



For Immediate Release

CANARI supports use of drone technology for coastal mapping and monitoring in Trinidad and Tobago

Port of Spain, September 2, 2024 – Recognising the growing climate and disaster risks from coastal erosion, sea level rise and extreme weather events, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is supporting the use of drone technology for coastal mapping and monitoring under the project, “Integrating digital technologies and participatory tools to support coastal community resilience in Trinidad and Tobago (*Tech4CoastalResilience*)”.

The *Tech4CoastalResilience* project is being implemented by CANARI in partnership with the Fisheries Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries and the Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries, Tobago House of Assembly (THA). It aims to improve the technical capacity and resources of coastal communities and key management agencies to use innovative technologies and tools to enable a more inclusive and informed approach for building resilience. It focuses on 10 coastal communities, including Blanchisseuse, Carli Bay, Icacos, Mayaro, Matelot and Moruga in Trinidad and Castara, Roxborough, Scarborough and Speyside in Tobago.

Under the project, CANARI hosted two 5-day training bootcamps on drone flying and mapping in Tobago from June 24-28 and in Trinidad from July 8-12, 2024. The bootcamps engaged a total of 16 trainees from key coastal management agencies, including the Fisheries Division and Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries, fisherfolk organisations and environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They built knowledge and skills on how to fly drones safely, mapping and monitoring techniques, data analysis and geographic information system (GIS) integration using internationally accepted practices. These bootcamps were the first part of a 3-month training led by drone expert and Director of Marine Spatial Information Solutions (MarSIS), Dr. Kim Baldwin. This will aid in field data collection and analysis to enable better planning and decision-making in the face of rapid coastal changes.



Drone bootcamp trainees in Carli Bay, Trinidad. Credit: CANARI.



Tobago drone bootcamp. Credit: THA.

Ms. Esther Tobias-Clarke, Research Officer at the Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries, Tobago House of Assembly, welcomed the drone training and noted that she and other trainees were “more confident in the use and operation of a drone, and in some of its applications, and are now better able to respond whenever agencies have a need to capture data and aerial footage.” She also noted that the Department is pleased to partner on the *Tech4CoastalResilience* project to improve fisheries and marine management and related livelihoods in coastal communities.

Mr. Ryan Mennette, SpeSeas Co-founder and Director further highlighted that “what we got in this workshop was so much more than just flying drones. We learned the application of it and how to do actual mapping using the drones. We can now use the knowledge that we gained to go out in the field and do our ecological monitoring. In SpeSeas, we have a few projects that we’re getting off the ground, including sea turtle monitoring and coastal zone monitoring, and using drones will be a great asset.”

In addition to the training, CANARI provided drones, related equipment and access to a one-year software subscription for data analysis to five organisations that are actively engaged in coastal monitoring, including the Fisheries Division, Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries and environmental NGOs in Trinidad and Tobago.



CANARI staff handing over drones to the Fisheries Division, Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries, Trinidad (left) and the Environmental Research Institute Charlotteville (ERIC), Tobago (right). Credit: CANARI.

The *Tech4CoastalResilience* project is supported by the “Harnessing Innovative Technologies to Support Resilience Settlements on the Coastal Zones of the Caribbean (HIT RESET Caribbean)” programme funded by the ACP Innovation Fund, OACPS Research and Innovation Programme, which is implemented by the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and financed by the European Union.

For more information on this project and HIT RESET Caribbean, see: <https://canari.org/technologies-4-resilience-tt/>.

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

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