



**Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)  
Caribbean Coastal Area Management (C-CAM) Foundation  
Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDT)**

# **Participatory Budgeting for the Forest Sector in Jamaica**

*Briefing Book for Local Government*

*December 2023*



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# Introduction

Civil society organisations in Jamaica are working together in the Coalition for Forests to promote enhanced citizen engagement in forest decision-making and increased share of public and private spending that benefits forests and forest-based communities (see Box 1). This briefing book is for Ministers and Members of Parliament and outlines the Coalition's key messages to support meaningful dialogue and collaboration towards achieving these objectives (see Box 2).

### BOX 1: WHAT THE COALITION FOR FORESTS WANTS

- Government budget allocation for forest conservation and management is increased.
- Participatory budgeting and public finance management is embraced by the Government on every level.
- The values and economic benefits of civil society's work on forest conservation and management are recognised by the Government and supported accordingly.

### BOX 2: KEY MESSAGES OF THE COALITION FOR FORESTS

- Increased budget allocation to forestry management and conservation is beneficial for the Jamaican people, environment and economy.
- Jamaican civil society is delivering results for forest conservation and management and therefore has a right to be included in the budgeting process and allocated more funding to strengthen their important work.
- Forest management and conservation supports economic growth and participatory budgeting opens the door for sustainable development; it opens the door to improved governance, accountability, strengthened citizen engagement and democracy, and an increased share in the public and private spending on forests and forest-based communities.
- Funding forestry management and conservation is funding strong, sustainable and resilient communities.
- Civil society involvement in forest management and conservation supports the guiding principles under existing and proposed policies and plans on forest conservation and management.

## About the Coalition for Forests

The Coalition for Forests is comprised of 27 diverse civil society organisations (CSOs) which are actively engaged from national to local levels in forest conservation, management and restoration in Jamaica (see Box 3). **The Coalition's aims are to advance democracy by increasing citizen engagement in forest decision-making, and to help increase the share of public and private spending that benefits forests and forest-based communities.** To achieve these aims, members of the Coalition are working together to engage in knowledge sharing and learning, collective analysis, advocacy and dialogue with key government agencies and policy-makers to promote the development of mechanisms for participatory budgeting for the forest sector (see Box 3). As CSOs with interests, rights and responsibilities and delivering positive results for forest conservation and management in Jamaica, the Coalition provides on-the-ground forest stakeholders with a voice in the budgeting process and assurance that critical forest resources can continue to support their needs.

**Photos on the cover (clockwise from top left): 1) C-CAM recon in area where Cuban Tree frog trap was installed near a water hole in Portland Ridge. Credit C-CAM; 2) Cockpit Country view. Credit CANARI; 3) STEA explaining the importance of the Cockpit Country. Credit CANARI; 4) Mangrove boat tour in the Salt River. Credit C-CAM**

### BOX 3: COALITION FOR FOREST MEMBERS

- Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM)
- Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCdT)
- Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
- Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI)
- Clarendon Parish Development Committee Benevolent Society
- Cockpit Country North Local Forest Management Committee
- Constitution Hill Local Forest Management Committee
- Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ)
- Hanover Bee Farmers' Co-operative Society Limited
- Jamaica Accountability Meter Portal (JAMP)
- Jamaica Coffee Growers Association (JCGA)
- Jamaica Environment Entrepreneurs' Advocacy Network (JEEAN)
- Jamaica Environment Trust (JET)
- Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM)
- Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE)
- National Conservation Trust Fund of Jamaica (NCTFJ)
- Nature Preservation Foundation
- Negril Area Environmental Protection Trust (NEPT)
- Northern Rio Minho Local Forest Management Committee
- Rise Life Management Services
- Sawyers Local Forest Management Committee Benevolent Society
- Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency (STEA)
- Spring Dunrobin Local Forest Management Committee
- St. Thomas Environmental Protection Association (STEPA)
- The Nature Conservancy (Jamaica)
- The Sustainable Livelihood Network Ltd.
- Watermount Community Development Committee



Dry forests, Portland Bight 3. Credit Troy Franklin, C-CAM

## Understanding Jamaica's budgeting process

Funding for public forest conservation and management in Jamaica comes through two distinct streams:

- a) the national budget process, which allocates public revenue to public sector agencies (most relevant for forests are the Forestry Department [FD] and National Environment and Planning Agency [NEPA])
- b) the funding received from external bilateral and multilateral sources, including budget support, programme-specific grants, and global fund allocations (most relevant for forests are the Global Environment Fund [GEF] and the Green Climate Fund [GCF])

There are a number of governmental as well as non-governmental stakeholders which are involved in the national forest budgeting process in Jamaica (see Box 4).

### BOX 4: KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE FOREST BUDGETING PROCESS

- Forestry Department (FD)
- National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)
- Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)
- Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC)
- Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MoFPS) especially the Public Expenditure Division (PEX)
- Cabinet
- Standing Finance Committee (all Parliamentarians)
- Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament
- Local Forest Management Committees (LFMCs)
- Protected area management partners: non-governmental organisations delegated by NEPA to manage designated protected areas (JCDT, C-CAM)
- Coalition for Forests and its civil society members

### National budget process

The national budget process (see Figure 1) is led by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MoFPS) which decides the total amount which will be allocated to the FD and NEPA. This is guided by information on the economic macro position of Jamaica, provided by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). Starting in about August, agencies decide on priorities for the year based on a review of their national plans – which include the National Forest Management and Conservation Plan (NFMCP), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the Protected Areas System Master Plan – to determine which activities in these plans will be undertaken during the next financial year and the following three financial years. This is usually done at a planning retreat with the agency's management team, which the MoFPS and other key government partners are invited to attend. Once these are agreed on, the budget estimates are prepared and submitted to the MoFPS. The Minister of Finance submits the draft budget (Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure) to Cabinet, which approves and tables it in Parliament. The Standing Finance Committee, which is comprised of all Parliamentarians, meets to review the draft budget. Parliament debates the budget and must approve the final budget by March 31. Agencies are informed of their allocations in April.

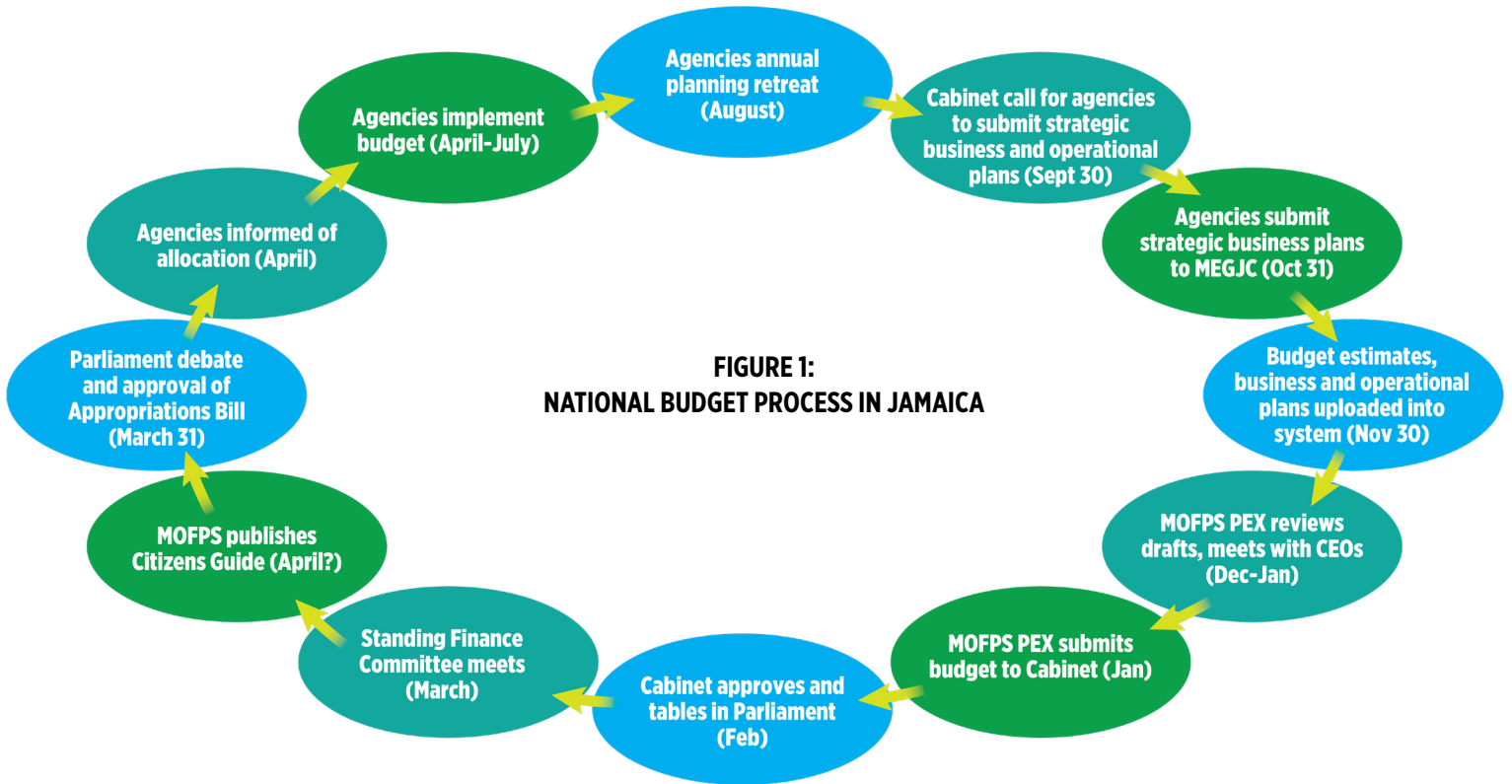
While it is possible to negotiate a higher ceiling, because the total Government budget is fixed, any increase in one agency's budget must be balanced by decreases elsewhere. In the hierarchy of policy priorities, forests and natural resource management rank fairly low, as does the political power of the key forest agencies, NEPA and FD.



Raking to dry coffee at Trumpet Tree factory. Credit CANARI

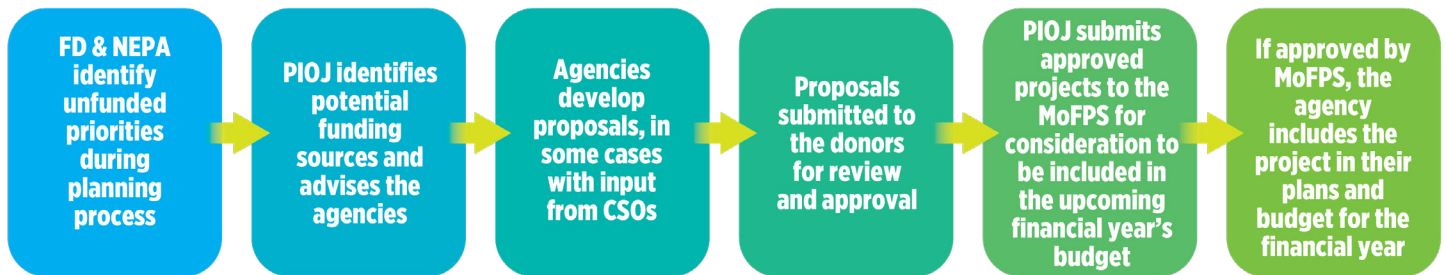
This budget cycle offers limited opportunities for public engagement. One opportunity is provided when the MoFPS produces the Citizen's Guide to the budget, which happens prior to finalising the draft budget and before the debates in the houses of Parliament. The guide is a less technical version of the budget which is published in the Sunday Gleaner and the Sunday Observer newspapers and on the MoFPS website after the Minister of Finance makes his speech on the budget. The public is encouraged to review the draft budget and submit comments to the MoFPS before the debate in Parliament ends.

Although this has not yet happened, CSOs such as Local Forest Management Committees (LFMCs), non-governmental organisations delegated by NEPA to manage designated protected areas (JCDT, C-CAM) and other members of the Coalition for Forests can also seek to directly engage with FD and NEPA as well as key Ministers and Members of Parliament to influence and support a strong budget for forest conservation and management.



**External funding from bilateral and multilateral sources**

The PIOJ has the lead responsibility to develop and negotiate funding from external sources for the Government of Jamaica. FD and NEPA need to have programmes ready to submit when an external funding opportunity arises and collaborate with PIOJ to take these to potential funders. The budgets for agencies generally only cover basic costs, such as salaries, so they are always seeking funding from external sources for capital expenses, expansion of services and special projects to deliver activities under national plans. CSOs in Jamaica have not had any role in the budget and planning process below the level of development of national plans. But CSOs may help to develop and promote priorities for forest conservation and management with external funders, who usually include a focus on civil society and delivering benefits on the ground. However, even when external funding has been secured, the MoFPS still needs to make the decision on the amounts allocated to FD and NEPA in the Government’s annual budget.



**FIGURE 2: EXTERNAL FUNDING PROCESS**

## Specific messages for Local Government

The Coalition wants the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and municipal representatives (Mayors, Councillors and Municipal Corporation members) to champion civil society involvement in participatory budgeting and increased funding for forest conservation and management during the budget debates at the national and local levels.

### **Increased budget allocation to forestry management and conservation is beneficial for the Jamaican people, environment and economy.**

More money towards forest conservation and management will translate into more support for local sustainable development plans via sustainable management of the natural resources in each Parish. This will bolster the pathway already created for more nature-based jobs and increased earning opportunities for constituents.

Improved forest conservation and management will also continue to support sustainable land use for key economic sectors such as tourism, agriculture and fisheries. Forested watersheds are important to ensure the sustainable supply of potable water to all, including urban centres and tourist destinations such as Kingston, Falmouth, Montego Bay and St. Andrew. Forests also play a key role in resilience to natural disasters, including hurricanes and other extreme weather, for example through preventing landslides and soil erosion and protecting coastlines from storm surges. Forests deliver climate change mitigation for Jamaica through removal and storage of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Working together to conserve Jamaica's forests is important to strengthen and maintain the health, well-being, security and livelihoods of citizens and helps to meet the goal of economic growth and development in Municipalities.

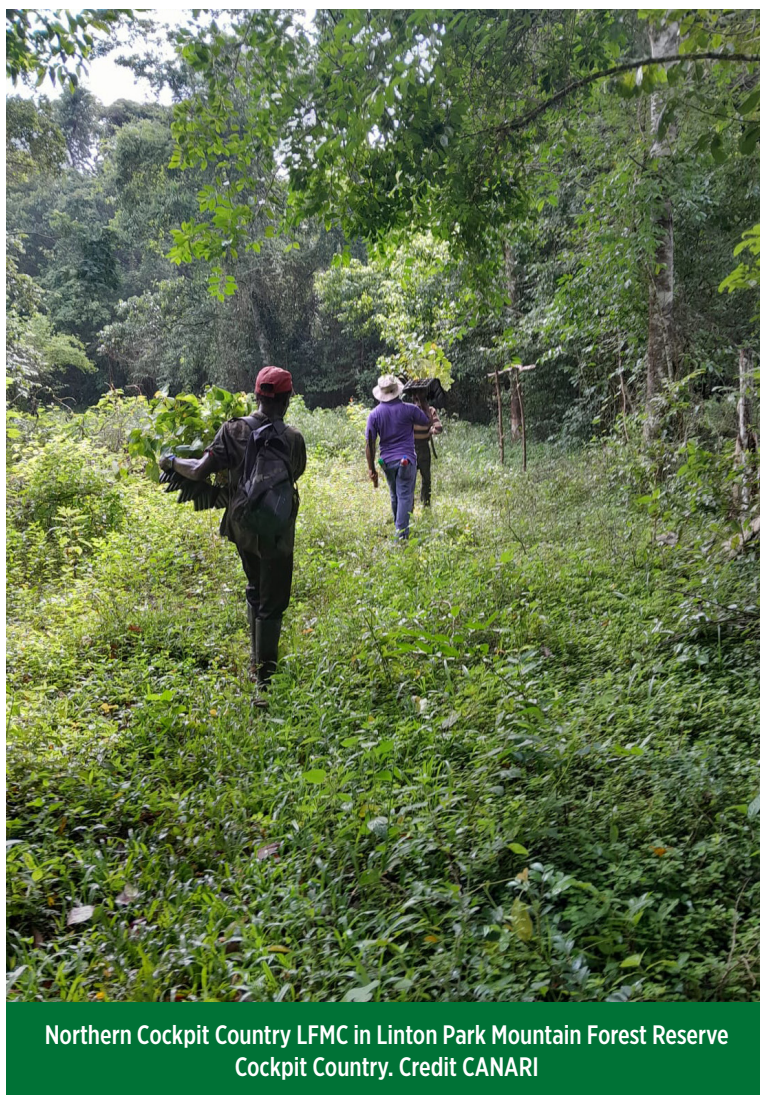
### **Funding forestry management and conservation is funding strong, sustainable and resilient communities.**

An increase in the budget for forest conservation and management is an investment in local communities via supporting forest-based businesses and the resources, jobs and amenities they provide. More funding for forests equals meaningful support of sustainable livelihoods.

Community-based ecotourism, agroforestry, apiculture and artisanal chocolate production are examples of sustainable livelihoods important in forest-based communities across Jamaica. Small and micro businesses, formal and informal, are developed in communities based on the sustainable use of forest goods and services. As local communities recognise the importance of forests in providing them economic opportunities, they are encouraged to practice stewardship to protect forests to support community well-being.

### **CSOs are effective partners to support local government in delivering socio-economic development.**

It makes sense and cents to include civil society in budgeting plans. CSOs can be cost effective implementing partners that deliver results for their Municipalities and the communities they serve on forest conservation and management projects.



Northern Cockpit Country LPMC in Linton Park Mountain Forest Reserve  
Cockpit Country. Credit CANARI

## Participatory Budgeting for the Forest Sector in Jamaica



Bogue forest reserve supports tourism at the Dunns River falls.  
Credit Dwight Robinson, UWI Mona



JCDT conducts patrols in the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park. Credit JCDT

For example, a recent study by the Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency (STEA) showed that in 2022, JM\$1.23 million of grant funding was provided to STEA and Local Forest Management Committees (LFMCs) for reforestation, awareness raising and sustainable livelihoods in the Cockpit Country. The volunteer in-kind contribution by STEA and the LFMCs was valued at JM\$8.86 million. What this confirms is that for every dollar invested in supporting local organisations' work on forest conservation and management, several times this amount is contributed by CSOs and the community. Investing more in the work of local organisations makes financial sense to get the most impact for local socio-economic development.

**Forest conservation and management is a viable space for participatory budgeting which is a boost to sustainable development as it builds effective, accountable and inclusive Municipalities and community-based organisations (in the communities served).**

Increasing CSO participation demonstrates to the international community that Jamaica's local authorities are committed to helping the country meet its targets and obligations under the Vision 2030 national development plan, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 16) and international agreements on biodiversity, climate change and human rights. Participatory budgeting shows Jamaica's commitment to including civil society in the decision-making process for good governance and sustainable development.



C-CAM manages the Portland Bight Protected Area, including the dry forests on the Portland Ridge. Credit Dr Ann Sutton

## Participatory Budgeting for the Forest Sector in Jamaica



A community member from the Scotts Hall community in St. Mary participates an oil extraction workshop in Kingston, as part of improving opportunities for alternate livelihoods using forest-based products. Credit Cohen Ming



Constitution Hill LFCM touring Trumpet Tree coffee factory. Credit CANARI

Participatory budgeting also provides an opportunity for local government partners to advocate for the people in a way that will impact positively on improving lives and livelihoods of their citizens, demonstrating their understanding of the issues on the ground and their willingness to partner with others to implement these necessary actions. It shows an understanding of the value of nature (particularly forests, including mangrove forests) as well as an appreciation of the need to participate in processes to manage these resources for the good of the people. The call of local government for increased funding for the forest sector shows that it is listening to the people.

## Conclusion

The Coalition for Forests in Jamaica welcomes dialogue and collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders committed to enhanced citizen engagement in forest decision-making and increased share of public and private spending that benefits forests and forest-based communities.

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### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Coalition for Forests is being supported under the project 'Participatory budgeting and financial management for the forest sector in Jamaica' which is being led by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and co-implementing partners, the Caribbean Coastal Area Management (C-CAM) and the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCdT), with financial support from the European Union (FED/2021/428-620). The project aims to strengthen citizen engagement in and support for sustainable management of forest ecosystems and biodiversity in Jamaica to benefit livelihoods, socio-economic development and human well-being. This will be achieved through enhancing awareness and capacity of Jamaican civil society to engage in participatory budgeting and public finance management for the forest sector. This project also supports the Government of Jamaica's efforts, also supported by the EU, to strengthen its public finance management to improve governance, accountability, fiscal control, efficiency and effectiveness in resource use.

Learn more about this project here: <https://canari.org/green-economy/jamaica-participatory-budgeting/>

