



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

# Participatory Budgeting for the Forest Sector in Jamaica

*Briefing Book for Government agencies involved in the forest sector*

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) Birdwatching supports Jamaica's tourism sector. Credit CANARI; 2) STEA team member explaining Cockpit Country flora. Credit CANARI; 3) STEA staff. Credit CANARI; 4) Sign in at Cockpit Country Forest Reserve. Credit CANARI**

### BOX 3: COALITION FOR FOREST MEMBERS

- Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM)
- Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDDT)
- 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 (STEPSA)
- The Nature Conservancy (Jamaica)
- The Sustainable Livelihood Network Ltd.
- Watermount Community Development Committee



Boardwalk in the mangrove at Salt River. Credit 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.

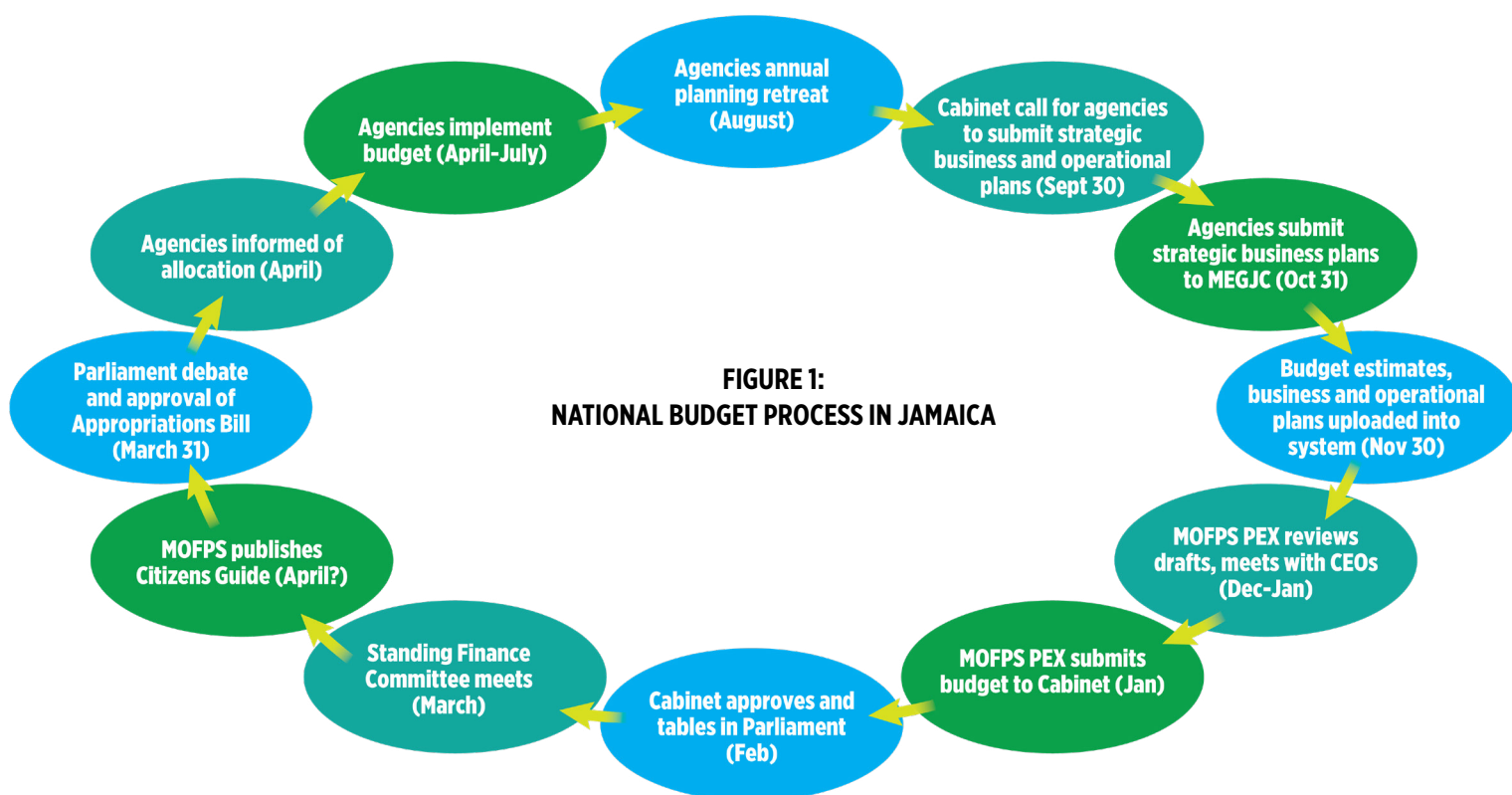


Community members participate in reforestation activities on Exhibition Hill, Portland. Credit JCDT

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.

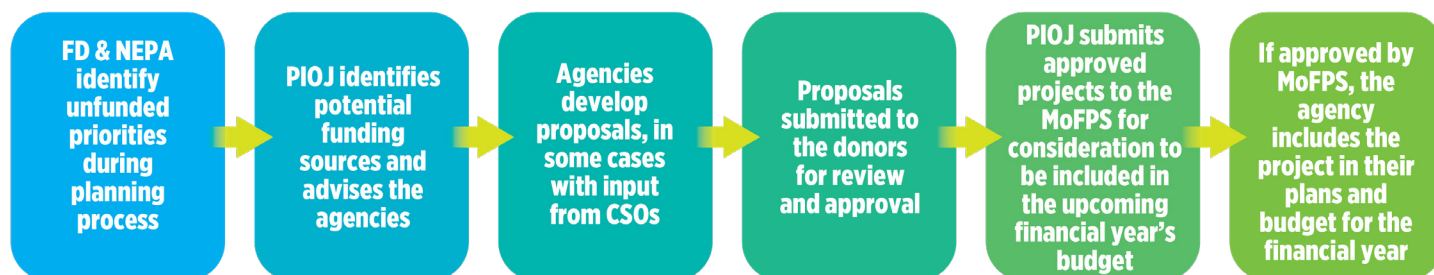
Although this has not yet happened, CSOs such as Local Forest Management Committees (LFMCs), non-governmental organisations delegated by NEPA to manage designated protected areas (JCDT, C-CAM) and other members of the Coalition for Forests can also seek to directly engage with FD and NEPA as well as 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 Government agencies involved in the forest sector

Three key agencies are involved in forest conservation and management: the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), the Forestry Department and the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). The Coalition wants these agencies to advocate for an increase in the overall budget allocation for forest conservation and management and to recognise the economic value and benefits of the work that civil society does in the forest sector.

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

Forest conservation and management benefits both the environment and the people who depend on it. Forests contain much of Jamaica's precious biodiversity and are part of the natural heritage of all Jamaicans. Forests provide ecosystem services such as regulating climate, purifying water, storing carbon and preventing soil erosion. Forests offer livelihood opportunities, cultural values and recreational benefits for local communities. Funding forest conservation and management will help to protect these natural resources and enhance the resilience of communities to cope with the impacts of climate change, such as drought, fire, pests and diseases.

However, not enough funding is currently being allocated for forest conservation and management in Jamaica to ensure threats are being effectively addressed. Here the contribution of civil society as a valuable partner in forest conservation and management is extremely important, with CSOs directing over JMD100 million towards their work on forests in 2022 alone.

CSOs understand the needs on the ground and support forest research, protection and restoration, education and capacity building, as well as sustainable forest-based businesses and livelihoods in communities. But CSOs can do much more to help Government agencies to achieve their mandates. Increasing funding to CSOs in the forest sector would enable them to expand their work and bolster the capacity of Government agencies to meet their mandate and deliver a balanced and effective approach to conserving Jamaica's forests.

Collaborating with civil society will help Government agencies to deliver results which will help them to justify an increase in their own budgets. Working closely with CSOs, agencies can make a stronger case for an increase in funding for Jamaica's forest sector.

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

Supporting forest conservation and management provides an opportunity for the Government to demonstrate its commitment to access by Jamaicans to Jamaica's resources. It allows agencies like NEPA and the Forestry Department to partner with citizens to build stronger communities based on sustainable use of natural resources to support local livelihoods and economic development.



Hugh Dixon, Executive Director of STEA, leads a capacity building workshop in Bunkers Hill, Trelawny, with the purpose of informing community members on the possibilities for alternative livelihood ventures. Credit STEA

**Forest management and conservation is a viable space for economic growth and opens the door for sustainable development.**

There is a general misconception that there are minimal economic opportunities in Jamaican rural communities that align with forest conservation. In addition to the inherent ecological benefits of conservation, sustainable forest-based livelihoods and businesses also provide key opportunities to unlock sustainable development in rural areas which brings about real improvements in quality of life through new green economic opportunities.

Working with civil society partners can support the development and strengthening of sustainable forest-based businesses in local communities. Civil society partners provide technical assistance on topics such as forest management, business development, product quality, certification and marketing. CSOs conduct advocacy on policies and regulations that affect forest-based enterprises by conducting research, raising awareness, mobilising stakeholders and engaging with decision-makers. CSOs also deliver capacity building and support to access markets and finance by forest-based enterprises.

### **Jamaican civil society is delivering results for forest conservation and management.**

CSOs play a key and direct role in working with physical forest resources and people in forest-dependent communities. In this way CSOs connect environmental and socio-economic development goals, especially supporting vulnerable groups. Civil society is well positioned to deliver results at the local scale in communities and for the environment. For example, over 2021-2023 CSOs have delivered results such as:

- 1) Conserving important ecosystems such as the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park and World Heritage Site and the Portland Bight Protected Area, a combined 15% of Jamaica's territory and two of three large Key Biodiversity Areas in Jamaica, in partnership with NEPA.
- 2) Conducting important scientific research in Key Biodiversity Areas (such as the Cockpit Country) that have been globally recognised as irreplaceable. These research activities have supported the conservation of several key species such as the Jamaican Iguana, Jamaican Hutia and many endemic bird species.
- 3) Providing training and developing the capacity of over 1,000 residents in communities around the Blue Mountains, and over 800 in the Cockpit Country, to participate in alternative livelihoods which do not destroy forests.
- 4) Monitoring the health of 40,000 acres of forest while restoring and maintaining over 80 acres of degraded landscapes in the Blue and John Crow Mountains within three years.

CSOs are working with limited resources to help to advance the mandates of Government agencies. Strengthened partnerships between agencies and civil society would help CSOs to access more funding and deliver benefits for the sector.

### **Jamaican civil society has a right to be included in the budgeting process and allocated more funding to strengthen their important work.**

Civil society is a proven cost-effective implementing partner that delivers results for agencies on forest conservation and management initiatives. This proven track record suggests that CSOs are key stakeholders that deserve a seat at the table in the forest sector budgeting process.

For example, CSOs want to be able to participate in annual planning processes of agencies on priorities and budget allocation for forest conservation and management.

Some of the benefits of involving civil society in the budgeting process are:

- It will increase transparency and accountability of public spending by government agencies with a mandate to protect Jamaica's forests, by ensuring that the forest budget reflects the needs and priorities of the Jamaicans who live adjacent to and protect forests, and that the funds are used efficiently and effectively to protect these forests.



Mangroves in Portland Bight Protected Area managed by C-CAM protect the coastline and are an important fish nursery. Credit JB Collier CEPF



## Participatory Budgeting for the Forest Sector in Jamaica



Dolphin Head LFC educating about the forest. Credit CANARI



Hiking in Dean's Valley Forest Reserve. Credit Nicole Brown

- It will enhance participation and empowerment of citizens, by giving them a voice and a role in decision-making, and by building their capacity and awareness on budget issues.
- It will improve the quality and impact of public services, by providing feedback and monitoring on the delivery and outcomes of the budget programs, and by suggesting innovations and solutions.
- It will foster coordination and collaboration to enhance the effectiveness and impact of work done by both Government agencies and CSOs for forests, livelihoods and sustainable development.

### Supporting CSO involvement delivers on commitments to good governance.

CSO involvement in forest conservation and management delivers on the guiding principles under many of Jamaica's policies and plans, including the proposed new Watersheds Policy, which acknowledges the role that CSOs have to play in watershed management to advance the objectives of the Policy. Principles of transparency and accountability as well as participation and collaboration are enshrined in this as well as other policies and plans to support Jamaica's commitment to sustainable development.

## 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.

For more information and to engage with us please contact:

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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 (JCMT), 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/>

