



CARIBBEAN NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE

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Action Learning Projects (ALPs) in Participatory Forest Management **GUIDELINES FOR MENTORING**

1. Purpose of ALPs

The specific objective of the Action Learning Projects (ALPs) is to learn about:

- (a) how forests can benefit livelihoods and improve the quality of life of the rural poor in the Caribbean; and
- (b) what role non governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) can play in forest management in the Caribbean.

Ultimately, the purpose of the ALPs is to contribute to CANARI's programme on *Forests and Livelihoods*. This programme focuses on research and capacity building activities designed to maximise the contribution of forests to improving the quality of life of people in rural communities in Caribbean islands. The programme looks at the contribution of forests in terms of both 'forest goods' (e.g. timber, craft materials, medicinal plants) and 'ecological services' (e.g. preventing soil erosion, contributing to improved water quantity and quality, providing landscape beauty). The programme's definition of livelihoods also goes beyond just the ability for people to earn money from forest resources (although this is important) to include other aspects of quality of life including individuals' and the community's access to a range of other important assets – natural, social, human and physical (for example a clean environment, basic social services and infrastructure, opportunities for recreation and relaxation, etc.).

Funding for the ALPs comes from a project entitled "*Participatory Forest Management: Improving policy and institutional capacity for development*", supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) through its National Forest Programme Facility (NFPPF).

2. Grant disbursements

Using the action learning approach, a small grant of US \$4,000 will be given to four NGOs/CBOs to implement a small innovative project that will contribute to learning about how forests can benefit livelihoods and what role NGOs/CBOs can play in forest management.

The grant will be disbursed according to the following schedule:

- 50% or US \$2,000.00 at the start of the project
- 40% or US \$1,600.00 upon submission of the mid-term monitoring reports
- 10% or US \$400.00 upon submission of the final evaluation reports

The timeframe for submission of the mid-term monitoring reports should be specified in the project plan and correspond to a mid-point for execution of project activities. This timeframe will need to be approved by CANARI before disbursements can be made.

3. The Action Learning approach

Action learning describes learning to take effective action to address real... challenges. The learning occurs with a group of colleagues, who develop a united approach to addressing the challenges. Action learning is more than 'learning by doing' as it aims to develop a fresh perspective on existing knowledge and experience to apply to current challenges or issues. The need for review, reflection, rethinking and reinterpretation of this knowledge and experience is integral to the action learning process.

(Adapted by N. Johnson from ANTA National Staff Development Committee: 1996)

The ALPs will be executed by the NGOs/CBOs, supported by technical assistance from an expert Consultant from the NFPF project to assist with planning, monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The NGO/CBO will work closely with the Consultant to evaluate the project's success and identify broader lessons learned relating to NGO and CBO involvement in forest management and the impacts on the environment and livelihoods.

4. Timeframe for implementation

The ALPs are expected to be completed within 12 months, starting January 2008.

5. Project design/development

A detailed project plan should be developed by the NGO/CBO at the start of the project with support given by the Consultant.

6. Project management and financial management

Support for project management is to be provided by the Consultant, including development of the project plan and monitoring and adaptive management to respond to potential opportunities or threats.

A detailed budget should be developed at the start of the project and submitted to the Consultant for review. ALP funds may be used for the following as directly used for the project: materials and equipment, travel, meals and accommodation, services, stipends, and capacity building (including technical assistance provided by the Consultant beyond the mentoring specified in these guidelines). Appropriate financial records should be kept and should be available for perusal by the Consultant upon request.

7. Evaluation of lessons

Evaluation of project results and analysis of research findings about the role forests in providing livelihood benefits and the role of NGOs/CBOs in managing forests should be conducted by the NGO/CBO facilitated by the Consultant.

8. Dissemination of lessons

Lessons learnt from the ALPs will be disseminated through activities under CANARI's *Forests and Livelihoods* programme, including national workshops, a regional conference on Forests and Livelihoods tentatively scheduled for the end of 2008, and activities of the Action Learning Group on Forests and Livelihoods.

9. Consultant roles and responsibilities

9.1 Objectives

The Consultant will provide technical assistance and mentoring to the NGO or CBO in order to:

1. facilitate and build capacity in project design and planning
2. facilitate and build capacity in project management (including monitoring and evaluation and adaptive management)
3. facilitate and build capacity in development of research questions and analysis of research findings
4. provide CANARI with periodic reports on the action learning process and project design, implementation, results, and lessons learnt
5. review financial and other records to ensure accountability
6. recommend disbursement of tranches based on execution of activities according to the workplan and after completion of mid-term review

9.2 Activities

The Consultant will execute a series of "visits" each of which may span multiple days and may take various forms (e.g. workshop, meeting, e-mails, etc.) or a combination of these in order to complete the planning, monitoring or evaluation activities. There should be a minimum of 3 of these visits for:

1. Project planning / design (inception): The Consultant will facilitate/assist the NGO/CBO with need/problem analysis and development of objective(s), research question(s), workplan, budget, and

monitoring and evaluation plan in order for NGO/CBO to be able to complete the Project Plan (form provided). Agreement on how mentoring will be conducted will need to be negotiated at this stage.

2. Project monitoring (mid-term): The Consultant will facilitate/assist the NGO/CBO with mid-term monitoring and planning any adaptive management required in order for NGO/CBO to be able to complete the Project Monitoring Report (form provided). Disbursement of the second tranche to the NGO/CBO will be triggered upon submission of the monitoring reports by the NGO/CBO and the Consultant.
3. Project evaluation (end): The Consultant will facilitate/assist the NGO/CBO with conducting the final evaluation in order for NGO/CBO to be able to complete the Project Evaluation Report (form provided). Disbursement of the final tranche to the NGO/CBO will be triggered upon submission of the evaluation reports by the NGO/CBO and the Consultant.

The Consultant may conduct additional visits as needed and should maintain regular communication via telephone and e-mail in order to effectively monitor the project's progress and challenges so that timely support can be provided to maximise the potential for the ALPs success.

9.3 Outputs

The Consultant will produce the following reports for CANARI:

1. Mentor Inception Report (using form provided)
2. Mid-term Mentor Monitoring Reports (using form provided)
3. Final Mentor Evaluation Report (using form provided)

The above is the minimum reporting expected. If problems are detected through regular communication with the NGO/CBO then an additional "crisis report" should be submitted to CANARI highlighting the critical issues and recommendations from the NGO/CBO and the Consultant.

9.4 Reporting

The Consultant will report directly to the ALP Project Manager at CANARI.

9.5 Additional technical assistance

The Consultant may be requested by the NGO/CBO to provide additional technical assistance (e.g. training, facilitation) beyond the requirements of mentoring. The NGO or CBO would be solely responsible for funding any of this additional technical assistance. This may, however, be included in the ALP budget.

10. NGO/CBO roles and responsibilities

10.1 Objectives

The NGO/CBO awarded the grant will work closely with the Consultant and CANARI to:

1. design and implement a project to extract lessons about how forests can provide livelihood and environmental benefits to the rural poor
2. evaluate the project's success and identify broader lessons learnt relating to the role of NGOs/CBOs in forest management and the impacts on the environment and livelihoods
3. distil lessons learnt
4. complete the ALP within 12 months and within budget
5. submit a final report on lessons learnt to CANARI
6. participate in the action learning community under the CANARI "*Forests and Livelihoods*" programme to share with and learn from other organisations working in forest management from around the region.

10.2 Activities

The NGO/CBO will develop and implement the project, including collaborating with the Consultant to develop a project plan, to conduct mid-term monitoring, and to conduct an end-of-project evaluation and analysis of lessons learnt.

10.3 Outputs

The NGO/CBO will, with support from the Consultant, develop and submit the following to CANARI:

1. Project Plan (using form provided)
2. Mid-term Project Monitoring Report (using form provided)
3. Final Project Evaluation Report (using form provided)

10.4 Reporting

The NGO/CBO will submit reports to the Consultant for onward transmission to CANARI. The Consultant will act as CANARI's agent including financial oversight of project implementation.

11. CANARI roles and responsibilities

CANARI will provide general project oversight including provision of guidelines and forms, management of Consultants, management of financial disbursements and input into the action learning process. CANARI will also be responsible for dissemination of lessons through its Forests and Livelihoods programme.

Appendix 1: Possible research questions for the ALPs

<i>Focus area</i>	<i>Possible research questions</i>
Strengthening civil society organisations	a) How can the capacity needs of NGOs and CBOs best be determined? b) What capacities are needed for NGOs and CBOs to engage in participatory forest management? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacities internal to the organisation • Capacities in the enabling institutional framework c) How can existing capacity of NGOs and CBOs be effectively used to their advantage? d) How can the capacity of NGOs and CBOs be effectively built so that it is sustained? e) How can capacities of NGOs and CBOs organisations (versus capacities of individuals within organisations) be effectively built? f) How can NGOs and CBOs organisations develop and implement monitoring and evaluation systems so they learn and adapt? g) How can capacity be shared among NGOs and CBOs to build a strong civil society?
Designing participatory institutional arrangements, selecting suitable management regimes, and developing and implementing management agreements involving state agencies, the private sector and community organisations	a) How do different institutional arrangements (policies, legislation, structures, and relationships) evolve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who and what are pushing for them and why? • Who and what are pushing against them and why? • How are they influenced by larger forces, such as national policies, markets or international priorities and initiatives? b) What are the social, cultural and political forces that determine the landscape and options in which institutional arrangements evolve, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attitudes and policy orientations regarding private ownership and property rights • attitudes towards and spaces for stakeholder participation • national economic policy goals and orientations c) How do historical events and processes influence the evolution of institutional arrangements: for example, do natural disasters, an externally-funded project, or the tenure of a particular Forestry Director contribute to a changed way of doing things? d) What are the multi-leveled and overlapping institutions that actually comprise the arrangements: Which are obvious? Which are hidden? How do they interact? Who are the key actors in each and what are their objectives? e) How do the arrangements work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what they claim to do (versus what they actually do) • who they claim to involve (versus who is really involved) • what they aim to achieve (versus what they do achieve) in relation to livelihood benefits
Developing and sustaining forest-based businesses	a) How can forest-based livelihood opportunities be identified and promoted? b) How can stakeholders develop and implement business plans for forest-based businesses? c) What type of organisational structure (or organisational characteristics) is/are most effective for forest-based businesses? d) What resources, policies, legislation, structures and relationships are needed to support development and implementation of forest-based businesses?
Community management of tourism resources	a) How can community-based tourism opportunities be identified and promoted? b) How can the potential of communities be assessed and existing capacities be used to their advantage? c) What capacities are needed and how can capacity be built? d) What support / enabling policies, legislation, structures and relationships are needed? e) How can existing initiatives be leveraged or improved? f) What are the benefits (and costs) of community-managed tourism? g) What are the linkages and spin-offs and how can benefits be spread? h) How is a sustainable community-based tourism initiative (versus project restricted) built within the realities of local communities?