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Community participation in natural resource management: lessons from Caribbean small island states

Throughout the islands of the Caribbean, initiatives are underway to engage communities in co-management of natural resources. The stated rationale is often that community involvement can help to reduce the degradation of marine and terrestrial biodiversity, address resource use conflicts, improve the community's quality of life and provide opportunities for economic activity. Other goals include improved governance through building stronger community institutions and increased community capacity, empowerment and voice, which can in turn provide a vehicle for strengthening local governance in other spheres of social and economic development (Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2004).

This issues paper examines the factors that have contributed to the few sustained and effective community-based co-management initiatives that currently exist in the region. It also analyses the constraints and challenges that have been encountered and suggests how these might be overcome. It focuses particularly on what funding agencies, policy makers and other external partners can do to support the development of sustainable community-based organisations. Although it examines examples at the community level, many of the lessons learnt are equally applicable to civil society organisations operating at wider scales (for example, national or parish-level). As such, it complements earlier CANARI research on civil society and governance (for example, CANARI 2005)

The paper draws primarily on research conducted by CANARI and its partners over the past ten years and notably under the following projects implemented by CANARI:

- **Developing and disseminating methods for effective biodiversity conservation in the insular Caribbean** (2003-2005, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation);
 - **Going from strength to strength: Building capacity for equitable, effective and sustained participation of civil society organisations in biodiversity conservation in Caribbean islands** (2008-2010, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation);
 - **Participatory Forest Management: Improving policy and institutional capacity for development** (2005-ongoing, funded under the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation National Forest Programme Facility);
 - **Practices and policies that improve forest management and livelihoods of the rural poor in the insular Caribbean** (2007-2010, funded by the European Commission).
- **Who Pays for Water: Preparing for the use of market-based mechanisms to improve the contribution of watershed services to livelihoods in the Caribbean** (2004-2006, co-ordinated globally by the International Institute for Environment and Development and funded by the United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development);



The community-based Calder's Dining and Aquatic Sports is conducting tours and managing the Visitor Centre in the famous Morne Trois Pitons World Heritage Site in Dominica.

(Source: Ronald Charles)

The paper is also intended to contribute to several of the objectives under the *Building civil society capacity for conservation in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs)*, funded by the UK Department for Food and Rural Affairs Darwin Initiative, and co-implemented by the Commonwealth Foundation and CANARI, notably:

- identification of the key enabling factors, at both the institutional and organisational level, for effective civil society participation in biodiversity in UKOTs; and
- improved sharing of lessons learnt elsewhere in the region that are relevant to Caribbean UKOTs.

What is a sustainable community-based organisation or initiative?

When funding agencies talk about ‘sustainable’ community-based organisations (CBOs), they generally mean that revenue-generating activities should cover the full operational (or core) costs, without ongoing grant funding or technical support. In CANARI’s experience, this is rarely feasible in Caribbean small island states, even with well-established groups and initiatives, because the markets to which they have ready access are limited (for example, by the level of poverty in their own communities, the seasonal nature of tourism, and the high cost of meeting export standards), and because governments are rarely prepared to devolve power in ways that would allow CBOs to generate revenue from the services they provide.

For the purposes of this brief, a financially sustainable CBO is considered to be one that sustains itself through a diversified fundraising strategy (i.e. not over-dependent on a single source but that may include grant funding), which



The breakdown of the institutional arrangement for community-based management of Gros Piton tours has enabled a private entrepreneur to take over and reduced the community’s involvement in decision-making and benefit-sharing. (Source: Robyn Cross)

Box 1: The need for long-term support and commitment of resources

The Saint Lucia Forestry Department conceived of local Water Catchment Groups as a mechanism to involve communities in watershed management but it has not been able to secure consistent funding to support the Groups. Today, only two of the original seven Groups still exist and even these two have been largely inactive between project funding cycles. Yet research on the Talvern group found early evidence of positive contributions to water quality, water quantity and community awareness and concluded that investing a small percentage of water revenues in further organisational capacity building could generate sustained and enhanced results (Pantin, Reid and Maurice 2006).

In the case of Fond Gens Libre, also in Saint Lucia, the multi-stakeholder management committee stopped functioning after the initial project funding ran out, enabling a private entrepreneur to take over the management of the Gros Piton trail and turn it into a profitable business. While the community still derives benefits in the form of employment as tour guides, community members have little voice in decision-making and the government is getting no revenue although the tours are conducted on state land (CANARI 2009a).

On the other hand, the Jamaica Forestry Department has recognised the need for long-term accompaniment in the development of its Local Forest Management Committees (LFMCs). It employs a rural sociologist for this purpose (and is about to hire a second) and has secured funding from a variety of sources to support the incremental development of the Committees. There are now a total of eight LFMCs with another four planned by 2013. The intention is that all of these should have both a conservation and a livelihood component (Brown and Bennett 2010).

Twenty years after their creation under an initiative of the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Department in Trinidad and Tobago, Nature Seekers and the Grande Riviere Tourism Development Company have become world famous for their turtle research and protection programmes and are now important local employers, generating revenue from a range of ecotourism, agricultural and forest management initiatives. But it is unlikely they would have reached this point without the long-term commitment of their government partners and the significant and sustained capacity building and inputs of technical and financial support from a variety of sources that they have consistently managed to secure (Trewenack 2010, CANARI 2008a).



Cockpit Country Local Forest Management Committee manages a visitor centre and conducts tours relating to the area's rich Maroon history.



Nevis Historical & Conservation Society's diversified funding strategy includes selling locally made items.

covers its operational costs, including continuous capacity building, as well as any project or programme activity. Of course, there are many other aspects of sustainability, some of which are addressed below.

Developing effective community-based natural resource management institutions and organisations requires long-term commitment of resources

Many well-intentioned natural resource management programmes involving CBOs have floundered or collapsed because the necessary support was not available beyond the initial project phase. A typical one-to-three year project timeframe has consistently proven too short for CBOs to reach the stage where they can operate independently. Conversely, where appropriate support has been available over a relatively long period (often as much as ten years), and tailored to the specific local needs and stage of organisational development, the organisation thrives and can contribute significantly to improved community livelihoods and resource conservation (see Box 1 for examples).

This indicates that **better long-term results could be achieved if funding agencies and other external partners made strategic investments over a longer period in the same organisations**, rather than moving on to a new set of organisations in each round of funding. This would require a shift in thinking from short term outputs to long-term outcomes, and recognition that outputs such as “30 CBOs trained in forest management” have little value if 29 of them no longer exist two years later.

Box 2: Developing policy and legislation that support participatory forest management in Jamaica

Jamaica's forest legislation and policy make specific provisions for stakeholder participation in management and decision-making about the use of forest resources. Within the parameters set out by the Forest Act (1996), the 2001 National Forest Management and Conservation Plan (NFMCP) and Forest Policy identify stakeholder and community participation as key implementation strategies towards meeting the country's forestry and watershed management goals, with the Local Forest Management Committees (LFMCs) as the main vehicle for doing so at the local level.

Under the Forest Act (1996), LFMCs can be appointed by the Conservator (the chief forest officer) for all or part of a forest reserve, forest management area, or protected area. The functions of these committees, as outlined in the Act, broadly include: monitoring and assisting with management; public education and mobilisation; and advising the Conservator on matters relating to the development of the forest management plan, as well as on making regulations and proposing incentives for local conservation practices.

The current Strategic Forest Management Plan 2009 – 2013 also places importance on participatory approaches to forest management, building on the 2001 NFMCP and Forest Policy. The new plan, however, makes stronger statements about community participation in general, and the LFMCs in particular, and includes performance measures related to the latter. Moreover, it goes further than the previous plan and policy in placing participatory forest management in a livelihoods framework: while the 2001 NFMCP identifies “income-earning activities [for communities] based on sustainable use of forest resources” as an incentive for sustainable forest management, the present plan includes sustainable livelihoods for LFMCs as a performance measure against which implementation of the plan will be evaluated. It also identifies capacity building for sustainable livelihood projects (in addition to forest management and conservation) as a strategy towards meeting its objective around increased community participation and public awareness (Brown and Bennett 2010).

Box 3: Mutual trust and respect versus formal arrangements

The turtle protection groups in Trinidad and Tobago have been operating without formal long-term contracts for the past twenty years. Originally a bone of contention, Nature Seekers, for example, subsequently acknowledged that there had been advantages in the flexibility afforded by the informality and strong relationship of trust and respect between themselves and the Wildlife Division. However, when the Forestry Division was shifted to a new Ministry, a decision was taken by the Minister, without consultation, to do away with the annual funding for turtle patrols; a formal contract could have prevented that (Sammy, pers comm.).

In Fondes Amandes, Trinidad, the Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Group (FACRP) is involved in watershed management in an area where the land is a jigsaw of ownership, involving many private owners and two state management agencies - the Forestry Division and the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA). The informal arrangement with WASA has existed for over ten years, brokered by a powerful intermediary and sustained through the building of mutual respect and trust, the symbolic joint planting of a tree on WASA land, and occasional 'letters of comfort', primarily to reassure external funders and partners. A more recent government initiative to involve communities in reforestation, the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme also operates without contracts with any of its community partners (56 at the time of writing). In the case of FACRP, the absence of a contract or built mutual trust and respect erupted in serious conflict, initially over FACRP's application for complementary funding under Trinidad and Tobago's Green Fund but extending to profound disagreements over issues that should have been documented from the outset - the area to be reforested, the area that has been reforested and how data is and should be collected, whether staff can work double shifts under different sets of funding etc. (McDermott 2010).

The policy and legal framework for community participation in management needs strengthening

Community participation in natural resource management cannot be effective without an enabling policy environment, not just in areas with obvious linkages such as land use planning, land tenure, agriculture, forestry and fisheries but also in terms of those relating to finance and economic development, social development, community development, civil society capacity building, and heritage



Members of the Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project planting in the Fondes Amandes watershed in north Trinidad.

and culture, among others (see Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2004 for a comprehensive discussion of enabling factors, including policies and instruments; also CANARI 2005).

Within the region, community involvement in the management of natural resources has become part of the political rhetoric in most countries, yet few Caribbean islands have legislation that specifically enables community co-management. There is also little formal recognition of the concept of common property resources and limited progress in regularising long-standing but informal rights of local people to use and occupy state land. This means that most arrangements between government agencies and CBOs are informal and therefore insecure. Jamaica is an exception (see Box 2) but the seven other countries¹ participating in recent projects under CANARI's Forests and Livelihoods Programme all identified the need for an improved policy environment and framework for participatory forest management that would be characterised by:

- an explicit statement of forest policy (vision, objectives, programmes and actions);
- strong and functional linkages between forest policy and the other components of the national development policy framework, especially in relation to social development, poverty reduction, water management, rural development, and tourism;
- the translation of forest policy statements into effective and efficient policy instruments (such as laws, regulations, guidelines, codes of conduct, standards; and

¹ Barbados, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago.



The Pencar Local Forest Management Committee in Jamaica maintains a nursery to provide the Forestry Department with seedlings for reforestation.



Clozier Youth Farmers of Grenada are producing anthuriums for the hotel industry and building their capacity in nursery management and marketing.

- an explicit inclusion of the principles, goals and tools of participation and devolution within policy statements and instruments (Leotaud and McIntosh 2009).

There is also a need to develop, and share experiences of implementing, instruments that facilitate community co-management, such as management agreements, memoranda of understanding and contracts. One outcome of CANARI's civil society and governance action learning groups, particularly under its *Going from Strength to Strength* project, has been the willingness to share such information, notably between groups co-managing protected areas in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

In the absence of this legislative framework, **mutual trust and respect can substitute for formal arrangements**, at least temporarily. Many of the community-based initiatives examined by CANARI have existed for a long time without formal contracts, or at best with an annual agreement on funding and activities. The key to those that are successful appears to be whether trust and mutual respect have been built up between the partners (Lum Lock and Geoghegan

Box 4: Building on existing community organisations and structures

In the case of the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation project in Trinidad and Tobago (see Box 3), groups like Nature Seekers, Grande Riviere Tourism Development Company, and Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project used their existing conservation and eco-tourism experience to insist on planting native species, inter-cropping with fruit trees, and developing trails, enhancing both the conservation and the livelihoods outcomes (McDermott 2010, Trewenack 2010, CANARI 2008a).

The Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust, a non-governmental organisation that celebrated its 21st anniversary in 2009 by rebranding itself as Green Jamaica, co-manages the John Crow and Blue Mountain National Park. One of its goals is to increase support and improve natural resource management in the park's buffer zone communities, leading to ecosystem conservation and poverty alleviation. To date it has worked over a period of several years with four targeted buffer zone communities to plan and implement projects with both conservation and livelihood components, such as reforestation, community tourism and sustainable agriculture (Beale 2010).

In Grenada, NGOs such as Grenada Community Development Agency (GRENCODA) and Agency for Rural Transformation (ART) have a long history of working alongside government agencies to build the capacity of community-based organisations. During 2003, ART assisted CANARI with the mobilisation of civil society inputs into the development of a proposed community tourism policy (CANARI 2003a and b). In 2005, GRENCODA coordinated a USAID-funded, post-hurricane Ivan initiative to build the capacity of 14 communities to implement community tourism projects, mainly based around the use of natural resources, such as trails, fish festival, craft, beach management etc. (Government of Grenada 2006).

2006; McIntosh and Renard 2010). However, such arrangements are highly vulnerable to policy change and shifts in power relationships, so it is important to **clarify mutual expectations and respective roles and responsibilities from the outset** rather than relying solely on trust (McDermott 2010). Formal contracts are valuable, not only as legally binding instruments for co-management and security of land tenure and access to resources, but also because they do normally clarify expectations and roles and responsibilities.

Box 5: Challenges in fostering community participation and equitable distribution of benefits

In the case study of the LFMCs in Jamaica, Brown and Bennett identify a number of challenges at the level of the community:

- it takes a long time to foster a cooperative spirit for income generation in a cultural context characterised by strong individualistic traditions;
- the capacity of groups is not built overnight and the very process of coalescing and learning to function effectively as a group takes time;
- low levels of educational attainment in many rural communities present a capacity constraint for community-based organisations and influence the pace at which organisations can move and develop;
- poverty in rural communities can preclude participation in voluntary initiatives, particularly where participation means foregoing income from one's customary livelihood sources. Additionally, the absence of a personal safety net may cause some individuals to be wary of new ventures that have not demonstrated their income-generating capacity (Brown and Bennett 2010).



CANARI works as an intermediary to facilitate participatory processes in communities.



CBOs working on developing sustainable livelihoods exchange experiences and lessons learnt at a workshop facilitated by CANARI.

Building on existing community organisations and structures can speed up and improve implementation....

Investing in a group that already exists in order to implement a programme or project **is more efficient and effective because key aspects of capacity, such as a governance structure, financial management systems and project management skills, are likely to be in place.** However, the group's mission and vision must be compatible with the programme objectives or there is a danger that programme activities will detract from its core focus. Where no group currently exists, **the funding or technical support agency must expect to invest in the development of an effective governance structure and the necessary capacities before the project is implemented.** The **use of another non-governmental organisation as an intermediary** for this purpose may also be a more successful strategy than direct engagement by government agency staff, many of whom have little personal experience of facilitating participatory processes or establishing and running a non-profit organisation or entrepreneurial activity. Such NGOs have often worked in the communities for many years and have therefore built up a high level of trust and mutual respect.

....but it is important to give voice to the wider community

The existence of an established CBO does not guarantee that it represents, or is taking account of the rights and interests of, other community stakeholders. Yet ignoring these interests can potentially derail an entire project as well as result in inequitable sharing of power and distribution of benefits. Guidance is therefore needed to



Partners of the Environment, in Saint Vincent, is a community organisation that is hoping for continuing support from its mentor as the group builds its capacity to operate sustainably.

Box 6: Engaging stakeholders, building relationships

In the facilitation of the participatory planning for the Aripo Savannas, an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) in Trinidad, CANARI and the Environmental Management Authority made a deliberate effort from the outset to involve the squatters (some regularised and some still illegal) in the strategic visioning and subsequent planning, in the face of some opposition from conservation organisations that perceived squatters to be 'the problem'. By the end of the two-year process, consensus had been built on the way ahead and a number of unanticipated outcomes were achieved. The squatters had a much clearer understanding of and appreciation for the objectives of the protected area. They suggested that those who were being allowed to remain should form a 'human buffer zone' to support the Forestry Division in reducing illegal access to the area. Members of the conservation NGOs recognised the importance of taking into account community livelihoods and the dangers of excluding from the decision-making processes stakeholders who can affect the outcomes. Practical exercises such as participatory GIS mapping helped to build relationships between stakeholders with diverse interests (CANARI 2008b).

encourage and build the skills of CBOs (and in many cases their external partners) to engage in exercises like community strategic visioning, participatory planning, and participatory monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. Consideration must be given at all stages to redressing power imbalances and fostering equitable participation. This can affect many aspects of community mobilisation and animation including the selection of the venue and time for meetings, compensation to participants for travel costs and loss of earnings while attending consultations, use of approaches that do not disadvantage those with low educational or literacy levels, gender sensitivity etc.

This presents a number of challenges even in a context such as the development of the Jamaica LFMCs where broad community engagement has been enshrined in the project design from the outset (see Box 5). These can be compounded by the fact that the support agencies may be sceptical of, or lack the requisite skills to conduct, such participatory processes. However, while effective community engagement of this kind will generally be a lengthy and iterative process, the livelihood and conservation benefits can be significant, including the fostering of relationships that improve the sustainability of the desired outcomes (see Box 6).



People in communities surrounding the Aripo Savannas were given the opportunity to express their ideas and needs as part of the management planning.



Stakeholders worked together in the field to plan how to manage the Aripo Savannas.



Meetings were held in squatter communities around the Aripo Savannas so that people could get involved in the process.



Building relationships between people is an important part of capacity building for participation.



Resource users in rural communities have skills and knowledge that they can contribute to building sustainable livelihoods. (Source: Howard Nelson)

Assessing and building capacity for community participation is essential and can be a lengthy process

Programmes and projects cannot be implemented if the institutional capacity (both at national and community level) does not exist to implement them. Yet it is not unusual for externally-designed projects to be premised on the assumption that capacity exists without actually checking this in advance, identifying the gaps, and including provision to address these within the project. Without this capacity, no amount of money will achieve the desired results. CANARI has therefore developed a framework for analysing capacity for participatory management that is consistent with its own experience of assessing and building capacity (Krishnarayan et al. 2002). This includes the following elements:

- i. World view:** a coherent frame of reference that the organisation uses to interpret the environment it operates in and define its place within that environment. This should include a clear vision and mission.
- ii. Culture:** a way of doing things that enables the organisation to achieve its objectives and a belief that it can be effective and have an impact.
- iii. Structure:** a clear definition of roles, functions, lines of communication and mechanisms for accountability.
- iv. Adaptive strategies:** practices and policies that enable an organisation to adapt and respond to changes in its operating environment.
- v. Skills:** knowledge, abilities and competencies.
- vi. Material resources:** technology, finance and equipment.
- vii. Linkages:** an ability to develop and manage relationships with individuals, groups and organisations in pursuit of overall goals.

In practice, the efforts of external partners have been mainly dedicated to capacities v. and vi., even though other aspects of capacity, such as the world view, culture and structure, are usually prerequisites for effective and efficient application of skills and management of material resources. The tendency is also to focus solely on the capacities deemed to be lacking at the community level, without recognising that capacities also need to be in place within the partner agencies. For example, few government agencies have fully institutionalised participation and co-management in their world view, culture or structure, and

Box 7: Building CBO capacity through small grants and mentoring

Under the Who Pays for Water project, IIED gave £1000 each to the Buff Bay Local Forest Management Committee and a Local Forest User Group under the Saint Vincent Integrated Forest Management and Development Programme (IFMDP) programme. With the support respectively of the Jamaica Forestry Department's Rural Sociologist and the Saint Vincent Forestry Department's IFMDP Coordinator, these groups implemented small projects which they have since identified as having catalysed the organisation's development (McIntosh and Leotaud 2007, Bennett and Providence pers. comm.).

Building on this experience, CANARI instituted micro-grants for action learning projects under its FAO-funded Participatory Forest Management: Improving policy and institutional capacity for development, project. These projects were designed to be experimental, with the focus as much on learning as on outcomes. Partners for the Environment, a Forest User Group under the St. Vincent IFMDP, implemented a project centred around community involvement in watershed management, specifically through riverbank cleanup activities, which it described as resulting in:

- a reduction in rats and other vermin and the mosquito population;
- ability to use the river for traditional purposes such as bathing and fishing;
- residents participating in the cleaning of the river and the wider community as a result of enhanced environmental awareness;
- encouragement to other communities to organise and participate in clean-up campaigns;
- bringing persons from the various political parties to work for a common purpose;
- increased organisational capacity, self-confidence and pride in the community, facilitating lobbying of the minister and other governmental officials to provide support to the community;
- negotiation with government for at least five acres of state land to implement a mauby agro-forestry project and development of proposal to the Global Environment Facility Small). Grants Programme to fund this;
- enhanced visibility;
- increased membership
- long-term commitment of support from the mentor.

(CANARI 2010)

most employees lack the skills to facilitate effective participatory processes. **The design of community-led and managed projects should take a much broader and more holistic approach to building the capacity of all partners to participate effectively**, as has been the case with the development of the LFMCS, where capacity has been built both within the Forestry Department and the LFMCS themselves.

In terms of the skills needed, **leadership emerged as a critical enabling factor**, both within the CBO and the partner government agency, so should be paid more attention in capacity building programmes.

Start-up organisations need special attention

Newly-established CBOs find themselves in a difficult situation, similar to that faced by school or university graduates looking for employment – they don't have the track record to attract funding but without funding, they cannot establish a track record. CANARI has found that **small grants, combined with mentoring, can be a winning combination**. Both independently, and in collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), CANARI has experimented with



Partners of the Environment, in Chateaubelair Saint Vincent, did a project to clean up a river which was completely choked with elephant grass.



CANARI's Forest and Livelihoods Action Learning Group visited Chateaubelair to learn about the Partners of the Environment project.

Box 8: Enhancing community based natural resource management through shared effort and inputs

Collaboration between government partners and aid agencies

In Jamaica, the Forestry Department's work with the Local Forest Management Committees (LFMCs) has not been a unilateral undertaking, either in terms of effort or financial resources.

At the point of first contact with communities, the Forestry Department engages and works with those agencies and organisations that are already active on the ground, be they state agencies or NGOs. In the case of Spring Bank/Plantain Garden, for example, it worked closely with the Social Development Commission, a national NGO that is active in the area, the Women's Resource and Outreach Centre and the Department of Health, all of which had established working relationships with the community. The strong agro-forestry orientation of many of the LFMCs has led to ongoing collaboration with the Rural Agricultural Development Agency for training, marketing and the provision of seedlings and technical advice.

The Forestry Department has also been able to draw on external donor support through, for example, the Trees for Tomorrow Project (Canadian International Development Agency) for work in Buff Bay, Pencar and Northern Rio Minho and the Protected Areas and Rural Enterprise Project (The Nature Conservancy and United States Agency for International Development) for work in the Cockpit Country. These agencies provided and managed funds, personnel and logistical support for research, mobilisation, training, and infrastructural support for livelihood development. The collaboration enabled a wide array of resources, skills- local and foreign - and a focus that might not have materialised in a timely manner given the constraints of government budget and procedures (Brown and Bennett 2010).

Institutional mechanisms for collaboration and networking

The Dominican Republic is unique in the region in having a formal, legally constituted network, Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano (CAD), which brings together representatives of the two main government agencies and seven environmental NGOs and CBOs to develop and implement environmental policy. The members contribute to an endowment fund, which provides 45% of the operational costs of a four-person secretariat, with the balance coming from project income. The two sectors acknowledge that they do not always agree on everything, and that their cultures can be very different, but they share an overriding common objective which enables them to transcend these challenges, although the process can sometimes be lengthy. Key results to which CAD has contributed since its inception in 1993 include:

- collective articulation of national objectives and system vision;
- establishment of the first biosphere reserve and development of management plans for protected areas;
- creation of the protected area forum which has con-

tributed to developing a united civil society voice, greater participation of civil society, an increase in the number of people informed and involved in and advocating about environmental issues, and an increase in the number of volunteers;

- revision of protected area law and development of forest and biodiversity law;
- constitutional reform that ensures that the size of protected areas cannot be reduced;
- restructuring and increased effectiveness of the Ministry of Environment; and
- design of policies for the national protected area system. (CANARI 2009)

Integrating private sector expertise and resources

Turtle Village Trust (TVT) in Trinidad and Tobago is an idea that originated with the CBO, Nature Seekers. TVT's main goals are to ensure the protection of the environment, with specific emphasis on marine turtles, and to inspire the natural potential of the people by increasing their capacity to generate sustainable livelihoods through successful entrepreneurship. The Board comprises representatives of the communities in north-east Trinidad and south-east Tobago where turtles nest, the private sector and government agencies, with the major sponsors being the Ministry of Tourism and energy company, BHP Billiton. This collective approach facilitates fundraising from new sources, provides access to entrepreneurial skills, and raises the visibility and credibility of both individual community-based initiatives and the region as a whole. However, the process has also highlighted the challenges of integrating different organisational cultures and world views in the effort to reach consensus on the way ahead. (<http://www.turtlevillagetrust.org/> and representatives of Matura to Matelot network, pers. comms.).

In the Dominican Republic, the Ebano Verde Reserve, which is on private land, is managed by the non-profit organisation, Progressio, which relies heavily on a small number of private sector companies to cover core operational costs. Relationships with these funders are well established and Progressio is confident that they will survive changes in management. Progressio's mission is to promote natural resource conservation while taking account of human beings. In the areas surrounding the reserve (5 communities with approximately 250 families in each), they therefore promote sustainable use of the resources, sustainable agriculture, sustainable building, renewable energy as well as building greater awareness of conservation issues. Tangible benefits from Progressio's activities include improved quantity and quality of water, reduced soil erosion as a result of reforestation and reduced degradation, and generally better quality of life for community members as a result of improved access to livelihood assets. Similarly, Fondation Seguin in Haiti, which is seeking to improve management of Parc La Visite while enhancing local livelihoods, has been an initiative primarily of small business owners. (CANARI 2009)



Turtle Village Trust partners with local communities in Grande Riviere and other "turtle villages" in N.E. Trinidad and S.W. Tobago.



The Ebano Verde protected area in the Dominican Republic managed by the CBO, Progreso.



Stakeholders celebrate at a community day in the Soufriere Scotts Head Marine Reserve in Dominica, managed by a multi-stakeholder committee involving government, private sector, and community groups.

giving CBOs ‘risk capital’ in the form of small grants (US\$1500-4000) to pursue small scale projects or capacity building activities, with either informal or formal mentoring. As illustrated by the example in Box 7, the results have outstripped those achieved from much larger investments and have created relationships that are contributing significantly to long-term sustainability.

The value of an integrated collaborative approach

Many of the **challenges relating to insufficient financial, human and physical resources could be addressed through better coordination and collaboration between different government agencies and other external partners.** No one agency is likely to possess all the skills and resources necessary to help in building the capacity of a community-based organisation that has multiple objectives, which may include not only conservation but also business development, community development, community education and awareness and social development

objectives. In a series of national workshops in seven countries under its Forests and Livelihoods programme, CANARI invited a wide range of government and private sector agencies to participate in panel discussions where they outlined what they could contribute to community level forest management initiatives. Yet there appeared to be no systematic process or institutional arrangement to coordinate their programmes into a holistic approach to community development, resulting in both duplication of effort and significant gaps. However, it is clear that shared effort and inputs have been a significant enabling factor in the development of the LFMCS and of the environmental management landscape in the Dominican Republic (see Box 7). There is also an increasing number of examples of private sector involvement in catalysing or supporting community-based conservation initiatives (see Box 8).



CBO participants at the Tobago Forests and Livelihoods workshop met agencies who could support community development in Tobago, but who were not coordinating their efforts.

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**Caribbean
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The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for over 20 years.

Our mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing the natural resources critical to development.

Our programmes focus on research, sharing and dissemination of lessons learned, capacity building and fostering regional partnerships.

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