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## Stakeholders charting a course towards resilient, inclusive, blue-green economic development in the South Coast region of St. Vincent



*Part of the SCMCA and surrounding watersheds from Fort Duvernette*  
Photo credit: Phillip Beckles

**Port of Spain, March 8, 2023** - Along the south coast of St. Vincent lies an enchanting expanse of calm blue waters and white sandy shores, extending from Indian Bay to Johnson Point at Canash and encompassing Young Island and Fort Duvernette. This picturesque and idyllic coastal region forms the South Coast Marine Conservation Area (SCMCA), the mainland's sole marine protected area. The SCMCA features mangrove, sea grass and coral reef ecosystems, which are key to the nature-dependent tourism and fishing sectors, local employment, and the rich biodiversity of the area.

Despite its significance, the SCMCA faces serious threats from climatic hazards and pollution which are reducing the capacity of its ecosystems to provide the goods and services on which people rely. To address these challenges, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is partnering with the National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority, Forestry Department, Fisheries Division, the SVG Hotel and Tourism Association, and the SVG National Fisherfolk Organisation to implement a three-year project entitled, "[Pioneering a blue-green economic development model for coastal adaptation, livelihoods and sustainability in St. Vincent.](#)" This is a project of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, co-financed by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety through KfW.

The project aims to adopt a landscape approach to address key risks from climate change and land-based pollution within the SCMCA and surrounding watersheds and communities. This approach is multi-scalar and multi-dimensional, addressing the environmental, social and economic aspects of development. Firstly, practical on-the-ground ecosystem-based adaptation actions will be

implemented by local communities to rehabilitate threatened coastal and watershed ecosystems. A second stream of work seeks to reduce threats through targeted communications and awareness raising to increase local environmental stewardship. Under this component, [local green-blue enterprises](#) are being supported to improve their business practices, improve their climate resilience and achieve triple-bottom-line benefits. Thirdly, the project seeks to address broader institutional issues by supporting capacity building of management institutions, catalysing public-private-civil society partnerships and developing a broader blue-green economy roadmap and financing plan for the South Coast.

The overarching goal of this blue-green economy framework is to support local economic development that operates within environmental limits, protect and restore natural capital and ecological services, provide economic opportunities to local communities, including vulnerable groups such as women and youth, and build socio-economic resilience.

To launch on-the-ground activities, CANARI facilitated a participatory planning workshop at the Sunset Shores Hotel in Villa from January 31 to February 2, 2023. The primary objectives of the workshop were to conduct adaptation planning with target communities to identify appropriate coastal and watershed ecosystem-based adaptation solutions, and to begin the process of visioning a framework for inclusive local blue-green economic development in the South Coast region. 45 participants from various stakeholder groups including local communities, civil society organisations, government agencies, churches, academia and the private sector participated in interactive activities and discussions over the three days.



*Workshop participants represented a range of sectors and interests but were united in their commitment to resilient, inclusive, blue-green economic development in the South Coast region of St. Vincent.*

Photo credit: CANARI

The first day of the workshop focused on orienting stakeholders to the project and the issues it addresses. Participants engaged in exercises to identify the linkages between ecosystems and

livelihoods within the South Coast, the climatic and non-climatic threats to these ecosystem services and their impacts on the most vulnerable people and assets. This involved a rapid field survey of the affected areas and a participatory mapping exercise. During the field trip, participants heard from resource managers and community representatives who discussed the issues affecting the area as well as their previous experiences with implementing ecosystem-based adaptation actions.



*Mr. Sternley Walker, Park Ranger, briefing participants at Great Head Bay, Arnos Vale*  
Photo credit: CANARI

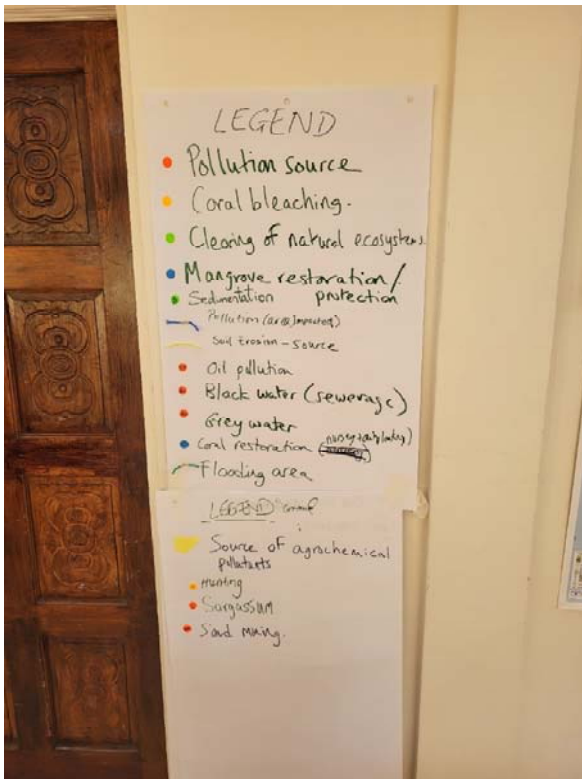


*Mr. Vaughn Martin of the Serenity Dive shop speaking to participants about his enterprises' coral restoration project*  
Photo Credit: Winsbert Harry



Participatory three-dimensional mapping draws heavily on the knowledge and experience of community members and stakeholders

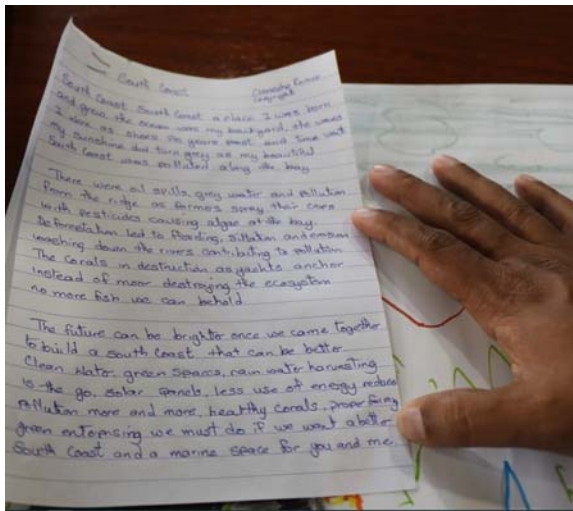
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Map legend developed by participants

Photo credit: CANARI





*A poem outlining the type of transformation she envisaged for the South Coast  
Photo credit: CANARI*

The insights gleaned from the participatory exercises will be used to refine the project's scoping report, and the outputs of this workshop will inform the development of stewardship action plans and the allocation of resources for on-the-ground interventions under the project. Moving forward, an action learning group comprised of stakeholder working groups on coastal and watershed ecosystem-based adaptation will be created to develop detailed sub-projects and engage in knowledge sharing, networking and participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning (PMEL) during project implementation.

The workshop was a great success and participants left with a better understanding of the objectives of the project and the steps to be taken to achieve them. The project partners are committed to working together to protect the marine ecosystems and biodiversity of the South Coast Marine Conservation Area and support the transition to inclusive blue-green economic development in the South Coast region of St. Vincent.

For more information on the project and the workshop, please contact the project manager, Ms. Yasa Belmar at [yasa@canari.org](mailto:yasa@canari.org).