



Innovating for equity, resilience and sustainability



Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
Strategic Plan 2021-2030



About CANARI

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is an independent technical institute working across the Caribbean to further sustainable development in the region. Its strategy and programmes are driven by its mission to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation and collaboration in the stewardship of renewable natural resources in the Caribbean.

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Summary

The Caribbean region and the world have entered a period of great upheaval, uncertainty and risk, as well as unprecedented opportunity. The need to radically change the way we manage the environment, pursue economic development and seek a more just and equitable society has never been greater. CANARI's 2021-2030 strategic plan aims to address that need.

The vision guiding the strategy is of a transformative shift in the way the region approaches development, with all of society working together to achieve equity, wellbeing and resilience throughout the Caribbean.

Over the strategy period, CANARI's work will be oriented around five inter-linked strategic directions:

- Learning, advocating on and building capacity for approaches to resilience-building that work across sectors and scales to address diverse development challenges in a holistic way;
- Facilitating the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems in support of Caribbean social, cultural and economic development;
- Championing equity and justice in meeting the environmental and livelihood needs of poor and vulnerable people;
- Informing, convening and empowering people and institutions for participatory governance of natural resources; and
- Working together with stakeholders to introduce innovation in approaches, institutions and enterprises, which is needed to make the transformation to sustainable development in today's rapidly changing world.

The first four of the above strategic directions will align with the strategic plan's main programme areas, while innovation will be a cross-cutting theme.

CANARI will use the skills and approaches to implementation that have proven to be effective over time. Grounded research and testing with partners will yield knowledge that will be shared through tools and capacity building of organisations. To turn information into action, CANARI will seek to influence policy and practice in the region through research, capacity building, facilitation of dialogue and collective action.

In order to achieve the ambitions of the strategic plan in the context of a changed working environment, CANARI will need to grow and move in new directions as an institution. The priority organisational aims for the strategy period are:

- enhanced ability to work and partner with others throughout the region, through progressive staff decentralisation, deeper partnerships with close collaborators, coalition building and networking;
- increased international presence and engagement, to bring Caribbean needs and priorities to global attention;
- enhanced participation in internal governance, through broader involvement of programme stakeholders in planning and decision-making;
- financial sustainability, through the creation of a surplus fund and greater diversity of funding sources;
- improved information and communication capacities to reach diverse audiences more effectively, drawing on new technologies as well as more creative use of traditional methods.





Our Foundation

CANARI has been, for more than 30 years, a persistent and influential voice for justice in the way natural resources in the Caribbean are managed and used. Understanding the central role of renewable natural resources in the lives and livelihoods of Caribbean people, we have pursued in creative ways alternative Caribbean pathways, focused on the wellbeing of the land and the people rather than narrow economic growth. CANARI's efforts to support the rights of the least powerful and most vulnerable stakeholders, to level the playing field and amplify voices, have been constant throughout its history. CANARI's influence can be seen in the widespread legal and cultural affirmation that affected communities should have a say in decisions that affect their access to and relationship with natural resources. Governments have become more accepting of the value of partnering with civil society because CANARI has demonstrated time and again that such partnerships can work. A living organism, CANARI has continually evolved in response to changes in the political and socio-economic circumstances of the region, while remaining constant in its commitment to sustainable and equitable Caribbean development. Believing in Caribbean solutions to Caribbean problems,

CANARI's efforts to support the rights of the least powerful and most vulnerable stakeholders, to level the playing field and amplify voices, have been constant throughout its history.

our work has demonstrated the wealth of expertise and capacity that exists in the region and the effectiveness of locally designed and driven approaches. Always an innovator, CANARI has pioneered and shared participatory approaches that have changed, and continue to change, the way natural resources are managed and perceived in the region. We have demonstrated the power and value of sharing different perspectives to build consensus and catalyse commitment to collective and collaborative action. Our skill in bringing stakeholders together has built lasting bridges between governments and civil society across institutional, cultural and linguistic barriers. As an independent organisation without members or government sponsorship, we have not only been free to innovate but also able to gain the trust of all types of stakeholders and to provide a safe space for dialogue between them. As the region goes through one of the most challenging times in its recent history, few are better placed than CANARI to lead debate and visionary thinking on a more resilient and sustainable way forward and to support the changes needed to achieve that reality.

CANARI's own vision is of a transformative shift in the

way the region approaches development, in order to achieve the equity, wellbeing and resilience that are the basis for a healthy environment and long-term prosperity. We believe that shift is only possible when Caribbean people, governments and communities are working together, empowered with the information, capacity and intra-regional and global linkages needed to transform systems and institutions. This vision is grounded in CANARI's mission to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation and collaboration in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean.

The mission and vision reflect CANARI's longstanding values of equity, adaptability and integrity, which are embedded in our programmes, relationships, management approach and internal operations.

Our strategic plan for the 10-year period 2021-2030 is a road map for us and our partners, which builds on our foundation and legacy. We focus on using innovation to effect positive change as we do our part to address the collective need to radically transform the way we manage the environment, pursue economic development and seek more just and equitable Caribbean societies.



Mission

To promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean.

Vision

Empowered Caribbean people, with the information, capacity and intra-regional and global linkages needed to transform systems and institutions, are working together to deliver equity, wellbeing and resilience throughout the region.

Values

- **Equity:** CANARI seeks to overcome structural discrimination and power imbalances based on economic status, gender, age, ethnicity, or beliefs, and to ensure fairness. We promote justice by supporting equitable access to and use of natural resources, restoration of natural capital that is the foundation of nature-based livelihoods, and protection of those most vulnerable to disasters and climate change. We value and respect all forms of knowledge, including traditional and local knowledge, as well as diversity in people, cultures, perspectives, languages, and social systems. We support empowerment through self-organisation and amplifying the voices of marginalised stakeholders.
- **Adaptability:** CANARI focuses on building the resilience in social and ecological systems needed to adapt to changing conditions, with particular attention to the poor and vulnerable. We take a continuous learning, adaptive management approach to our work, and also support the organisations we work with to become better prepared for change through greater flexibility and resilience.
- **Integrity:** CANARI is committed to honesty, transparency and accountability in all our work and to meaningful partnerships and collaboration with others. We respect the rights of all stakeholders to participate in natural resource management. Building trust is an essential component of our work. We are accountable to all our stakeholders for results and processes and strive constantly to ensure a high standard of our work.

Finding opportunity in the challenges we face

Achieving our vision of Caribbean sustainable development depends on addressing the weaknesses in policy and governance, limits on civil society engagement and flaws in economic development models that impede efforts to overcome the interlinked challenges of poverty, inequality, biodiversity collapse and climate change.



Challenges

- Poverty and inequality
- Biodiversity collapse
- Climate change



Opportunities

- Enhancing sustainable development policy and governance
- Strengthening civil society engagement
- Transforming economic development models



Figure 1. Challenges and opportunities in the Caribbean



The challenges

Poverty and inequality

Economic inequality and attendant power imbalances have driven inequitable access to natural resources and environmental services throughout Caribbean history; increasing inequality threatens to reverse what progress has been made to reduce poverty and increase prosperity for all.

COVID-19 has highlighted systemic failures in how we structure our society and protect the most vulnerable. The widespread loss of jobs and contraction of the economy has particularly hurt the poor and economically vulnerable. Many have fallen back on resource-based subsistence activities such as farming and fishing, but find access to these activities reduced and the resources degraded. Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), especially those operating in the informal sector, have been particularly hard hit. With their own revenues plummeting, there is little that Caribbean governments have been able to do to help these businesses survive and recover.

Biodiversity collapse

The wellbeing of millions of Caribbean people, particularly the rural poor, depends heavily on healthy natural ecosystems and the economic benefits they generate. Biodiversity and ecosystem protection, sustainable use and restoration are also vital to building resilience to climate change, including slow onset effects such as increased sea surface temperatures and sea level rise, and rapid onset effects such as intense storms and hurricanes. We now also better understand the direct link between the rise of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19 and biodiversity loss, which forces disease-carrying animals out of their natural habitats and into closer contact with humans. The erosion of ecosystem services threatens food and water security, with immediate effects on poor resource-dependent communities and broader impacts on Caribbean economies. Yet, the degradation of Caribbean biodiversity and ecosystems has continued and may have accelerated, despite decades of conservation effort.

Climate change

The Caribbean's high vulnerability to climate change reverberates on the environment, society and economy. The negative impacts of climate change are expected to become increasingly apparent and pronounced over the coming decade, with increasing climate hazards and disaster risk, potentially overwhelming the adaptive capacity of social, ecological and economic systems. Poor households and coastal and rural communities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, whether in the form of natural disasters such as hurricanes or impacts on livelihoods from climate-related weather and ecosystem changes such as reduced rainfall on farmers or migration of fisheries stocks due to warming waters. The region has played a strong and active role in international climate change negotiations and institutions, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, but has little ability to slow the continual rise of greenhouse gas emissions in large economies; so, efforts must focus largely on building resilience.



How to address them

Enhancing sustainable development policy and governance

The policy environment for sustainable development has steadily improved at national, regional and international levels, offering a foundation for addressing environmental and climate challenges. Agenda 2030, with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has created a shared understanding of what sustainable development is and how to pursue it, uniting governments, civil society and other stakeholders around the world in a common effort. National development plans, regional strategies and programmes of non-governmental organisations, including CANARI, are increasingly aligned to the SDGs framework. Other international and regional agreements, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Escazú Agreement, have been influential, and Caribbean countries have played a strong role in many of those processes. While governments' attention has been diverted by immediate responses to the COVID-19 crisis, developments such as renewed attention to climate change by the United States (US) government and increased European donor support for biodiversity are likely to bring these issues back on Caribbean

agendas. There are good laws regarding participatory and collaborative approaches throughout the region, and considerable regional experience, including through CANARI's work, which has demonstrated that these approaches work. There has also been considerable investment in ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, much of it donor-supported and civil society-led. Some of this investment has paid off in increased public awareness, improved legal and policy frameworks and better protection on the ground, albeit rarely at sufficient scale to achieve broad impact.

Strengthened policy, growing social awareness and movements, and continued efforts by civil society have not yet translated into widespread effective environmental governance.

Strengthened policy, growing social awareness and movements, and continued efforts by civil society have not yet, however, translated into widespread effective environmental governance. Environmental management institutions are often weak, and public and donor investment in the environment often fails to address drivers of environmental degradation, such as unsustainable resource use, development models that do not value natural capital and weak or uncoordinated governance arrangements, resulting



in short-term gains that are quickly reversed when projects end. Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of participatory and collaborative natural resource governance, its growth has been impeded by mutual mistrust between governments and civil society. Even when the will to collaborate is there, the structures and institutions for collaboration are often lacking or not functioning effectively.

The priorities for sustainable development policy and governance reform are, therefore:

- reversing the steady erosion in technical capacity in government agencies;
- increasing political understanding of the role of natural resources in development; and
- strengthening the commitment of both governments and non-governmental stakeholders to collaborate, and the structures needed for that collaboration.

The strong allegiance of Caribbean governments and society to the global framework for sustainable development cooperation, including the SDGs, Paris Agreement on Climate Change and Convention on Biodiversity, provide an entry point for action on these priorities. The regional Escazú Agreement is another key entry point for increasing commitment to civil society collaboration.





Strengthening civil society engagement

Caribbean civil society has long played a major role in reducing poverty and protecting the environment. Much of the region's progress on improving rural livelihoods, conserving renewable natural resources, and establishing and managing protected areas has been under the leadership or with the collaboration of communities, civil society organisations, and resource user groups. Civil society has been at the forefront in advocating for sustainable development and climate action and holding governments accountable for their commitments. It has stepped in to provide social services in the wake of structural adjustment and other government cutbacks over the years, as well as in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Autonomous initiatives to address community-level food security, education and health needs that have emerged from that crisis will play an essential role in recovery and can offer lessons on what works and what forms of support are most needed.

New forms of civil society engagement are emerging that offer potential directions for rebuilding the sector's prominence.

Despite these contributions, the traditional civil society sector is nearing collapse in many countries. It has been weakened by reduced donor support and growing resistance of governments to accept and support a meaningful role for it, undermining people's faith in its potential power. Yet, at the same time, new forms of civil society engagement are emerging that offer potential directions for rebuilding the sector's prominence. Among the public, there is a growing

■ appreciation of the role of nature in culture and wellbeing, as well as climate change awareness, reflecting years of public awareness work by governments and civil society, reinforced by ever more visible threats and damage associated with ecosystem degradation and climate change. That increased awareness has stimulated communities and the wider public to get involved in advocacy, research and practical actions and to forge partnerships with the private sector and governments to scale up those efforts. Young people are using social media to engage in new and dynamic forms of social activism in response to pressing issues. These initiatives will need different forms of support than traditional civil society received, delivered in innovative ways.

Transforming economic development models

The economic models that prevail in the Caribbean rely heavily on extractive use of natural resources, export-based agricultural production and mass tourism, which are damaging to the environment, generate little lasting progress given their volatility and dependency on external conditions, and favour the economically powerful while excluding others from access to resources, finance and market opportunities. These models have increased inequality, with a widening gap between the rich and poor. They have also blocked progress on many fronts, including growing small enterprises, greening the economy and making it less fossil-fuel dependent, building civil society's role in national governance, and protecting critical natural resources and ecosystems. The power structures that perpetuate current

economic models are deeply entrenched. The private sector's participation in discussions on sustainable development is essential, but so far, private sector actors have largely failed to engage or to consider changes to their ways of doing business.

The economic and social crises countries have faced in the wake of COVID-19 have increased calls for green, low-carbon, resilient and inclusive development pathways that could simultaneously address the region's environmental, economic and social challenges and threats from climate change. Government responses so far have largely been crisis-driven and unstrategic, with a focus on meeting immediate needs, through safety nets and other social programmes for the poor. There has also been considerable effort to attract foreign investment to get key economic sectors up and running again, but realignments in the trade regimes of major partners, including the US, China, the European Union and the United Kingdom in the wake of Brexit, make navigating the global economy much more challenging for the region. Innovative solutions, such as green debt reduction instruments and investment incentives, as well as effective mechanisms to specifically support the recovery and resilience of MSMEs and the informal sector, and recognition of the role of natural resources in economic development, are needed but are not being considered in most national COVID-19 recovery plans. And with countries struggling to pay their monthly bills and debt burdens likely to grow, the fiscal space for innovation is very narrow.

But this moment of crisis still offers an opportunity to “reset” and move to a more sustainable pathway. In highlighting the importance of science in decision-making, COVID-19 has also strengthened arguments for a shift to green, low carbon development. Growing debt burdens and the tourism sector's collapse could shift attention to new areas of economic growth and diversification, including building sustainable food economies, which will have to grow as weak export earnings limit the ability to import food. In seeking to convince governments, private sector investors and influential international partners that new economic models are the only option for long-term prosperity, there are a diversity of promising developments to build on. The SDGs provide a framework for shifting to more equitable and sustainable pathways that governments of the region have committed to, and have in many cases aligned their national development plans with. There are increasing examples of green social enterprises that have created jobs, supported local development and opened new markets in the region. There is growing global experience that governments can use to implement systems of natural capital accounting, to help them factor the value of environmental goods and services into investment and economic policy decisions.

This moment of crisis offers an opportunity to “reset” and move to a more sustainable pathway.

Caribbean solutions to Caribbean problems: The ten-year strategy

CANARI's unique offer

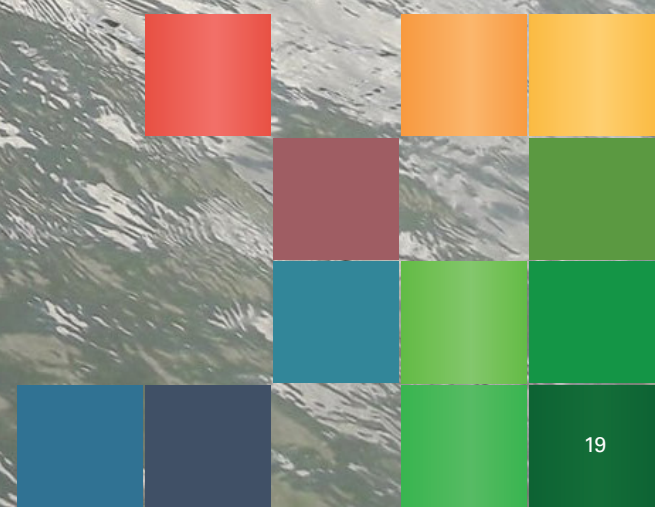
CANARI's focus on the role of ecosystems and renewable natural resources in improving wellbeing and helping people move and remain out of poverty is especially needed under current economic conditions and trends, which point to increasing poverty rates and reduced economic opportunities, especially for the poor and near-poor. CANARI has five distinguishing features.

- *Engagement of stakeholders across sectors.*
Our ability to work with all actors at all levels that have a stake in sustainable development, including governments, civil society, research and academic institutions and the private sector, is exceptional.
- *Long-term collaborative partnerships.*
Our collaborative approach is built on long-term partnerships, ranging from small community-based organisations and innovative micro-enterprises to Caribbean governments, civil society organisations (CSOs), universities, regional inter-governmental organisations and enabling partners such as international agencies and donors. We participate in and build networks across the region and beyond to improve the quality and impact of our work and broaden our reach.
- *A focus on the root causes of vulnerabilities.*
Our deep understanding of and attention to the root causes of the region's vulnerabilities and of their inter-connectedness, positions CANARI well to address the existential climate threat, biodiversity loss, and support the sustainable recovery of nature-based businesses that have been decimated by the economic impacts of national and global lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 crisis.
- *Integration of community enterprises into the natural resource management discourse.*
Our demonstrated ability to leverage funding for MSMEs and community development projects makes us an attractive partner for governments and regional agencies, offering an entry point for policy influencing on building social, environmental, climate and economic resilience.
- *Support for participatory management for environmental governance.*
Our strong expertise in supporting participatory management and improved environmental governance is perhaps our greatest strength, underpinning all the work we do. Our decades of experience have taught us that solutions cannot be lasting and robust without effective governance, and that governance is only effective when it has the support and engagement of the people it affects.





Our strong expertise in supporting participatory management and improved environmental governance is perhaps our greatest strength, underpinning all the work we do.



Strategic directions

Over the next 10 years, CANARI will contribute to furthering sustainable development in the region by orienting our work in five strategic directions where we can make a difference: resilience, biodiversity and ecosystems, equity and justice, participatory governance and innovation. The first four of those directions will align to programme areas, while innovation will cut across the other programme areas.

These issues are closely linked to one another in a virtuous circle. The resilience of biodiversity and ecosystems is dependent on effective participatory governance, which in turn increases societal and institutional resilience through more sustainable and secure flows of environmental goods and services for development. Resilient societies foster greater equity and justice by reducing the vulnerability of all, including the poor and marginalised, at individual, household and community levels, thus increasing their opportunities to thrive and to be active partners in governance and decision-making. Because of the increasing pace, and increasingly uncertain direction of change in the region and globally, the ways in which these issues are addressed will need to be more flexible, nimble and adaptable than ever. Innovation, in methods, approaches, policies and enterprise models, therefore, is essential to and permeates the entire strategy.

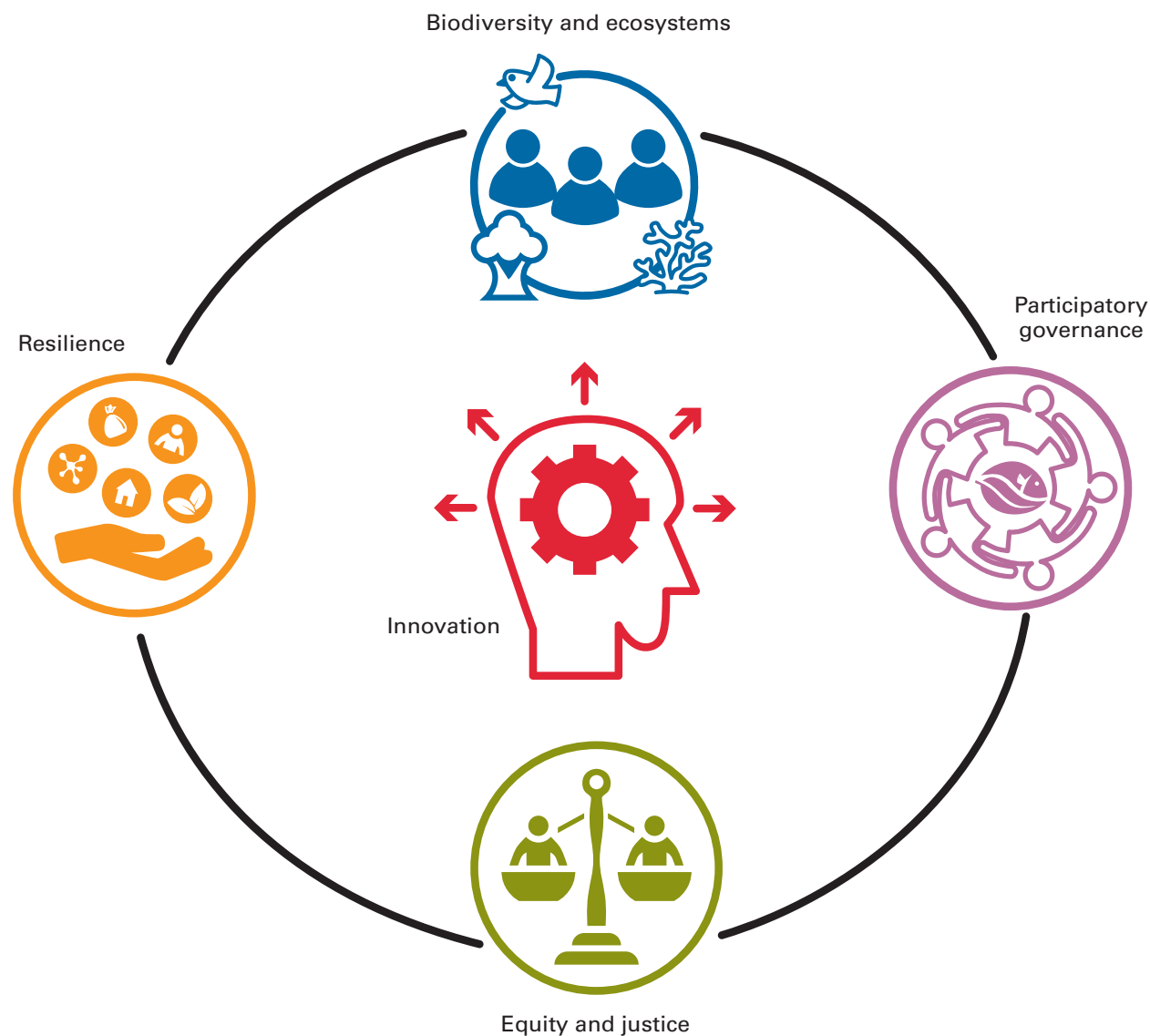


Figure 2. CANARI's strategic directions 2021-2030

1. Resilience

CANARI's work on resilience aims to support the region to confront and overcome the compounding vulnerabilities, from climate change and natural disasters to economic shocks and pandemics, that impede progress towards sustainable development. It is based on the understanding that efforts to build resilience in natural, social, economic and governance systems must be coordinated, as these systems themselves are deeply interlinked. To support resilience-building in such a multi-dimensional way, CANARI's work will focus on:

- conserving, restoring and sustainably managing the natural ecosystems that contribute to environmental, climate and disaster resilience, as well as the resilience of rural livelihoods and key economic sectors;
- building resilience in rural community livelihoods and enterprises that are dependent upon the use of ecological goods and services;
- supporting participatory governance arrangements that fully engage civil society and communities in decreasing their vulnerability to climate change, natural disasters and other threats to their security and livelihoods;
- developing, advocating on and building capacity for multi-dimensional approaches to resilience that address linked development challenges in holistic ways.

2. Biodiversity and ecosystems

Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use have always been a focus of CANARI's work, and remain central to achieving our mission. Our work going forward will focus on developing and sharing methods and approaches for biodiversity and ecosystem management that are aligned to national, regional and international frameworks and that optimise the contribution of nature to development. Major areas of work will include:

- supporting local-level natural resource stewardship;
- promoting landscape management initiatives;
- building the health and resilience of Caribbean ecosystems;
- rehabilitating and restoring ecosystems;
- strengthening participatory frameworks, mechanisms and knowledge bases.

3. Equity and justice

Prevailing economic models in the region fail to capture the value of renewable natural resources, and the cost of their degradation, to rural livelihoods. This creates a context in which large enterprises can prosper through unsustainable practices while nature-based livelihoods prevalent in rural communities are overlooked and undermined. This area of CANARI's work aims at addressing these injustices in order to achieve more equitable economic, social and environmental outcomes in rural economies and the MSMEs that sustain a large portion of the Caribbean population.

Strategic Directions 2021- 2030

- 1. Resilience:** Learning, advocating on and building capacity for approaches that holistically build resilience to climate change, natural disasters and other risks to Caribbean people, ecosystems and economies.
- 2. Biodiversity and ecosystems:** Facilitating the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems in support of Caribbean social, cultural and economic development.
- 3. Equity and justice:** Championing equity and justice in meeting the environmental and livelihood needs of poor and vulnerable people.
- 4. Participatory governance:** Informing, convening and empowering people and institutions for participatory governance of natural resources.
- 5. Innovation:** Working together with stakeholders to introduce innovation in approaches, institutions and enterprises, which is needed to make the transformation to sustainable development in today's rapidly changing world.



Main areas of work will include:

- supporting the development of rural nature-based livelihood options and enterprises to increase the prosperity and improve the economic resilience of vulnerable peoples;
 - creating the enabling policy and institutional frameworks and support mechanisms needed for enterprises to develop and flourish;
 - mainstreaming environmental valuation and biodiversity value consideration into Caribbean macroeconomic decision-making.
- strengthening the capacity of civil society, governments and other partners in key areas of participatory natural resource governance, including planning, monitoring and evaluation, managing partnerships and stakeholder engagement;
 - supporting the full engagement of marginalised and less powerful stakeholders, through actions that seek out and assure the space for their participation, increase their capacity to participate knowledgeably, and reinforce and amplify their voices.

4. Participatory governance

While much progress has been made in improving the governance of natural resources and ecosystems through greater participation of resource users and other stakeholders, unequal power relations continue to impede the full participation of many stakeholders, particularly poor, marginalised and rural communities. Much more work is needed to empower stakeholders to demand their rights to participation and improve the frameworks and institutions for participatory governance. Similarly, more needs to be done to increase the understanding of all stakeholders of the value of participation in the management of natural resources, and their capacity to work together effectively. Work in this area will focus on:

- developing and demonstrating more effective participatory governance arrangements through legal and policy reform, financial support, and improved structures and processes;

5. Innovation

CANARI's success over time is grounded in an understanding that the purpose of innovation is not simply to do things differently but to effect positive change. Innovation is about developing alternatives to practices, structures and enterprise models that are not working equitably for people or sustainably for the environment. Innovation is required to break through barriers to progress, whether financial, cultural, political or institutional. It is needed to confront new challenges and take advantage of new opportunities, as well as to modify what once worked and no longer works so well. Innovation is meaningless unless it is driven by those who will benefit from the changes it seeks to make. CANARI's role in developing new approaches, methods and tools is less to lead and more to facilitate the work of stakeholders on the ground. Where CANARI adds greatest value is in bringing stakeholders together to seek innovative approaches, sharing those innovations more broadly, building people's capacity to use them and advocating for their widespread uptake.



Expanding our geography

CANARI works across the Caribbean, with projects and programmes at local, national and regional levels. Our local and national work has mainly focused on the island countries and territories of the region, and we have acquired substantial experience and developed deep relationships over time in several countries in particular. Over the strategy period, our geographic scope will expand further to some continental Caribbean countries, starting with Guyana, Suriname and Belize as members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CANARI also engages in international processes as an advocate for Caribbean sustainable development and to share experiences from the region while learning from other countries and regions facing similar issues.

Our methods

We will use a mixed set of mutually reinforcing implementation methods, drawing on the skills and approaches that have proven effective over time. We will conduct grounded research and testing with partners to co-create knowledge and develop tools, while also contributing to the capacity development of partners. We will also build the capacity of institutions through training, provision of resources and other forms of support. We will create spaces for dialogue among stakeholders on key issues, build networks to share knowledge and take collective action, and seek to influence policy and practice in the region through research, capacity building, facilitation of dialogue and collective action. We will coordinate action by partnering with governments and regional and international organisations to manage programmes and projects, providing technical services and acting as a conduit, channelling funding, information and technical support to CSOs and other local organisations.

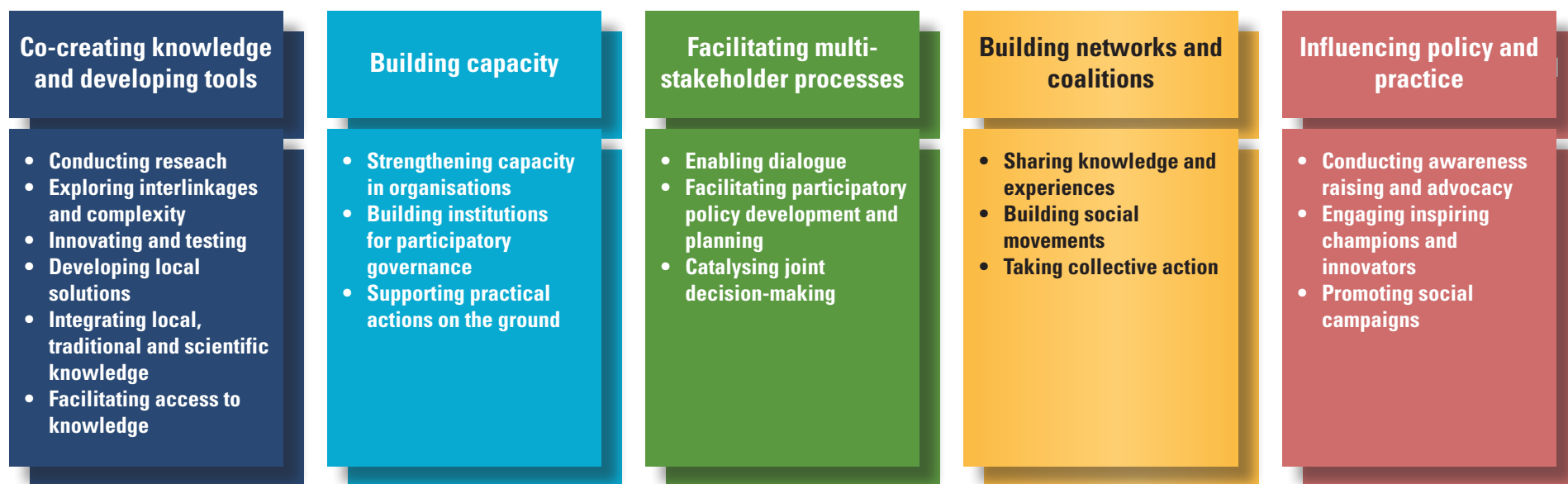


Figure 3. CANARI's implementation methods 2021-2030

Reflecting and learning together



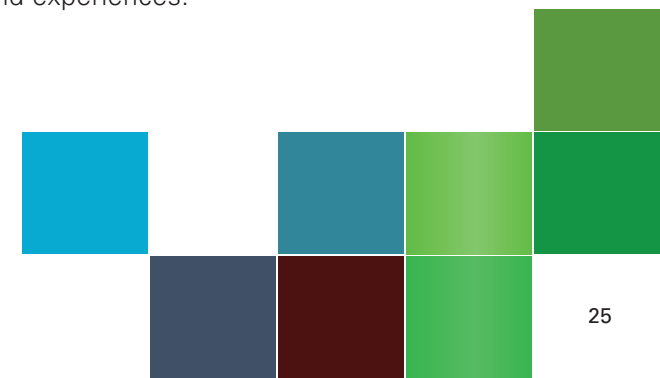
CANARI is a learning organisation, practising continuous self-reflection. We conduct participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning (PMEL) processes for all our projects and programmes, as well as our governance and operational systems. We systematically capture lessons and recommendations for adaptation and continuous improvement, and share that learning with our partners and stakeholders.

We are focused on achieving clear results for change: in more participatory institutions for natural resource management; in more engaged and empowered social actors (individuals, communities, organisations); in enhancing ecosystem goods, services and biodiversity; and in development models. By helping us to understand how to do things better and with

greater impact, PMEL will play as much a part in the process of change envisioned by this strategic plan as the activities themselves. We see monitoring, evaluation and learning not as separate steps but as a continuous process that is fully integrated into programme design, development, implementation, review and refinement, including through periodic review of the regional context and reassessment of priority needs.

How we do monitoring, evaluation and learning will evolve in response to learning and programme needs, but will always include the active participation of stakeholders in its design and implementation – from determining what constitutes “success” to deciding how to use the learning to improve programme effectiveness and outcomes. Participation is essential to CANARI’s approach, both by providing accountability to stakeholders and by supporting stakeholder learning, dialogue and capacity development.

PMEL guidelines will be developed to accompany the strategic plan, drawing on CANARI’s previous work and experiences.



Equipping CANARI for the task

CANARI's growth as an organisation has reflected the values and approaches that characterise our work. We practice participatory management in our programmes and projects, our governance, and our internal operations. CANARI staff participate in decision-making, including through their roles as project and programme managers, team members, members of and participants in meetings of CANARI's highest governance body - the Partnership². We engage our stakeholders and donors in planning, implementation and evaluation of our work.

CANARI will need to further evolve in a number of ways to achieve the aims of the Strategic Plan 2021-2030 and adapt to rapidly changing conditions in the region and globally. While the working environment post-COVID-19 is uncertain, it will undoubtedly continue to involve less travel and more home-based work for CANARI's staff and stakeholders. Therefore, as an

organisational imperative, we will need to devise hybrid remote working conditions which focus on creating inclusive working environments that also cater to the physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing of our dispersed staff. The role of information and communication technology (ICT) in bringing people together and creating virtual workspaces is increasing tremendously and likely to continue to do so. As a regional organisation that works to connect people across the Caribbean and from local to national to regional to global levels, CANARI can benefit from that trend. But its work must remain deeply grounded, requiring staff decentralisation and stronger networks and partnerships throughout the region, as well as addressing capacity needs and using a mix of engagement approaches to ensure that some stakeholders are not marginalised by virtual modes. CANARI has identified five key areas for organisational strengthening over the strategy period.



Figure 4. CANARI's key institutional development areas 2021-2030

¹CANARI's legal governing body is a regional Board of Directors. In 2001, CANARI established an internal operating structure, the Partnership, designed to more effectively leverage the collective skills of Board members and senior staff. Elected members of the Partnership work alongside the Executive Director as "Managing Partner" and other senior technical staff appointed as "Staff Partners". Partners have collective responsibility for oversight of the Institute and for ensuring the appropriate use of the Institute's funds.

1. Enhancing ability to work and partner with others throughout the region

CANARI will **progressively decentralise programme staff**, employing individuals or establishing small hubs in various parts of the region, while maintaining a central office for management, administration and national level work in Trinidad. Thematic teams involving staff, Elected Partners, Associates and Programme Advisors from different countries will both help maintain cohesion among staff and the wider CANARI family, as well as making more systematic and strategic use of non-staff CANARI expertise.

The size of the staff, the location of hubs and the composition of teams will be determined by programme needs as they evolve. Increasing CANARI's capacity to work effectively in all the languages of the region will also be a major consideration in future staff recruitment and staff location.

In order to further expand our scope and programme impact, we will **implement some aspects of our programme through or with trusted organisations and individuals** based in countries across the Caribbean and with whom CANARI has developed relationships over time. Such arrangements will increase our capacity to work regionally, especially in countries where we have limited or no CANARI family presence. It will also contribute to capacity building of our partners.

We will also continue to **build our networks of CSO partners and allies** working on similar issues across the region in order to increase the impact and scale of our advocacy work. Some of these networks could be developed into more formal consortia working together on key issues.

These actions will make CANARI more effective in our country-level work and help us **become a more effective convenor and leader in regional processes and initiatives**. We will seek to strengthen our relationships with regional agencies working on sustainable development issues, including through formal partnership agreements.

2. Increasing international presence and engagement

CANARI has increasingly engaged in international processes and networks in order to highlight Caribbean priorities and get Caribbean messages into those spaces. We will expand those efforts through technical support to Caribbean negotiators and supporting greater Caribbean civil society and stakeholder participation in global processes. We will also **build our international profile** through strategic global partnerships on key issues such as the green-blue economy and climate change. We will particularly seek to **develop alliances with organisations in other island regions and the global South** in order to better achieve shared international policy objectives and to learn from one another. In becoming more widely recognised for our work internationally, CANARI will also increase its influence and legitimacy with Caribbean governments and international actors operating in the region.

3. Strengthening internal participatory governance

CANARI's governance is built around the Partnership, an innovative structure bringing together the expertise and skills of elected and senior staff Partners. The Partnership is complemented by the active involvement of all staff in programme planning and organisational decision-making, as well as regular input from CANARI Associates and Advisors. With these internal participatory governance arrangements working effectively, we now wish to **make programme planning and decision-making even more participatory through the structured involvement of a broad range of stakeholders** from around the region. We will explore options for achieving that, for example, through increasing the use of technical advisory teams comprised of knowledgeable stakeholders for each programme and Action Learning Groups on key issues. We will also increase stakeholder participation in programme monitoring and evaluation.

4. Achieving sustainable financing

CANARI's growth over the past decade has been enabled by its effective efforts at fundraising. But the funding environment for CANARI's work is changing in uncertain ways, making financial stability and sustainability more important than ever. COVID-19 has diverted donor priorities for now, and the region has become a relatively low priority for donors,

given most countries' middle-income status. But the trend over the last several years has been favourable for sustainable development and thus for CANARI. Climate change and the SDGs have been particularly influential, and there has also been increasing investment in strengthening civil society, addressing growing inequality, biodiversity and oceans.

Beyond securing the funding needed to deliver this strategy over its 10-year period, our main aims for the coming decade are: 1) to establish a substantial surplus unrestricted fund that can be used to innovate and to take advantage of emerging opportunities for which funding is not immediately available, as well as to get through short periods of financial constraint; and 2) to achieve greater diversity of funding sources and types in order to reduce risk.

We will pursue those aims through a strategy that includes:

- focusing fundraising efforts on **larger long-term funding that can contribute to broad programme aims and support organisational development rather than just having project-level impact**, and also generate enough funds for administration and strategic institutional development to contribute to building the surplus fund;
- **establishing relationships of trust with major donors** based on an understanding of the need for flexibility, responsiveness and adaptive management in programmes and projects to address unexpected issues and the emerging needs of stakeholders;
- seeking more **opportunities to serve as the management intermediary for large regional funds or projects/programmes**, and to be an **executing partner** in consortia implementing regional projects and programmes, in order to provide CANARI with the means to steer the direction of such funds and offer financial support to key sustainable development stakeholders including government agencies, CSOs, MSMEs and resource user associations.

5. Innovating in communication and engagement

Outside of its economic impacts, one of the most immediate effects of COVID-19 has been the shift to virtual forms of communication and dialogue. While it has made it easier to share information with wide

audiences, it has also facilitated the spread of misinformation, and growing reliance on social media and the Internet has made it more difficult to tell the difference between truth and lies. Participatory processes have also been affected in both positive and negative ways – it has become possible to engage with more people, but the quality and depth of dialogue is reduced and inaccessible to those without technology access and capacity.

The ways in which CANARI communicates and engages are expanding with these changes and the rapid evolution of ICT, but our ability to take advantage of new technologies is constrained by our limited capabilities. **Increasing staff ICT skills and use of ICT tools** are therefore priorities in order to expand the range of tools we can draw on and use them more creatively and effectively.

As our ICT capacity grows, we intend to further develop our **online knowledge platforms**, bringing together information, including local knowledge, and stakeholder voices on key programme issues.

Not all our stakeholders have, or are comfortable with, the skills and technologies needed to effectively engage virtually, and for much of CANARI's work, face-to-face dialogue offers advantages that are not possible with virtual communication. We will therefore **continue to rely on traditional forms of communication and engagement** as much as possible in all our work.

We will also work on **improving our communication about CANARI**, in order to better document our work, network more effectively, and make information about the organisation more accessible to partners, donors and wider audiences.

“The purpose of innovation is not simply to do things differently but to effect positive change.”

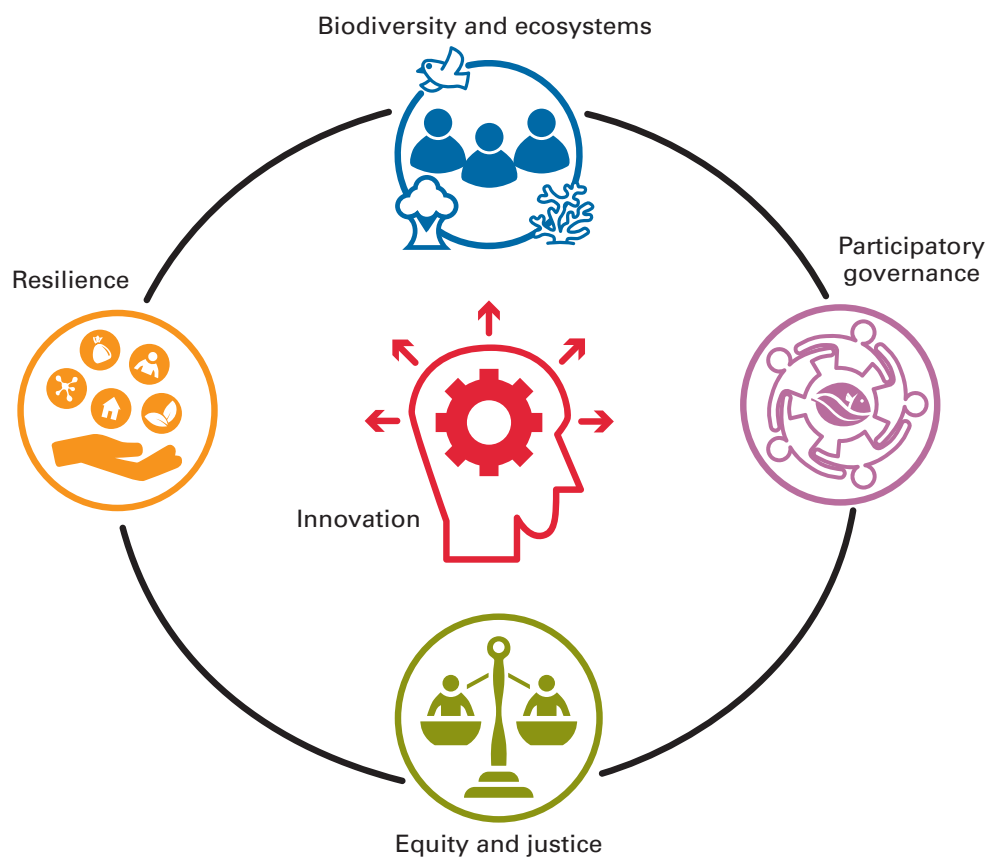


Key elements of CANARI's Strategic Plan 2021-2030

Vision: Empowered Caribbean people, with the information, capacity and intra-regional and global linkages needed to transform systems and institutions, are working together to deliver equity, wellbeing and resilience throughout the region.

Mission: To promote and facilitate stakeholder participation and collaboration in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean.

CANARI's strategic response



CANARI's approach

Co-creating knowledge and developing tools

Building capacity

Facilitating multi-stakeholder processes

Building networks and coalitions

Influencing policy and practice

Innovating for equity, resilience and sustainability



Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
Strategic Plan 2021-2030