



**RBC Royal Bank**

**Report of the Capacity Assessment**

**for the project**

**"Capacity Building for Watershed Management Stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago"**

**May 2013**

**Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)**

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## 1 Introduction

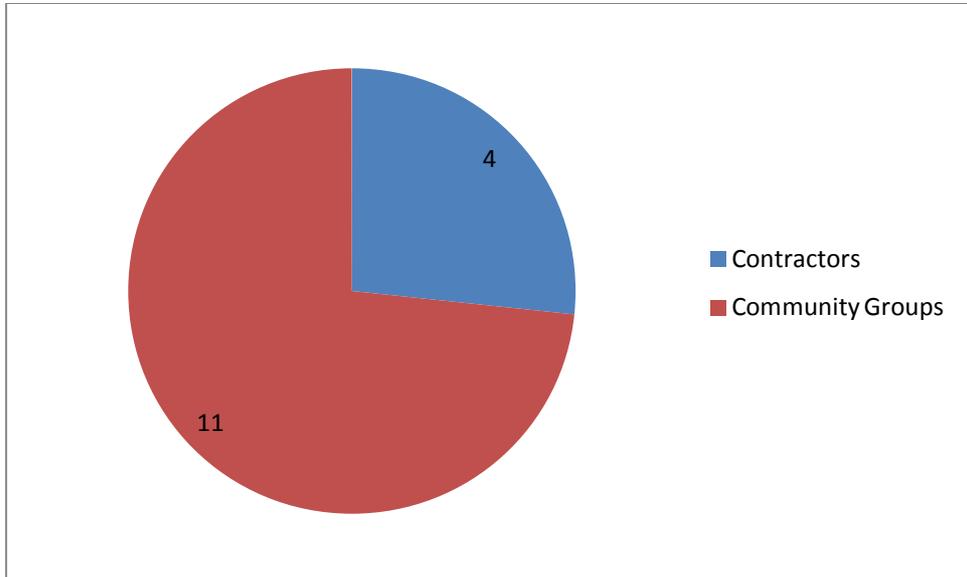
Forest removal coupled with the current and expected impacts of climate change will compromise the availability and quality of freshwater, a critical resource in Trinidad and Tobago. Locally, there have been various initiatives to encourage water conservation and to protect and manage watersheds. These efforts have however, not been able to sufficiently nor sustainably reverse nor reduce the causative issues which compromise freshwater quantity and quality. There is a need therefore to improve the systems which are in place for watershed protection while simultaneously encouraging public awareness and participation in water conservation.

CANARI has undertaken the Capacity Building for Watershed Management Stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago project under its 'Forest and Livelihoods' thematic programme. The goal of this project is to improve the community-based management of watersheds in Trinidad and Tobago through building the capacity of community groups involved in watershed management, to share lessons learnt and best practices in watershed management with each other and to enhance their skills in communicating how their work contributes to clean, safe drinking water.

This project involves the execution of four different project activities which are to be informed by a capacity assessment of project participants to evaluate the capacity of project participants in organisational and watershed management. Results of the assessment will be discussed at a one-day national workshop with the 15 national forest management groups. CANARI will then facilitate a session with project participants to formulate a project work plan, select training topics, select themes for the newspaper series.

## 2 Participants

16 forest management groups from different regions in Trinidad and Tobago were selected for participation in the project. These groups were recommended by the Forestry Division of Trinidad and Tobago, the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP) or participated in activities under CANARI's Forest and Livelihoods Programme. A listing of proposed participants can be found in Appendix 1 of this document. 15 groups accepted the invitation to participate in the project. When contacted, most groups indicated their willingness to participate in this project. All interviewees, with the exception of one, were forthcoming during the interview process. The majority of participating groups are community based groups but some companies are represented in the project. Figure 1 below displays the ratio of different group types in the project.



**Figure 1 Ratio of companies to community groups that were interviewed**

### 3 Method

The interview process took place during April 16<sup>th</sup> and April 27<sup>th</sup> 2013. Representatives of the groups were interviewed via telephone only or via email and telephone, dependent on the preference of the interviewee, in an attempt to evaluate the capacity of project participants in organisational and watershed management. A copy of the interview can be found in Appendix 2.

### 4 Findings

12 participating groups are from Trinidad and three are from Tobago. Figure 1 and Figure 2 below identify the regions in Trinidad and Tobago which are being represented in the project.

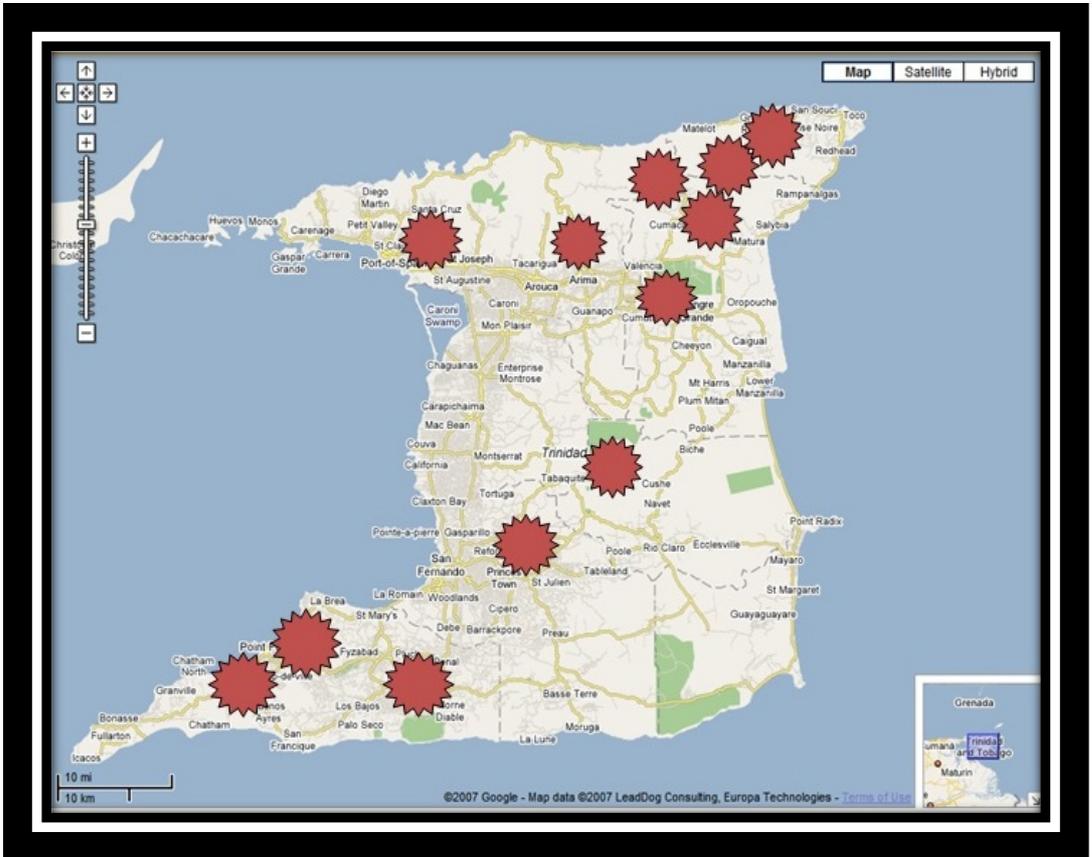


Figure 2 Map highlighting distribution of participating forest management groups in Trinidad

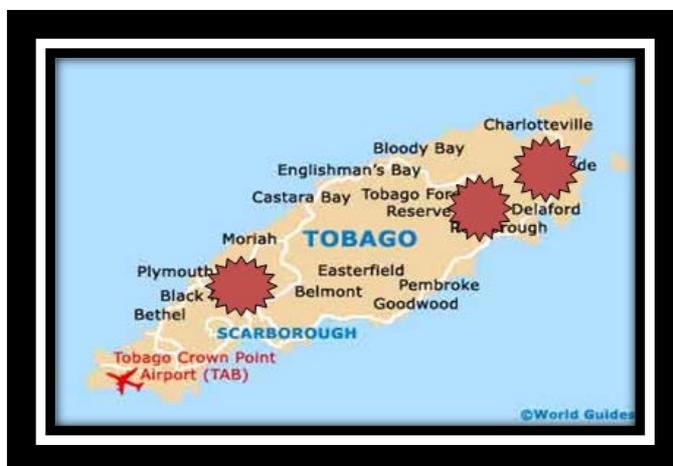


Figure 3 Map highlighting distribution of participating forest management groups in Tobago

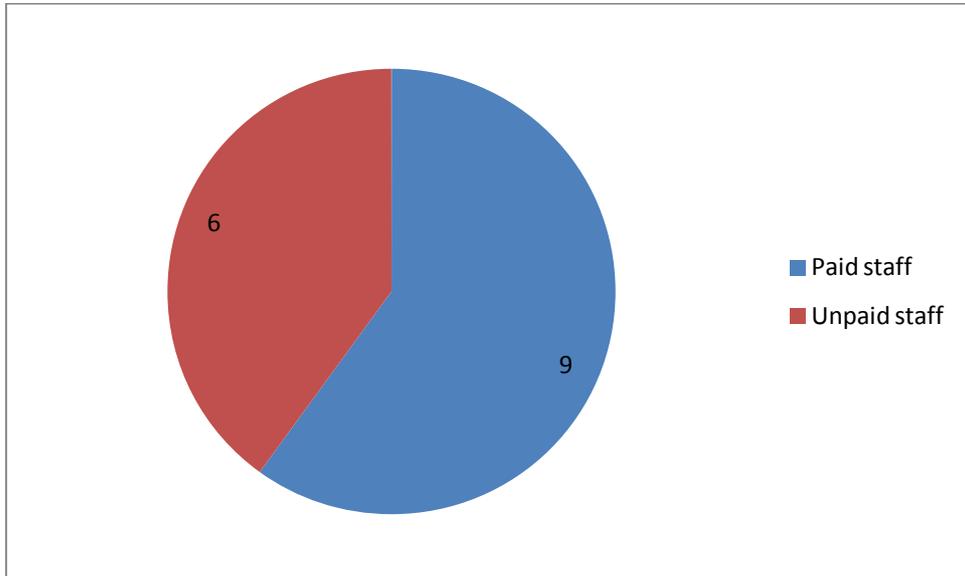
In terms of organisational capacity, below is a list of some trends which were noted:

- All participating groups indicated that they are **legally registered**, either with the Ministry of Legal Affairs or the Ministry of Community Development.
- All groups indicated that they own and use **bank accounts**, except for one group that chose not to answer.
- All groups, except for one that chose not to answer, indicated the presence of **written financial policies and procedures**.
- All groups, except for one that chose not to answer, indicated that they secure **funding** from several sources, but almost half of the groups interviewed expressed a need for additional funding as represented in Figure 9 below.
- As seen in Figure 5 below, less than 50% of the groups indicated that they have **strategic plans** as determined by their members. This may be the reason why there seemed to be confusion when determining the mission and vision for the groups.
- All groups, except for the one that chose not to answer, indicated that they have **good relationships with some relevant government agencies**, but indicated that the good relationship was only with the Reforestation Office.
- When quizzed on their **relationship with other key stakeholders**, such as from civil society groups and private sector, four groups indicated they do not have a relationship with any such group but will like to build one. As seen in Figure 6 below, less than half of the groups indicated that they do not work with groups in their catchment area.
- All groups **communicate to their members and staff** about their work and issues.
- As seen in Figure 7 below, most groups are engaged in **public awareness** activities.
- All groups recognised the importance in communicating their achievements to external stakeholders, however only three groups currently **engage the media**.

In terms of watershed management expertise:

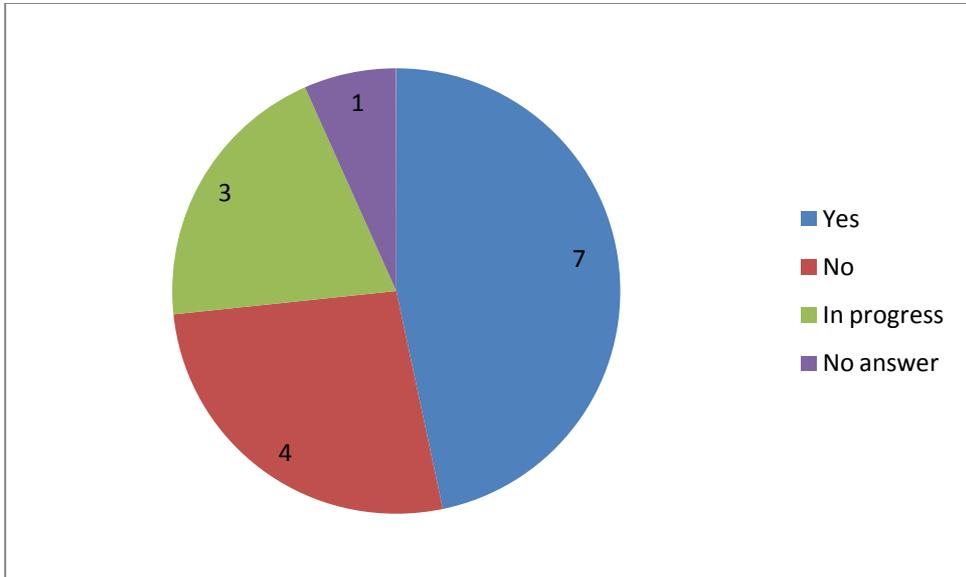
- 11 groups indicated **species selection** is directed from outside the group, either from the Reforestation Offices or from private land owners.
- All groups **retain certain species of trees** when preparing an area for planting.
- As can be seen in Figure 8, most groups engage in some type of **soil conservation** practice.
- While 13 groups indicated that they protect their work areas with **fire traces**, it was found that groups were unable to identify the established standards for fire tracing.
- All groups indicated that they maintain some sort of **record on planting activity**.
- All groups indicated a need to build capacity within their group to **monitor and evaluate** the work that they do.

Some of the participating groups utilise paid staff in their reforestation activities. Figure 4 below highlights the ratio of groups that utilise paid staff to those that utilise unpaid volunteers.

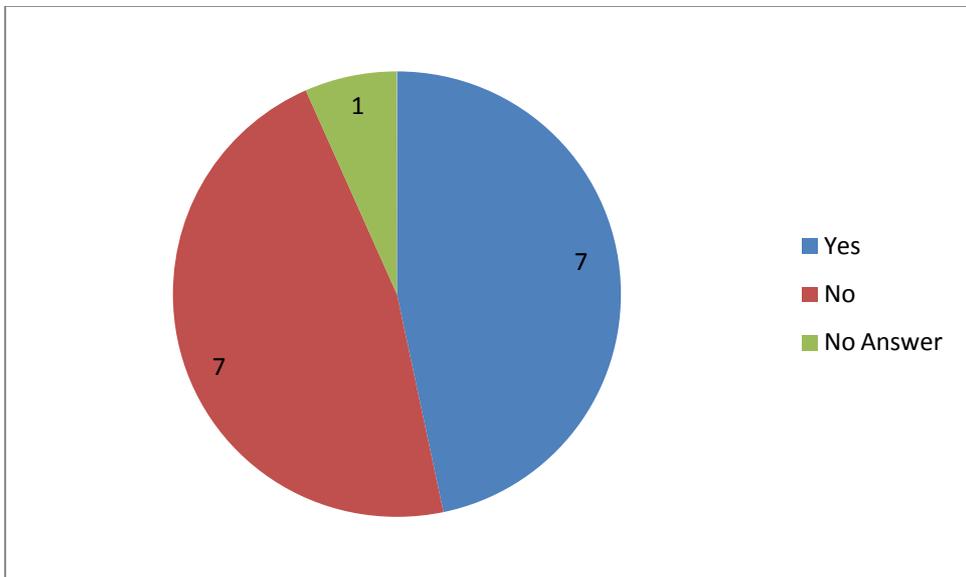


**Figure 4 Ratio of groups that utilise paid staff versus those that utilise volunteers only**

It was found that not all groups that were interviewed currently had strategic plans as determined by their members or staff. Some groups indicated that they are in the process of developing those plans. Figure 5 below gives a breakdown of the responses.

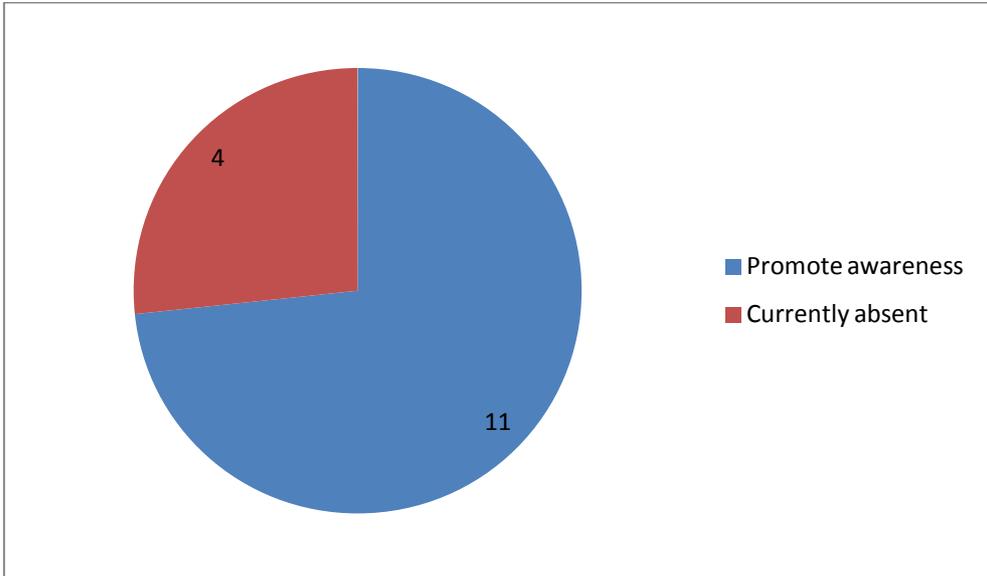


**Figure 5 Ratio of groups that currently have strategic plans as determined by their members**



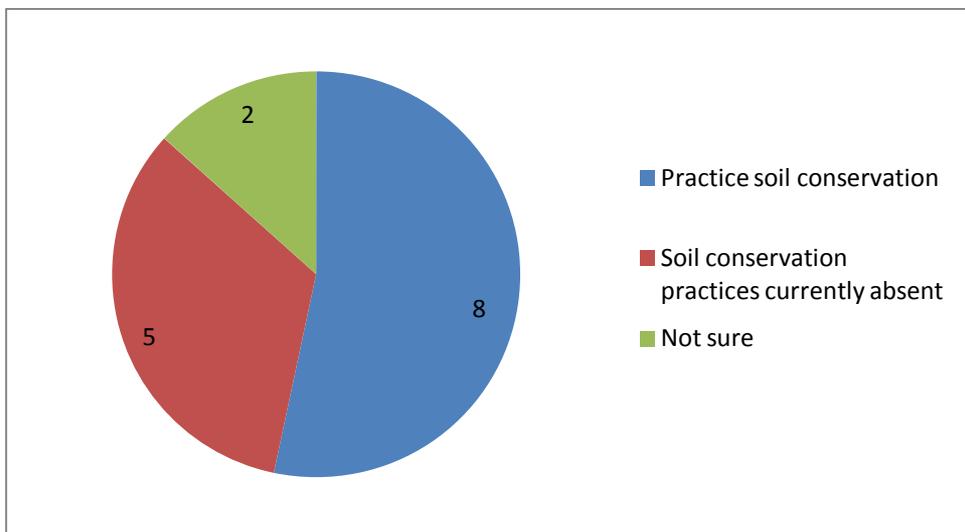
**Figure 6 Ratio of groups that work with other groups within their catchment area**

Although these groups are engaged in invaluable watershed management work, not all groups seek to promote their work by engaging in public awareness activities. Figure 7 below highlights the ratio of groups that are engaged in public awareness activities to highlight their watershed management work.



**Figure 7 Ratio of groups that engage in public awareness for their watershed management work**

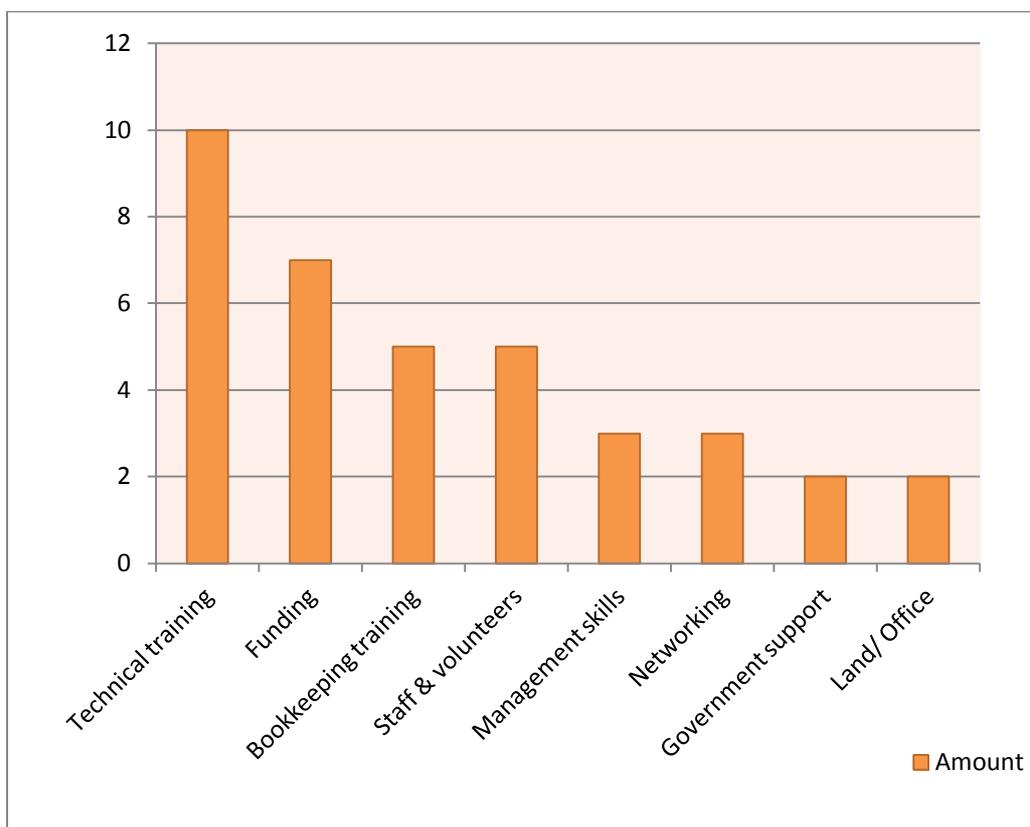
Soil conservation practices are utilised by most of the groups interviewed. Figure 9 below provides a breakdown of the responses given when asked if groups were engaged in soil conservation practices on their sites.



**Figure 8 Ratio of groups that engage in soil conservation practices**

In discussion, all groups expressed a need for assistance in some way or another. Groups were asked to identify the top three areas which they believe are the biggest needs for their organisation to function more effectively; Figure 9 below illustrates the different needs as identified by the different groups.

- Ten groups indicated that they needed additional training in technical areas such as forestry, agro-forestry or agriculture.
- Seven groups believed that they should be given access to more funds for their reforestation work, either to pay additional workers, to increase the pay of current workers or to increase the quality of work that they deliver.
- Some groups also indicated that they wanted to increase their capacity in book-keeping and financial management, as well as management skills.



**Figure 9 Graphical illustration of needs identified by interviewed groups**

## 5 Conclusion

All respondents identified that within their own groups there were significant skill gaps and they felt that a project of this nature can address. They look forward to the different workshops and hope that their members and staff can participate and benefit.

## Appendix 1: Contact details for forest management groups

Contact name	Organisation	Contact number
Adonis, Cristo	Santa Rosa Carib Community	367-8121
Arnold, Winston	Maitagual Unified Community Development	395-8627
Beharry, Sharon	Coromandel Reforestation Group	690 2072
Brown, Donna	Supporters of Natural Diversity in Ecological Wilderness	378 7467
Cordner, Anthony	Fundamental Cultural Group	354-6238
Edwards, Delmond	Argyle Environment Protection Group	359-5040
Fitzjames, Kelly	Brasso Seco Paria Tourism Action Committee	493-4358
Gosine, Nirmal	Royal Maintenance and Janitorial Services Ltd	313-4111
Jaramogi, Akilah	Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project	750 1716
Lakhan Baptiste, Suzan	Nature Seekers	398-3038
Lalman, Constance	La Fillet Village Council	
Maharaj, Dindial	Dindial Maharaj Construction Consulting	680-2583
Peters, Len	Grande Riviere Tourism Development Organisation	359-2478
Ramdeen, Rave	Fullerton Environmental Company Limited	690-3467
Williams, Laura	Anse Fromager Eco/Environmental Protection Organisation	380-6171
Bailey, Sherry	Mafeking Riverside Development	684-9990

Contact name	Organisation	Contact number
Ann *	Group (east central)	
Francis, Brian**		771-1914
Kent, Dain ***	Speyside Village Council	767-5345
Rampersad, Peter ****	Protectors of the Environment (west northern range)	788-7277

\* Contact could not be reach

\*\* Contact could not complete the interview within the specified 2 week interview period

\*\*\* Contact no longer affiliated with Forest Management Group

\*\*\*\* Contact did not agree to participate in project

## Appendix 2: Interview questionnaire

### Capacity building for watershed management stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago

#### 1.1 Contact information

INFORMATION			
Date interviewed		Medium	Face to face/ telephone
Organisation			
Organisation address			
	Tel no:	Fax no:	
	E mail address:	Website:	
Contact person			
	Tel no:	Mobile:	
	E mail address:	Fax no:	

#### 1.2 Organisational capacity to operate as an effective and sustainable organisation<sup>1</sup>

GOVERNANCE			
		Response	Notes/ Comments
1.	Does the organisation have a Board?	Yes/ No	
2.	How well does the Board perform its functions (oversight of financial management, strategic guidance, fundraising, public relations, etc.)?	Yes/ No	
3.	Is the Board regularly changed through a voting process by members?	Yes/ No	
4.	Does the organisation have a mission and vision determined by members?	Yes/ No	

<sup>1</sup> For ranking, 3 is strong and 0 is weak or absent

<b>GOVERNANCE</b>			
		<b>Response</b>	<b>Notes/ Comments</b>
5.	How many active members does the organisation have?	Yes/ No	
6.	How much do members have a say in what the organisation does?	rank 0-3	
7.	How involved are the members in implementing the work of the organisation? (Attending meetings, etc.)	rank 0-3	
9.	Are minutes taken of meetings of the organisation?	Yes/No	
10.	Does the organisation have staff?	Yes/No	
11.	If the answer to Question 10 is yes, how many members of staff are there?	Give number	
12.	Does the organisation have written policies and procedures for managing staff?	Yes/No	
13.	Does the organisation have a bank account?	Yes/No	
14.	Does the organisation have financial policies and procedures? (Authorising signatures, etc.)	Yes/No	
15.	Does the organisation prepare and use budgets?	Yes/No	
16.	What are the sources of income? (grants from donors, members fees, subvention from government, corporate sponsorship, other donations)	List	
17.	Is the organisation legally registered?	Yes/No	
18.	Does the organisation submit regular financial reports to the Board and members?	Yes/No	
19.	Has the organisation ever had an independent audit of its accounts?	Yes/No	

GOVERNANCE			
		Response	Notes/ Comments
20.	Does the organisation have a current strategic plan determined by members? (defined goals / what it wants to do)	Yes/No	
21.	How well is the organisation performing in terms of achievement of its goals?	rank 0-3	
22.	Does the organisation regularly report on its work and achievements?	Yes/No	
23.	Does the organisation have a positive working relationship with key government agencies?	Yes/No and examples	
24.	Does the organisation have linkages with other key stakeholders from civil society, private sector, others? Give examples.	Yes/No and examples	
25.	Are there other groups within the watershed catchment area that you work with	Yes/No and examples	
26.	How does the organisation communicate about its work and issues it is concerned about? (E.g. media, meetings, etc.)	List	
27.	Does the organisation keep records that are accessible to all members?	Yes/No	
28.	In your opinion, what are the 3 biggest needs of your organisation in order to be strong and effective?	List	

### 1.3 Technical capacity in watershed management<sup>2</sup>

## SITE ASSESSMENT

<sup>2</sup> *Watershed management* is the study of the relevant characteristics of a watershed aimed at the sustainable distribution of its resources and the process of creating and implementing plans, programs, and projects to sustain and enhance watershed functions that affect the plant, animal, and human communities within a watershed boundary.

		Response	Notes/ Comments
29.	How did you select the site for work?	Directed/chosen by a process	
30.	How did you identify the natural resources in the area where you work?	Researched/ local knowledge	
31.	How would you describe the present state of the natural resources?	good/fair/bad	
32.	How are the resources you identified linked to the supply of fresh water	List	
<b>PREPARATION OF THE AREA</b>			
33.	How do you prepare the area for planting?	Describe	
34.	How do you decide what is to be done?	Describe	
35.	Do you cut lines and stake lines?	Yes/No	
36.	Do you flat cut?	Yes/No	
37.	Do you retain certain species?	Yes/No	
<b>PLANTING</b>			
38.	How do you determine what species are to be used and located on the site?	Directed/chosen by a process	
39.	What is the source of the seedlings?	Wildings or nursery	
40.	How are the seedlings transported?		
41.	How are seedlings transplanted on the site?	Describe	
42.	Do you protect the reforested site	Yes/No	

	with fire traces?		
43.	When do you establish fire traces?	Yes/No	
44.	What are the standards for a fire trace?	Describe	
45.	How often and when are fire traces maintained?	Describe	
46.	Do you conduct off-site watershed awareness work to protect the reforested site?	Yes/No	
<b>TENDING</b>			
47.	How do you tend seedlings?	Describe	
48.	How long after planting seedlings do you tend?	Describe	
49.	How many times do you tend in one year?	Number	
50.	How do you determine mortality?	Describe	
51.	What measures do you take address mortality?	List and Describe	
<b>SITE MANAGEMENT</b>			
52.	Do you practice soil conservation practices?	Yes/No	
53.	How do you decide to use check dams, terracing or grass barriers?	Describe	
54.	Do you plant the banks of water ways to minimize erosion?	Yes/No	
55.	Do you practice wildlife rehabilitation?	Yes/No	
56.	How do you select which species for	Describe	

	wildlife should be introduced?		
57.	How do you monitor your progress in watershed management?	Describe	
58.	Do you keep records of how many seedlings you received for planting and when they were received?	Yes/No	
59.	Do you keep records of where, when and what you planted?	Yes/No	
60.	Do you keep records of the number of workers how many hours it takes to perform specific tasks?	Yes/No	
61.	Do you keep records of how many hours it takes to work on a particular area?	Yes/No	
62.	Who monitors the impact of your actions on or off the site	List	

