



For Immediate Release

Workshop held in Anguilla to Improve Sargassum Management

The Valley, Anguilla, May 11, 2023 – Since 2011, the Caribbean region has faced an unprecedented challenge of massive sargassum seaweed influxes that have negative impacts on coastal ecosystems, livelihoods, and public health. To address this issue, a two-day workshop was held in Anguilla from May 4-5, 2023, to build the capacity of local coastal and marine managers, fisherfolk, divers and hotel operators in areas related to sargassum use, removal and rehabilitation of affected areas.

The workshop was hosted by Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources (DNAR) in Anguilla and the University of the West Indies - Center for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (UWI-CERMES). It brought together coastal and marine managers and users from various sectors such as government agencies responsible for natural resources management, fisheries, planning, and disaster management, fisherfolk organisations, civil society organisations, hotel and tour operators and other private sector representatives.



Workshop participants engaged in group activity
Credit: CANARI

Carencia Rouse, Head of the Environment Unit at the Department of Natural Resources in Anguilla noted in her opening remarks that “We’ve been consistently monitoring the sargassum, trying very hard to pay attention to the science and the best practices for management. And now our ultimate goal is to get to the position where we can effectively and efficiently manage sargassum. I hope that after the next 2 days we come away with a clearer understanding of how to manage this phenomenon as well as understanding its implications and uses.”

The workshop aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the principles of sargassum adaptive management; how to select suitable tools and approaches for monitoring, collection and removal of sargassum and the rehabilitation of affected areas; evidence-based decision-making through accessing and utilizing appropriate data and information; and effective engagement stakeholders in sargassum management. Sargassum adaptive management is a framework for action based on resilience thinking and dynamic monitoring that offers guidance to stakeholders on appropriate actions and operations for the pre-influx, impact and post-impact phases.



*Workshop participants on field trip to sargassum impacted beaches on day 1 of the workshop.
Credit: Deniscio Samuel*

On day 1, participants were introduced to the science of sargassum, including the high level of uncertainty associated with this phenomenon and the importance of participatory monitoring and research in supporting decision-making for effective sargassum management. Day 1 also included a field trip to beaches affected by sargassum and demonstration of how drones are being used to monitor and map the impacts.

Day 2 of the workshop focused on sargassum adaptive management, including practical approaches to sargassum clean-up and management, selection of tools and approaches for sargassum removal and rehabilitation of affected areas, and effective stakeholder engagement and communication.

Over the next few weeks similar training workshops will be conducted in Montserrat and the Virgin Islands, UK under the project, *“Sustainable sargassum management in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat”* which aims to implement a participatory and multi-level approach to managing the social-ecological system responses to sargassum influxes in order to protect and enhance coastal and marine biodiversity and associated livelihoods. The overall project is being implemented from 2021-2024 by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in collaboration with Department of Natural Resources–Anguilla, Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration–Virgin Islands, Department of Environment–Montserrat, Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) of the University of the West Indies, and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission. It is funded by a grant from the UK Government through Darwin Plus: Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund under the Darwin Initiative. To learn more about the project, visit: <https://canari.org/darwin-sargassum-ots/>

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit institute which has been working across the islands of the Caribbean for 30 years. Our mission is to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean. Our work focuses on Equity, Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Resilience, and Participatory Governance. See here for more information on CANARI: <http://www.canari.org/> .

About Department of Natural Resources, Anguilla: The mandate of the Department of Natural Resources is to achieve Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Sustainable Fishing and Agriculture and Food Security. The Department’s mission is to deliver best practices in food production and environmental governance which emphasise entrepreneurship, public engagement and, ultimately, sustainable development: <http://www.gov.ai/departments.php?id=6&dept=45>

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