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**Yves Renard, Nicole Brown, and Tighe Geoghegan
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Integrating Stakeholders in Natural Resource Management in the Caribbean: Guidelines for Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

Yves Renard, Nicole Brown, and Tighe Geoghegan
Caribbean Natural Resources Institute¹

ABSTRACT

The paper describes a research project, “Synthesizing the Caribbean experience in stakeholder analysis for participatory natural resource management,” carried out by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in 2000 for the purpose of assessing the growing body of experience in stakeholder approaches in the region. The project received support from the International Development Research Centre under the framework of the project entitled *Community-Based Coastal Resource Management in the Caribbean*; the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development through its project *Caribbean Capacity-Building for Environmental Management*; the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica; and the UK Department for International Development as part of its regional programme *Capacity-Building for Community Participation in Natural Resource Management*, which is implemented by CANARI. The major activities of the project were the preparation of six case studies from around the region documenting examples of stakeholder approaches in a variety of contexts, and the convening of a seminar in April 2000 to review and analyse the case studies for the purpose of deriving lessons and methods for stakeholder approaches that are appropriate for the region. This paper summarises the conclusions of the project, complemented by lessons learnt by CANARI in field activities and training programmes in the region. It also offers a brief summary of the six case studies prepared for the seminar. The paper was prepared by three members of CANARI’s staff, Yves Renard, Executive Director; Nicole Brown, former Communication Coordinator; and Tighe Geoghegan, Associate Director.

¹ Fernandes Industrial Centre, Administration Building, Eastern Main Road, Laventille, Trinidad and Tobago

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Yves Renard, Nicole Brown, and Tighe Geoghegan
Caribbean Natural Resources Institute

Introduction

The project described in this paper is a contribution to the development and strengthening of participatory approaches to natural resource management in the Caribbean region. It has focussed on practical methods for the identification of stakeholders, and for the analysis of their interests, roles, impacts, benefits, expectations and capacities. It has been based on the recognition that stakeholder identification and analysis are indispensable early steps in all participatory planning processes. The project is justified, in many respects, by the fact that inadequate or incomplete uses of these tools have been responsible for the weaknesses or failures of many such processes in recent times.

While much has been written about tools and methodologies for stakeholder identification and analysis based on work in other disciplines as well as reviews of selected field experiences (Chevalier 2001, Ramírez 1999, Grimble and Chan 1995), there has been very little documentation of the growing Caribbean experience in this field. With the increasing acceptance and adoption of participatory approaches to resource management in the Caribbean (Geoghegan *et al.* 1999), there is a clearly expressed demand for practical tools and approaches that resource managers, development workers, policy makers, planners and community animators can use in the implementation of participatory planning and collaborative management. Key among these tools are what can be collectively called “stakeholder

approaches,” that is to say processes of identifying and analysing the interests of the individuals, communities, groups and institutions that can affect or be affected by the outcome of a management intervention, in a manner that contributes fully to the process and to project design, implementation and monitoring.

Description of the project

In order to assess the growing body of experience in stakeholder approaches in the region, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) undertook a research project in 2000 entitled “Synthesizing the Caribbean experience in stakeholder analysis for participatory natural resource management”. The project was implemented by CANARI staff and a range of colleagues. It was initially led by Nicole Brown, Communication Coordinator, and when she left CANARI’s staff in August 2000 coordination was taken over by Yves Renard, Executive Director and Tighe Geoghegan, Associate Director. Others involved in the project are named below.

The research consisted of two major activities. The first was the selection of cases from Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, and their preliminary analysis by leading actors in each case. Then, in collaboration with the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDT), CANARI convened a four-day seminar in April 2000, to present and analyse the cases. The case studies were used as the basis of discussions to identify common themes and concepts related to stakeholder approaches in the Caribbean and principles and skills relevant to the Caribbean context.

The cases selected for study and analysis in this project offer a range of situations and experiences. They were selected because they all met two primary criteria: a focus on participatory natural resource management, and a practical experience in stakeholder approaches. They were written by people who had been directly involved in the processes described; in many respects, these case studies therefore reflect the personal experience of Caribbean practitioners, who have examined their own work in the field, and have drawn lessons from it. The six case studies that were prepared are as follows:

- Case Study of the Integrated Coastal Fisheries Management Project: A Pilot Project for the Gulf of Paria, Trinidad, by Christine Chan A Shing (Chan A Shing 2000)
- Case Study of the Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve, Barbados, by Janice Cumberbatch (Cumberbatch 2000)
- Integrating Stakeholders in Participatory Natural Resources Management: Ecotourism Project of El Limón Waterfall, Dominican Republic, by Patricia Lamelas (Lamelas 2000)
- Case Study of the Negril Environmental Protection Plan, Jamaica, by Susan Otuokon (Otuokon 2000)
- Case Study of the Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA), St. Lucia, by Yves Renard (Renard 2000)

- Case Study of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, Jamaica, by Christine Scott Dunkley and Shermaine Barrett (Dunkley and Barrett 2000).

Other participants in the April 2000 seminar included Ricardo Ramírez of Guelph University in Canada, and Nicole Brown and Vijay Krishnarayan of CANARI.

The process used in the seminar involved the presentation and discussion of the case studies, some of which were illustrated by audio-visual materials. Each case study was then discussed and lessons were extracted from that experience. Comparisons were drawn between the cases, and lessons were confronted with the theory and practice available in the literature. This paper summarises the conclusions of this seminar, complemented by lessons learnt by CANARI in field activities and training programmes in the region. It also offers a brief summary of the six case studies prepared for the seminar.

The final phase of the project will consist of the preparation of a publication presenting the results of the analysis in the form of guidelines for Caribbean practitioners, the six case studies, and an annotated bibliography. This document is expected to be published by the end of this year.

The April 2000 seminar and the preparation of that publication have received support from four valuable sources. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada provided funding for the seminar and for the preparation of four of the case studies, under the framework of the project entitled *Community-Based Coastal Resources Management in the Caribbean*. The Environmental Foundation of Jamaica provided support, through the JCDT, for the preparation

of the two Jamaican case studies and for the participation of the Jamaican colleagues at the seminar. The University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development (UWICED) is providing support to the editing of the case studies and the publication of the guidelines document, as part of its project entitled *Caribbean Capacity-Building for Environmental Management*. The UK Department for International Development (DFID), as part of the regional programme on *Capacity-Building for Community Participation in Natural Resource Management* implemented by CANARI, is providing complementary funding for the preparation, printing and dissemination of the final document. In addition, two organisations provided travel and in-kind support to participants in the seminar, namely the FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean based in Barbados and the IUCN Working Group on Collaborative Management.

Conceptual framework

This project has been based on the premise that participation is desirable in all aspects and phases of development planning, including natural resource management. The case for participation is multi-faceted and compelling, with the justification including such things as: efficiency and effectiveness of management; responsiveness to community needs; the integration of environmental concerns into a wider development context; the incorporation of popular knowledge and wisdom into formal management systems; and community empowerment (Brown 1995, Renard and Valdés-Pizzini 1994).

There are several definitions of the word stakeholder. For the purposes of this paper, a stakeholder is any party with an actual or potential interest in the economic, social or cultural

use of the resource (Krishnarayan 1998), as well as any individual, community, organization or institution who can effect, or be affected by, changes in the status and use of the resource. The term “stakeholder approaches” is used here to describe a range of tools and methods for identifying and analysing the interests of the individuals, groups and institutions that can affect or be affected by the outcome of an intervention, assessing and understanding the dynamics among and between these groups, and utilising this information in project design, implementation and monitoring.

While stakeholder approaches are necessary parts of the participatory process, they do not suffice to ensure that a given process is participatory. In order to respect the principles of participation, planning and management initiatives require a wide range of methods and approaches, not only stakeholder identification and analysis. Within the broader participatory process, stakeholder approaches have their particular function, and they should not be expected to deliver more than what they are intended for.

In the past, participatory approaches have suffered from a certain naivete among managers and development workers, who have thought that the goals of participation could easily be achieved through simple methods of consultation and communication. Experience has shown that without rigorous methods and tools, participatory processes are at best ineffective, and at worst detrimental to the needs of people and of the natural resources on which they depend.

In the application of tools and methods, it must always be accepted that participatory approaches, including stakeholder identification and analysis, do take time and resources, and

that they require flexibility. A participatory process is a phased process that must be responsive to the needs, expectations and capacities of the participants.

Stakeholder approaches must be sensitive to the cultural context in which they are developed and applied. While the principles of participation are universal, the practice of participatory planning and management must take into account the values, communication patterns, knowledge and skills of all stakeholders.

In the development literature, one often finds a dangerous simplification of the concept of community, which assumes that interests, experiences, needs and expectations are homogenous among a given group of people. The reality is far more complex, and methods used in stakeholder identification and analysis must accept and reveal this complexity, by describing and interpreting the many differences which exist among social groups and sectors (Borrini *et al.* 2000, Leach *et al.* 1999). Stakeholders must also be defined broadly, in order to capture a wide range of groups and individuals (Freeman 1984). The interests or stakes of the various actors or stakeholders differ as a result of factors such as tenure, ownership, history of use, social organisation, values and perceptions, and pattern or type of use.

Stakeholder approaches can be tailored to a wide range of conditions and situations, including conflict management, project and programme planning, strategic planning, institutional development processes, and communication and marketing. The scale of the issue or initiative to which they are applied can vary greatly, from global to local. The level of detail that will be used in the analysis will, to a large extent, depend on that scale.

These approaches and methods have applicability beyond the early stages of a participatory planning process, and they provide useful management tools throughout the implementation cycle. This is particularly true in multi-stakeholder, multiple-use situations. Participatory processes are by their very nature transforming: they address issues of power, decision-making, access to resources, and legitimacy. This means that throughout the life of a participatory management intervention, the relations and dynamics among and between the various interest groups or stakeholders are likely to change, and this will in turn affect the social and institutional context of the intervention. These approaches provide a baseline that can help managers understand the changes that are taking place and how these changes are influencing and affecting the management process.

In practice, the use of stakeholder approaches inevitably results in a broadening of the planning agenda. When needs and interests of stakeholders are placed on the planning table, and when the marginal and powerless are given a real opportunity to participate, planning initiatives become more aware of the cultural, social, economic and environmental context in which they are implemented, and they become more responsive to a diversity of needs and priorities. This is why managers and facilitators need to embark on such processes with open minds: the form and outcome of the process is likely to be very different from what they had imagined in the first place.

Participatory natural resource management in the Caribbean

Over the past two decades, planning initiatives in the fields of development and natural resource management (protected areas, integrated rural development, coastal zone management, heritage tourism, fisheries and forestry) in the Caribbean region have relied increasingly on the use of participatory approaches, often leading to collaborative and decentralised forms of management (Geoghegan *et al.* 1999). In some instances, government agencies have begun to transform their structures and operations to assume new roles as facilitators of processes and supporters of partners within civil society, while community-based and non-governmental organisations have begun to assume a greater responsibility in planning and management. At the same time, the policies of Caribbean governments, as expressed in institutional arrangements, national legislation, and sectoral programmes, are beginning to provide a new framework that is increasingly favourable to participation.

This change has come about as a result of a number of factors, including the increasing voice of NGOs in Caribbean society, the realization that the financial and human resources of most of the region's governments are inadequate to manage natural resources effectively, and the failure of existing resource management structures to stem the tide of resource degradation. International agreements and donor agency projects have also served to emphasize a commitment to participatory approaches.

Natural resource management in the Caribbean takes place within a context that is shaped by the region's history, culture and geography, and influenced by economic forces and variables. This context determines and affects the willingness and ability of people, groups and organizations

to participate in decision-making and management. It sets the limits and constraints of the participatory process.

One important feature of this context, and one that differentiates this region from most other regions of the globe, is that Caribbean societies and their systems of production reflect a relatively recent convergence of disparate cultures and practices, including Amerindian, African, European, and Asian. They are not rooted in millenniums of homogeneous traditional practice, but are products and adaptations of a great diversity of influences.

Many of the traditional practices that were introduced to the region from around the world over the past five centuries have been modified, hidden, or absorbed by two opposite and conflicting forces: the logic of colonial expansion, characterised by the plantation economy and dependent political and social structures on the one hand, and the force of resistance on the other. The impacts of the dominant colonial and post-colonial system on natural resource use and management systems vary from country to country, but they include a number of common characteristics throughout the region: a dependent economy based on monoculture and exports; a radical transformation of the natural ecosystem; a high degree of openness to plant and animal species, new technologies, imported cultural values, and externally-controlled financial capital; and a concentration of ownership and rights of access in the hands of a few. In opposition to this dominant system, Caribbean societies have created various forms of resistance, from revolt to migration, and they have reconstituted production and resource use systems that are based on autonomy, diversity and flexibility. Caribbean landscapes have been created by the combination of these two, often conflicting, forces.

The institutions of resource management are the product of these complex processes. Informal networks and traditional values determine many of the patterns of resource utilization. Formal organisations, especially those of the State, but also those of new and emerging civil society movements, replicate the patterns and structures of formal colonial powers. Conflicts are many and take varied forms, and issues of natural resource use and management evolve primarily around issues of rights and access.

High population densities in most Caribbean countries and the dependence of many communities and economic sectors on a limited and vulnerable resource base increase the inevitability of conflicts, particularly in the coastal zone. Furthermore, this competition in the coastal zone, the impacts of globalization on Caribbean economic sectors, and the volatile nature of the tourism industry have resulted in constant changes in resource use patterns and a rapidly increasing field of stakeholders.

To be effective participatory approaches must recognize the cultural and economic factors within Caribbean societies that both encourage and constrain participation. These include traditions of reciprocal labour, institutions as diverse as the Church and talk radio, and open political processes on the one hand, and the continuing colonial influence on the policy context, marginalization of the poor, paternalism and political influencing on the other. These constraining factors contribute to the substantial power imbalances that are the greatest challenge to participatory resource management.

The region still lacks formal institutions within its governance and judicial systems to work through these power dynamics to achieve equity. Participatory resource management initiatives therefore must often operate without the support of legal frameworks and rules. In many cases, hard-won agreements among stakeholders remain tentative and can easily be overturned.

Efforts aimed at increasing participation in natural resource management in the Caribbean must be seen within this context. Their ultimate goal is to transform institutions and to guarantee a more equitable distribution of rights and responsibilities. They are based on the hypothesis that participatory approaches to natural resource management benefit both the resource, in terms of the sustainability of uses, and the people who need and use that resource. But they are also based on the premise that new systems of and approaches to natural resource management will contribute to, and be supported and enhanced by, the shaping of new institutions (including policies, values, laws, customs and organisations) in other spheres of social and economic development.

The case studies

Table 1 provides a comparative overview of the six case studies prepared for this project.

Table 1: Comparative synthesis of case studies

	Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park	Gulf of Paria ICFM Project	Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve	Ecotourism initiative for El Limon waterfall	Soufriere Marine Management Area	Negril Environmental Protection Plan
Type of resource	Forested mountains	Fisheries	Coastal area	Waterfall	Marine area	Coastal area
Management regime	National Park with NGO management	Governmental regulation	Marine Park with government management	Collaborative agreement among users	Marine Management Area with joint stakeholder management	Environmental Protection Area with joint stakeholder management
Critical management issues	Deforestation, poor farming practices, other uses on periphery impacting resources in the Park	Overfishing and land-based development in the Gulf threatening fisheries sector	Park's conservation objectives not being met; serious conflicts between user groups	Uncontrolled use resulting in degradation of area and poor returns for local entrepreneurs	Serious conflicts between user groups; degradation of marine resources	Severe impacts on marine and coastal resources from land-based activities threatening local economy
Objective of stakeholder activity	Protection of “buffer zone” surrounding park	Data collection for improved fisheries management	Improved protection of natural resources and conflict mitigation	Reversal of degradation, local financial returns	Improved cooperation among users, economic returns, and conflict mitigation	Integrated “ridge to reef” management
Initiator(s)	Park management	International agency	Government agency	NGO	Local and regional NGOs, government agency	Local and national government agencies and NGOS
Facilitator(s)	Park staff	Government stakeholder (Fisheries Division)	Independent party acting on behalf of government	Semi-independent NGO	Semi-independent NGO, local NGO stakeholder, and government stakeholder	NGO and government stakeholder coalition
Outcomes	Limited impact, objectives not achieved	Time frame too short and project scope too narrow for lasting impact	Recommendations developed; stakeholder awareness of issues increased	Management devolved to local stakeholders and improved	Effective management institution in place	Plan to guide environmental management prepared, management institutional established and functioning

The Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, Jamaica

The case study describes an effort to involve neighbouring communities in activities aimed at protecting Jamaica's first national park, through the establishment of a buffer zone comprised of these communities. The effort was based on concerns emerging in the park planning stage in the early 1990s that practices in these areas were damaging the resources of the Park. Local Advisory Committees (LACs), which were established in three population centres around the Park, were the main mechanism for securing local participation. The LACs were expected to take a lead role in managing the buffer areas outside the park boundaries. The communities were not consulted during the initial park planning process, and their mobilisation was based on communication of the potential benefits the Park could provide. Inadequate mechanisms for involvement of stakeholders in decision-making, lack of a clear understanding of and consensus on the role the local communities were to play, and a lack of facilitation and social science skills within the park staff resulted in a failure to achieve meaningful engagement.

Gulf of Paria Integrated Coastal Fisheries Management Project, Trinidad

The Gulf of Paria Integrated Coastal Fisheries Management Project was a 12-month pilot project carried out in 1994-95 by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the United Nations Development Programme. Its objectives were to improve the capacity of the government's Fisheries Division to manage coastal fisheries and to enhance the role of the fisheries sector in national development. The Gulf of Paria coastal zone is heavily used and there are numerous conflicts both within the fisheries sector and between fisheries and other sectors using the area. Efforts to enhance the sector were impeded

both by the weak organisation of the resource users and by the limited capacity of the Fisheries Division.

During its short time frame, the project sought to demonstrate the value of a stakeholder approach through a process of engagement and data gathering in two communities. At the wider level, stakeholder organisations were invited to contribute to the development of a bibliographic database and GIS for the Gulf, as well as to discussions on management issues. Although the project started with a stakeholder identification, its resources and time frame made it impossible to involve several critical but unorganised groups, including fish processors and boat owners. The project, although very limited in scope, had the important result of sensitising the Fisheries Division to the importance of involving stakeholders in management planning, of fully understanding and taking into account their perceptions and needs, and of providing them with the tools needed to be full partners in management.

Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve, Barbados

This case study looked at stakeholder participation in a feasibility study on the requirements for improving the management of the Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve in Barbados. The Park and Marine Reserve is a heavily used recreational area with numerous conflicts between users. There had been little consultation with stakeholders prior to the feasibility study, which was conducted in 1997. Management had been largely ineffective, and the resources of the marine reserve were deteriorating. The feasibility study took a consultative approach, beginning with a systematic identification of stakeholders, whose views on management of the Park and Marine Reserve were then gathered through structured surveys. An innovative aspect of the

process was the use of a series of ‘roundtables’ -- mediated discussions to resolve conflicts and identify management options. The results of these roundtables formed the basis of the study’s final report.

While the process was generally considered to be successful, it suffered from two important and related constraints. The first was that the time frame and budget imposed on the study were not adequate to fully achieve the objectives of stakeholder participation, particularly because these processes are extremely labour-intensive. Secondly, the short time frame increased the difficulties of engaging critical but unorganised stakeholders (in this case, jet skiers) in the process.

Ecotourism initiative for El Limón waterfall, Dominican Republic

The El Limón Ecotourism Project was an effort on the part of an NGO working in the Samaná Bay area of the Dominican Republic to improve the management of a local ecotourism site through a co-management approach. The El Limón waterfall (*Salto del Limón*) is visited by both tour groups and independent travellers, and a number of small local businesses have grown up around this visitation. No management agency took responsibility for the site, however, and the resource base was declining despite low levels of visitation and poor economic returns to the local entrepreneurs.

The first phase of the project sought to engage all stakeholders, both local and national (e.g., Ministry of Tourism, National Parks Directorate) in a process of consensus-building on management of the site. At the same time, the lead NGO, the *Centro para la Conservación y el*

Ecodesarrollo del Bahía de Samaná y su Entorno (CEBSE) worked with the local users to enhance their entrepreneurial and organisational skills. After three years, this resulted in the establishment of the first community-based tourism association in the Dominican Republic, the Community Ecotourism Association of Salto del Limón (ACESAL). Once formed, this organisation gave the small entrepreneurs an equal voice in the planning and negotiation process. The site now has a management plan accepted by all parties, with ACESAL having lead management responsibility. The process of capacity-building however continues to assure that the process results in improved management of the resource. This process is notable for its long time frame, which was needed to build the trust of the stakeholders, as well as their capacity to participate fully; and also by the care taken to balance the needs of the resources with those of the stakeholders.

Soufriere Marine Management Area, St. Lucia

The Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA) evolved out of a process of consultation and negotiation carried out in the early 1990s to address escalating conflicts between users of the Soufriere coastal region in St. Lucia. The process, which was co-facilitated by a government agency (the Department of Fisheries), a local development NGO (the Soufriere Regional Development Foundation), and a neutral third party (the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute), took the form of a series of meetings with identified stakeholders, focussing on specific problems and needs. This 18-month process resulted in the negotiation of an agreement on management of the coastal area, including boundaries, a zoning plan, management measures, and an institutional arrangement that gave a voice to all the major stakeholder groups. While

many of the technical aspects of the agreement were successful (e.g., implementation of a user fee system, improved monitoring and surveillance), local political and economic changes led to the collapse of the mechanism for maintaining consensus among stakeholders. The SMMA responded to the crisis with a participatory review that resulted in a clearer consensus on objectives and a more rational participatory management structure.

The initial process began as an exercise in conflict resolution, underestimating the dynamic nature of human interaction in the coastal zone and the constantly evolving situations that can provoke new conflicts and issues and bring previously unrecognised stakeholders to the fore. The development of the SMMA has taught the facilitators many lessons about the complexities of the participatory process, and these have been continuously fed back into the design of the institution.

Negril Environmental Protection Plan, Jamaica

This case study describes a community-led initiative to manage the development of the Negril coastline in Jamaica, and the adjoining marine and watershed areas, and the methods used to identify and involve all stakeholders in the process. The initiative arose out of the realisation by community environmental groups that management of Negril's valuable marine resources was only possible through an integrated approach that also addressed management issues along the heavily developed coast and in the higher watershed. Negril has a history of high levels of participation in community affairs, even by the less powerful, and the process was able to build on that. However, no formal stakeholder identification or analysis was conducted in the early stages of the process, and thus important stakeholders, especially farmers, were initially left

out. The Environmental Protection Plan that was eventually adopted addresses stakeholder issues and needs, and is a living document that has been updated once since its preparation in 1995. The process resulted in the establishment of a legally designated management area-- the Negril Environmental Protection Area B and the establishment of the Negril Environmental Protection Trust, a durable community institution to guide ongoing participatory planning and management.

Lessons learnt from the case studies

By using a comparative approach, this project was able to assess trends in participatory resource management at a regional level, and to extract lessons and guidelines from a range of differing contexts. The involvement of natural resource management practitioners in the preparation of the case studies and their interaction with scholars and social scientists in the analysis of the experience during the project seminar in April 2000 assured a blending of perspectives across disciplines.

The comparative study has confirmed that stakeholder approaches are critically needed in resource management processes in the Caribbean region. In virtually every situation, as shown by the six cases documented in this project, managers and facilitators have to deal with urgent and burning issues. Yet they find themselves confronted with the absence of relevant data and analyses, they have to address issues that have never been researched and documented, and they must often work without adequate scientific input. In such contexts, stakeholder approaches provide tools that allow managers and all other participants to grasp and analyse complex issues, without having to depend on long, costly and often externally-led research initiatives.

These approaches help to organise the information that is already known and to identify what needs to be known. They provide a practical focus on issues, needs and opportunities.

In this region, stakeholder approaches must give paramount importance to the process of stakeholder *identification*. In several of the studies covered in this project, problems occurred because the planning process inadvertently failed to include some of the stakeholders. These failures and omissions are not surprising when one considers the complexity of natural resource use and management systems: within these systems, the occasional users, the illegal harvesters and the migrant workers can easily be missed. Power relations in these societies will give prominence to some stakeholders and their needs, often at the expense of women, poor people and marginal social and economic sectors. There is therefore a need for clear methods that allow managers and process facilitators to identify all those who have a stake in resource management. The cases studied suggest that this method must start from the functions of the resource and not from the users. Taking each function of the resources or the areas under management, stakeholder identification requires answers to the following questions: Who uses the resources? Who benefits? Who does not benefit? Who wishes to benefit but is unable to do so?

In the process of identifying stakeholders, specific methods must therefore be geared towards the identification of the “less obvious” among the stakeholders. These methods involve field observations, interviews with key informants, and informal discussions, and they make extensive use of local and popular knowledge. Their use requires a constant awareness that some stakeholders are more vocal than others, and that power relations usually prevent the

weak and the powerless from coming to the fore, especially in formal situations and processes. They demand that account be taken of historical changes and seasonal patterns. They also challenge initiators and facilitators of planning and management initiatives to understand that resistance to formal institutions and processes has been a traditional weapon of the poor and the weak in this region, and that there are stakeholders who will, consciously or unconsciously, contribute to their own exclusion.

Once stakeholders have been identified, the next step in the planning process is to analyse their interests. The focus of this analysis will necessarily vary from situation to situation, but the cases covered in this research suggest that the following topics are of primary relevance:

- uses of natural resources and benefits derived from these uses
- changes and perceptions of changes over time
- impacts of uses on natural resources
- power relations, politics and institutional relations
- equity issues, including gender issues
- existing, latent and potential conflicts
- social relations and networks
- current, potential and expected role in management
- readiness and capacity to participate in the planning process

The literature on stakeholder analysis indicates that such analysis should be carried out in a participatory fashion. The experience from these cases, reinforced by observations from other field experiences in the region, suggests that this will not always be the case. There are

instances, particularly in cases of acute conflicts or significant inequity among stakeholders, where it is preferable to conduct a stakeholder analysis as a technical exercise, in order to guide a process of conflict management and empowerment. In order for meaningful participation to occur, there is the need for a level playing field, a table around which stakeholders can feel comfortable. In many instances, the analysis of interests, expectations, roles and issues is the tool that facilitators and animators need in order to know how to level the field.

This observation does not however negate the fact that, in this region as anywhere else around the world, participatory stakeholder analyses can serve as instruments of conflict management, as they allow each concerned party to hear and understand the needs and expectations of others, and as they serve as forums for negotiation. In participatory planning processes, a critical and indispensable moment occurs if and when stakeholders agree to hear the views and expectations of others, if and when they move from stating their individual positions to gaining an overview of the positions of all stakeholders. A participatory stakeholder analysis can create that moment.

Stakeholder approaches almost always require some form of independent facilitation, because it is not possible or desirable for one of the stakeholders to serve as facilitator of a process from which it could benefit, and to which it should contribute. While the responsibility for initiating and leading a participatory process will often fall on a management agency, such as a protected area management authority, a community development agency, a fisheries department or a forestry administration, it is important for these organisations to recognize that they are

participants in the conflicts that they seek to manage, that their interests are often perceived as contrary to those of local resource users, and that there are moments when they need external, independent facilitation skills. Such facilitation brings legitimacy to a process and its outputs, and it brings quality and professional expertise to the various steps and actions involved. It is however necessary for facilitators to be vigilant, and to avoid creating or re-creating patterns of dependency.

Lastly, these cases have shown that, in order to refine and expand the use of stakeholder approaches in the Caribbean, there is an urgent need to develop and disseminate specific skills, particularly in the areas of field assessments, facilitation and communications. Capacity building and training activities must therefore be incorporated into the agendas and programmes of all organisations seeking to promote and support stakeholder approaches in the Caribbean region. It is hoped that this research project has helped to reveal some of these needs, and has pointed out some of the directions that need to be explored and strengthened, in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of natural resource management initiatives in the Caribbean region.

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