
	a. Organisational	▪ The need for members' training in administration and marketing of the Organisation as well as in leadership skills as the Organisation develops and grows ▪ The need for accurate costing of Organisation's and members' input into	▪ There will be need for security of tenure of the land which NS occupies in the face of governmental changes. So, NS should secure a Memorandum of Agreement with government for this arrangement ▪ NS will need to prepare for sustained growth, be aware of the Organisation's limits and how to deal with this ▪ The need for increased professionalism ▪ As the Organisation is growing there will be		▪ The quality of the tourism product needs to be improved ▪ The need for diversity of the tourism product ▪ Carrying capacity with respect to level of disturbance from turtle-watching will need to be determined ▪ Need for contingency	

APPENDIX 3: Table 1 Stakeholder responses

		Partners/Funding organisations	Government agencies/collaborating organisations	NGOs/CBOs	Private sector tour operators	Assoc
						Stakeholders
		project activities for determining more accurate value of Organisation's contribution to projects ▪ The need to adopt a business approach to project implementation, income generation and investment of earnings	need for development of the structure and leadership ▪ Need for a reliable donor base		planning for changes in global tourism	
	b. Environmental	▪ Onshore and offshore development activities which will impact negatively on turtle nesting ▪ Industrial development in the area ▪ Deforestation ▪ Hotel construction and development	▪ Beach front development which will impact on turtle nesting ▪ Ill-conceived and rapid development of the north east sector of Trinidad	▪ Unrestrained development in Salybia or Balandra may impede or negatively affect the protection of biodiversity in Matura ▪ Coastal development	▪ The building of the Blanchisseuse to Matelot road	▪ Ov ▪ Ex ▪ Co bea thr dev
	c. Community	▪ The need for a more proactive approach to community education in environmental issues apart from leatherback turtles ▪ The need for better community involvement, support and linkages, cooperation and integration within Matura and among other communities	▪ Need for community buy-in and sustained community support for the programme	▪ The ability for politicians and the private sector to divide and exploit the local people and communities due to the focus of each CBO solely on its village or community		

APPENDIX 3: Table 2 Responses from community members

		Stakeholders
		Community members
Common Questions	Community support for NS	Yes (4) ▪ There is some support, although how much is not known (2) ▪ NS members are all from the village and do what they can to uplift it (1) ▪ No one has ever said anything negative about the group although the Matura community is generally not a supportive community (1) No (7) ▪ People accuse NS of being a group comprised of mainly family members and feel excluded (4) ▪ The community finds the group too aloof. It is not community-driven (2) ▪ Many people feel as if their rights to the beach are curtailed (1) ▪ Most of the community is not involved in NS and do not know what events take place except that the Organisation deals with turtles. Youth, however, do participate in its events when there are any (1)
	NS' contribution to development of Matura	Yes (9) ▪ Through employment (3) ▪ Bringing Matura national and international recognition (3) ▪ Through encouragement of tourist visits (2) ▪ Providing training for members (1) ▪ Financial contribution to Village Council (1) ▪ Protection of turtles on a voluntary basis (1) ▪ Through beach clean-up activities (1) ▪ Providing community education, but more needs to be done to reach the parents and grandparents in the community (1) ▪ Providing some education to the community, but there is need for more education of the young people in the schools (1) No (4) ▪ All benefits go only to NS (2)

APPENDIX 3: Table 2 Responses from community members

		Stakeholders
		Community members
	Improving NS' contribution to Matura	▪ Getting more community people involved in the Organisation and its activities as opposed to mostly family members (7) ▪ Recruiting more young people for work or general involvement in the Organisation (3) ▪ Sharing business opportunities with villagers example letting them know when tourists will be arriving and possible ways for gaining an income from these visits in terms of food preparation and host homes (2) ▪ Finding out what the community needs are (1) ▪ Letting the community sell on the beach at night (1) ▪ Becoming more service oriented (1) ▪ Giving lectures to schools outside of turtle season (1) ▪ Working with other groups including those that do handicraft (1) ▪ Paying volunteers (1) ▪ Organising a tourism workshop and exploring other areas apart from turtles (1) ▪ Providing greater support to children in sports events (1) ▪ Giving greater assistance to the Village Council (1)
	NS to get more community persons involved in its organisation and activities	▪ By meeting with and talking to the community on a more personal level about its projects. NS needs to break the barriers that exist between it and the community and initiate contact (7) ▪ Starting a campaign putting up posters, signs and spreading its message in the schools and community centre (4) ▪ Mingling with the community by taking more active part in community football, cricket, Best Village with more than the same two representatives. In this way NS appears to be a part of the community (2) ▪ Providing the community with general information possibly through a village meeting (2) ▪ Dismantling the clannishness associated with the Organisation (1) ▪ Getting more of the youth involved in its activities (1) ▪ Giving information on how to become a part of the group (1) ▪ NS has honestly tried and membership forms have been distributed, but the community listens to the wrong people. The community therefore has developed a mentality in which it will not participate in NS activities if there is nothing in it for the community (1) ▪ Sending invitations to the community to events (1) ▪ Having a Carnival Committee and turtle conservation link (1) ▪ Organising a family day (1) ▪ Establishing a library (1) ▪ Designing a youth programme (1) ▪ Recruiting more people for the Organisation (1) ▪ Offering pay and compensation to community members who get involved in activities (1)

APPENDIX 3: Table 2 Responses from community members

	Stakeholders	
		Community members
NS' successes		▪ Protection of turtles through commitment and love for the work that is done (8) ▪ Publicising the plight of the turtles and increasing visitor interest (3) ▪ Construction of an office (2) ▪ Attaining international recognition through receipt of awards (1) ▪ Development of local human resources (1) ▪ Getting support from people outside of the community (1) ▪ Promoting a clean beach (1) ▪ Providing employment (1) ▪ Achievement of success without the help of the community (1) ▪ Achievement of recognition for Matura within and outside Trinidad (1) ▪ Providing tourist accommodation (1)
NS' weaknesses		▪ Not getting more people, the community and other organisations involved in the organisation and activities (4) ▪ Not communicating with the rest of the community, the group's activities are only read about in the newspaper (3) ▪ Only family members and friends are employed (2) ▪ Not getting community support (1) ▪ Continuity in employment – paid employment does not last more than 6 months (1) ▪ Not enough guides per tourist group (1) ▪ Work is distributed to those who NS finds favour with and denied those who they don't (1)
NS' fulfilment of its objectives:		
a. To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members		Yes (14) ▪ Only for some members chosen by NS itself (2) ▪ Only some of its members prosper (1) ▪ Members are never known to complain (1) ▪ More needs to be done to train its members (1) No (1) ▪ There is a lack of technical training (1)

APPENDIX 3: Table 2 Responses from community members

	Stakeholders	
		Community members
b. To protect the biodiversity of the wild fauna and flora of Matura and environs	Yes (16) ▪ Only turtles are protected. It has not maximised its potential as a group in biodiversity protection (6) ▪ Very little. There is no physical protection, only a bit of education given (1) No (0)	
c. To improve the Matura Community through Community Tourism Development	Yes (1) No (12) ▪ NS operates not as a community, but private organisation and do things on their own (1) ▪ Tourists visit NS and leave the next day without visiting the waterfall (1)	
d. To assist and work with other organisations to improve and promote Community efforts	Yes (2) ▪ Sometimes other groups do not support NS (1) No (12) ▪ Groups in Matura all seem to want to retain their own identity and won't join forces (1)	
Improvements of NS programme to meet community needs	▪ More involvement with the community and community groups through a structured approach, meeting with the people one on one to invite them to events, letting them know that they are a part of the community and tourism. Use someone with the ability to do public relations (5) ▪ Having more school lectures (1) ▪ Having workshops (1) ▪ Having a youth programme to involve the youth who are unemployed in the community (1) ▪ Expand the tourism product to include a hiking trail (1) ▪ Give everyone an equal opportunity for involvement (1)	

NATURE SEEKERS
Evaluation
11-12 September 2004.

Participants
1. Suzan Lakhan – Chairman
2. Dennis Sammy – V. Chairman/Manager
3. Richard Villafana –Board Member
4. Marissa Ramjattan – Secretary
5. Savita Maryeun – Board Member
6. Christopher Mitchell
7. Rocky Aguillera
8. Anderson Inniss
9. Abiraj Rambaran
10. Ronald Williams

Facilitators:
1. Vijay Krisnarajan
2. Sarah Mc Intoch
3. Allana Lumlock

Ground rules:
1. Start on time
2. One person speak at a time
3. Talk-don't quarrel
4. Speak your mind
5. Don't be offended by constructive criticism
6. Full participation by all members
7. Deal with issues not persons
8. Keep discussions within the group
9. Don't stray from issue at hand

Expectations of retreat:
1. To complete what was started
2. Improvements
3. Voice concerns to solve issues
4. Leave with a vision for progress
5. Direction (Long term)
6. Able to move forward with a plan
7. Contribute to taking the plan forward
8. Majority of plans, detailed and strategize for implementation
9. Immediate short term plan (Financial) – family life
10. Evaluation of self – Personal goals
11. Financial recording system
12. Strategic work plan accepted by all
13. Identifying and planning – Financial management

APPENDIX 4

Changes from 2002:
- Half males - half females
- Members were not out spoken
- Uncertainty (18-18) (9-11)
- Less sub-groups (Not overwhelming)
- More work less time to fuss
- Inclusion of family in social activity
- More contribution by the membership – suggestions – active in implementing
- Fewer members
- Training exposure to seminars
- Excellent secretary

General changes:
- Open management – criticism, suggestions
- Individual members aware of other responsibilities
- Records improved
- Asset acquisition
- New membership
- Training opportunities
- Families support
- Continued togetherness
- Members all have different skills
- {Long term members/Short term members}
- Holistic   Specific

Opportunities Identified in 2002
- Green fund – Did not materialize
- National park 1981 – Slow progress (Identified board legislation) Training employment
- Evaluation
- Research – weighing data, plan for next year
- Global uncertainty - Caribbean perceived as being more safer, thus more foreigners come in and less locals leave
-

Threats:
- Tourism development ; infrastructure, legality – TIDCO, lack of knowledge, waste disposal, negative impact – litter
- Uncertainty – political threat/crime (kidnapping), opportunity – global uncertainty
- Oil industry continues to be a threat

Improvements from 2002 – 2004:
1. Internal communications – 70% improved
2. Vehicle management – 50% improved
3. Member participation – 80% improved

4. Management – 80% improved
5. Working together – 80% improved

Participants of perception study:

Stakeholders
Partners
Community
Sponsors
Associate members

Strengths:

Knowledge on sea turtles
Professionalism and training
Focus/dedication
Conservation/protection work
Attaining recognition for Matura
Ability to attract funding

Weaknesses:

Information and communication
Linkages and networking
Long -term sustainability
Product development
 Members contribution undervalued
Community relations with Matura

Fulfilment of objectives:

To provide opportunities for the growth and development of its members – undecided
Protect biodiversity – strong
Improve community – undecided
Work with other organizations – undecided

Financial management procedure:
Record keeping:

Income/Expenditure book or ledger
Petty cash book or ledger
Cherque and cash voucher
Receipts/Invoices for expenditure
Receipt copies for income
Record of capital assets
Loan agreements

Reporting:

Financial income and expenditure reports (monthly)
Balance sheet
Treatment of capital assets

Statutory reporting (PAYE, NIS, company tax)

Controls:
Separation of duties; Signatories
Authorized expenditure; ceiling - manager
                                   board
                                   membership
Signs a cheque:
$ limits are in place
Timely bank deposits
Bank reconciliation
Financial policies and procedures documented

Audit:
Audit of financial statements

Loans:
To members
Records of terms
Policy

Cash management:
Selection and management of bank accounts to;
    Maximize interest
    Retain transparency on individual grants/donors give flexibility – overdraft facility
Budgeting and cash flow forecasts

Community development programme:
Activities:
Three activities -1 Stakeholders
                          2 Community
                          3 School
1. (a) Stakeholders – newsletter, once per year
                  develop rationale and objective
                  resource personnel
                  article, photos
Access data on turtles enabling stakeholders to put on internet

(b) Quarter implementation
   Bringing information together

(c) Disseminate information/Hard copies and internet
   October evaluation
   Leader community education officer
   Need – stationeries
   Plan December objective/rationale
   Layout contents

APPENDIX 4

2. Community:
   Planning 1st quarter: Day of display, needs and goals of community
   Implementation in 1st quarter:
   Training and education programme
   Evaluation of questionnaire
   There may be re-planning based on the assessment
   Community development officer
   Needs –Stationary, equipment, transportation and venues

   Programme for children:
   Activities for school
   Design activity for children
   It was recommended that the programme not be runed for a whole year

- 1st quarter poster competition (Spirit of community)
  Their perception of the community
  Field trip – culture,history,create and appreciation
  Essay about history and culture.Good ones will be placed on the newspaper
  Poster winners will be done in post card

3. Primary school:
   Replanning will be done at a different level or with a different school
   Needs – stationeries,transportation,incentives

Promotional marketing:
Development of tours and tour packages
Develop and actualize

Financial tour pricing:
Consultation
Run a live tour
Use a group as a study group
Evaluate after participation to compare with other pricing strategies

Focus on pricing:
All tours done before pricing is finalized would contribute to forming a pricing strategy
Persons in charge/manager and board
Cost – money for guide done in 1st quarter

Selection of distribution channels:
Database containing all names would make it easy to locate potential customers;
Fliers to stick on taxis
Brochures for maxi taxis 1st quarter
All distributions will run and an assessment will be done on the targeted audience
Select the most cost effective model
Print and distribute
- The needs of people might change thus the method of advertisement may also change

APPENDIX 4

- Various advertisement sites would include; hotels, press, television, radio

Cost incurred : web designing, graphic design, printing, transportation and distribution

Responses would be reviewed

Manager spare head

Security and incentive plan:

- Research options for health plan, life plan and critical illness plan SAGICOR and ALGICO
- Guardian life to explore options for pension plan via Dr. James
- NIS for information on statutory obligations

Suzan will report by November 3rd

Membership loans:

Policy on loans and advances on salaries

Policy should be made by NS

   How much money, for what, how long, who is eligible, repayment plan and guarantees, interest rates

   A loan was recommended for health

Loans to members could be a contravene action against agencies

It may contravene NS constitution as an NGO

History of insecurity and bad payments from members

Training:

- Tour guide training (methods, dissemination of information)
- Forest conservation programme
- Bird watching
- Howler monkeys
- Butterflies
- Rocks and their formation
- Shrubs and medicinal plants
- First aid
- Life saving techniques
- Design a training session
- Source materials and prepare documents and deliver training in 6 months(of turtle season) 12 sessions.