Enhancing Alternative Livelihoods and Food Security in St. Kitts and Nevis through the Cultivation and Commercialisation of Sea Moss

Report of workshops to promote the development of two community based groups in St. Kitts and Nevis to cultivate sea moss and commercialise its production

January, 2018
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Introduction

In 2015, small-scale fisheries production in St. Kitts and Nevis was 454 metric tonnes, valued at US$3,668,171. The fisheries also employed approximately 837 fishers. Over the last 10 years, however, anecdotal evidence suggested that there has been a significant decline in fisheries resources as smaller catches of conch, lobster, pelagic and demersal fish species are being landed.

In March 2015, prompted by concern over fluctuations in production, and the likely negative impacts on the livelihoods of fisherfolk and national food security, the Department of Marine Resources implemented the Sea Moss Culture Pilot Project. The objective of the project was to build the capacity of fisherfolk to develop sea moss farming as an alternative livelihood, while reducing fishing pressure on the nearshore fisheries resources, and improving earnings of the fisherfolk, their organisations and communities. The Pilot Project achieved success in enhancing existing sea moss culture methods, including encouraging a change from *Euchema gracilaria* to the cultivation of a more viable species *Eucheuma cottonii*.

In an effort to build on lessons learned and contribute to the sustainability of the results from the Sea Moss Culture Pilot Project, the *Enhancing Alternative Livelihoods and Food Security in St. Kitts and Nevis through the Cultivation and Commercialisation of Sea Moss* component of the *Engaging Civil Society in CLME+ Strategic Action Programme Implementation* project was developed to provide technical assistance and small grant support to further build the capacity of fisherfolk and other key stakeholders in St. Kitts and Nevis in sea moss culture, as a demonstration of an alternative livelihoods initiative within the concept of ecosystem based management (EBM).

This report gives a summary of two one-day workshops that were held in St. Kitts and in Nevis on January 22 and 23, 2018, respectively to determine the way forward for two groups – one in St. Kitts and one in Nevis - in making and selling sea moss related products as a business.

Objectives of the workshops

The objectives of the workshops were for participants from communities (including fisherfolk) and technical support agencies in St. Kitts and in Nevis to:

- choose a business form for the intended sea moss organisation
- develop goals and objectives for each organisation
- develop a marketing and distribution plan for the business
- develop an outline of an operations budget
- determine next steps.

The workshop agenda is attached at Appendix 1.

Participants

Thirty-one (31) persons participated in the two workshops - twenty (20) in St Kitts, and eleven (11) in Nevis). The list of participants is attached at Appendix 2. Participants in St. Kitts’ were those who expressed interest in being a part of a group. During the workshop, the opportunity was taken to set aims, objectives and next steps for the group, keeping in mind that the overall intention is the development of a business using sea moss as its base.

Findings

Defining objectives for each organisation

Each group is at a different stage in the business development life cycle, which includes the following key steps: selection of group members, capacity building, formalisation of organisation, selection of product or service, applying for grant, strengthening/establishment of business operations. The St. Kitts group is at the capacity building stage, while the Nevis group is at the selection of group members stage. Both groups decided to register as community groups, a first step towards formalisation, with them having set the completion date for registering as February 28, 2018. The Government has provisions for registering community groups based on their status and objectives within communities, which will allow them to work and carry out activities to improve, develop, and build sustainable communities. Participants from both groups agreed to contribute a small monetary fee of up to one hundred (100) EC dollars each to assist in group registration.
In addition to the formal registration of their organisations, each group determined their specific objectives to complete the business development life cycle. The specific objectives of the St. Kitts group are to:

- formalise group by registering with the Government as a community group, as defined by the St. Kitts and Nevis Community Development Ministry, by the end of February 2018
- set up a bank account for the group immediately after registration, no later than March 2018
- formalise the product to be marketed and sold by the group during March 2018
- organise mentoring for the group in order to build their capacity in business development, and to complete the grant application
- organise additional capacity building on sea moss culture
- complete grant application during April 2018.

The specific objectives for the Nevis group are to:

- attract additional members to the group by hosting a meeting by January 31, 2018
- choose a suitable site, with the assistance of the Department of Marine Resources, to cultivate sea moss
- formalise group by registering formally as a community group by February 28, 2018
- set up a bank account for the group immediately after registration, no later than March 2018
- organise mentoring and additional capacity building in business development and sea moss cultivation during March 2018
- complete grant application during April 2018.

Defining expectations
The expectations of both groups were to use sea moss and sea moss value added product development as the base for starting, growing and developing profitable and sustainable businesses.

Each group defined sustainability as the ability to run their respective businesses, make a profit and contribute to the community, whilst not depleting the natural resources upon which their businesses depend. They defined sustainable livelihoods as the ability to live comfortably through the addition of earnings from this business to the income earning opportunities of each person within the two groups.

![Figure 1: Working group exercise, St. Kitts](image-url)
Marketing and distribution of products
Marketing and distribution of sea moss was discussed, with the approach agreed upon being to use a marketing and promotion exercise as a practical learning experience, in which the piloted products would be introduced to the islands in a directed format. Each group agreed that a food fair would allow for direct and immediate feedback from customers. Participants also agreed that the marketing exercise would help introduce the businesses to the islands using displays, samples and sales in a trade market and trade fair setting. This approach would gently introduce the consumer to the products, while at the same time getting real time feedback to improve both product and business development.

Outlining operational budgets
Budgeting and costing for business operations could not be addressed in these workshops, as it was recognised that both groups were still in the very early stages of developing their businesses. It was therefore decided that budgeting and costing would be dealt with after the groups were registered and their respective products/services were officially declared. Each group decided that they would agree on their products and services to be developed by February 18, 2018.

Next Steps
In St Kitts, the group decided on the next steps as follows:
1. Register group with relevant authorities as a community group by February 28, 2018
2. Agree on products and services to be developed by February 18, 2018
3. Formalise expectations for group by February 18, 2018
4. Decide upon executive of group by February 28, 2018
5. Set up a bank account by March 30, 2018
6. Obtain training on sea moss culture by March 31, 2018
7. Build additional capacity in business development by April 30, 2018
8. Prepare a grant proposal by April 2018
9. Conduct marketing and market research exercise by December 2018

In Nevis, the group decided on the next steps as follows:
• Register group with relevant authorities as a community group by February 28, 2018
• Choose site for sea moss development by March 31, 2018
• Agree on products and services to be developed by February 18, 2018
• Formalise expectations for group by February 18th, 2018
• Decide upon executive of group - February 28, 2018
• Set up a bank account by March 31, 2018
• Obtain training on sea moss development by March 15, 2018
• Build additional capacity in business development by April 2018
• Prepare a grant proposal by April 30, 2018
• Conduct marketing and market research exercise by the end of 2018
• Obtain business mentorship to December 2018.

Mentorship
Both groups will require guidance on the steps necessary to ensure their suitability and capability to successfully operate a business. Mentorship was seen as a suitable means to provide this guidance. It was agreed that the aim of a mentorship programme would be to assist the groups in managing, growing and improving their community businesses in a way that supports growth in the community and sustainable livelihoods.

It was also noted that the utilisation of a mentor could be viewed as a measure of promoting accountability – meaning, to hold them accountable to the goals, decisions and outcomes which were/are set at each meeting. Both groups, are open to the mentoring option as a next step to allow them to achieve their objective as sustainable businesses.
Recommendations
As this project comes on stream, it is being recommended that:

- Further capacity building should be provided to focus on finding useful and simple ways for the enterprises to:
  - report on their business performance in areas such as cash flow, profitability and staff development
  - improve on their evaluating and monitoring capabilities.
- The groups should be encouraged to work closely with the Department of Marine Resources, including the CC4FISH project, Fisheries Unit (Nevis) and other Government agencies such as the St. Kitts and Nevis Development Bank, Cooperatorives Department, and the Agro Processing Division of the Agricultural Ministry to make the best use of the technical resources available.
- Further capacity building should be provided on sea moss production and additional business capacity building.
- Periodic mentoring should be provided to both groups in St. Kitts and in Nevis.

Conclusion
Both groups are eager and interested to use sea moss to develop alternative livelihoods. A fair level of ground was covered over the two one-day workshops, with concrete next steps charted. It is also evident that the Department of Marine Resources is on board given their participation in both workshops and support of the groups thus far. Mentorship and additional capacity building in sea moss culture and business develop would be essential for this project to go further given the status of both groups. Participants feedback on the workshops is attached at Appendix 3.

Figure 2: Plenary session, Nevis
APPENDIX 1: AGENDA

ENHANCING ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY IN ST. KITTS AND NEVIS THROUGH THE CULTIVATION AND COMMERCIALISATION OF SEA MOSS

Workshop to promote the development of two community based groups in St. Kitts and in Nevis to cultivate sea moss and commercialise its production

January 22 & 23 2018, St. Kitts and Nevis

Agenda

Specific objectives

By the end of the workshop, participants from selected fisherfolk organizations and technical support agencies in St. Kitts and Nevis would have:

- chosen a business form for the intended seamoss organization
- developed goals and objectives for the organization
- developed a marketing and distribution plan for the business
- developed an outline for an operations budget
  - determined next steps.

Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Welcome and introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>(15 mins.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Review of project Enhancing Alternative Livelihoods and Food Security in St. Kitts and Nevis through the Cultivation and Commercialisation of Sea Moss, to date</td>
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<tr>
<td>(15 mins.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Business forms – suitability, advantages and challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:35 am</td>
<td>Develop goals and objectives for business organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:05 am</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 am</td>
<td>Marketing and distribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Introduction to budgeting and costing</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td>Preparation of budget and costing</td>
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<td>(45 mins.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15 pm</td>
<td>Next steps</td>
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<td>(30 mins.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45 pm</td>
<td>Wrap up</td>
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1The Alternative Livelihoods and Food Security in St. Kitts and Nevis through the Cultivation and Commercialisation of Sea Moss component of the Engaging Civil Society in CLME+ SAP Implementation project is being executed by CANARI as part of the CLME+ Project. The five-year (2015 – 2020) CLME+ project is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and co-financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
Appendix 2: List of Participants

St. Kitts
1. Natasha Leader - Fahie's Agricultural Womens Cooperative
2. Hazelmay Richards - Liamuiga Seamoss
3. Reiner Doan Ferdinand - Liamuiga Seamoss
4. Tracyann Audain - Department of Cooperatives
5. Iroy Marshall - Liamuiga Seamoss
6. Kharim Saddler - DMR
7. Ornel Wilkes - Liamuiga Seamoss
8. Orisia Williams - Liamuiga Seamoss / CC4fish National Project Coordinator
9. Jennifer Williams - Fahie's Agricultural Womens Cooperative
10. Edwana Halliday - Liamuiga Seamoss
11. Myrtrice Sedam - Liamuiga Seamoss
12. Kendol Huggins - Liamuiga Seamoss
13. Antonio Browne - Liamuiga Seamoss
14. Michael Samuel - Liamuiga Seamoss
15. Ira Liburd - Liamuiga Seamoss
16. Nikkita Browne - DMR
17. Wilmoth Alleyne - DMR
18. Wycleff John - Liamuiga Seamoss
19. Arabella Nisbett - Fahie's Agricultural Womens Cooperative
20. Harrington Bristol - entrepreneur

Nevis
1. Dwight Browne – Manager, Agroprocessing, Nevis
2. Kareem Wilkin – Fisheries Unit
3. Rhosyll Jeffers - Cmosstic
4. Winston Hobson - Cmosstic
5. Winston Fyfield - Cmosstic
6. Nikkita Browne - DMR
7. Thema Ward - Cmosstic
8. Vaughn Sturge – Fisheries Unit
9. Stephen Moore - Cmosstic
10. Alset Myers - Nevis Cooperative Unit
11. Tejhardi Wallace - Cmosstic
APPENDIX 3: EVALUATION COMMENTS

PARTICIPANTS FEEDBACK FROM THE TWO WORKSHOPS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

- Workshop helped us to focus
- Workshop assisted in breaking down the steps in a way forward
- Eloquent and down to the nitty gritty in delivery
- Interest that was shared at the workshop was heart-warming
- Support is there for those who want it
- Time well spent
- Perseverance is the key.