

**Civil Society  
& Governance**



**Caribbean Natural Resources Institute  
Technical Report  
No. 396**



## **Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano (CAD)**

A decade of networking and developing strategic partnerships to promote the conservation and participatory management of natural resources in the Dominican Republic





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### Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)

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**MACARTHUR**  
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARLG	Action Research and Learning Group
CAD	Consortio Ambiental Dominicano
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CASTA	<i>Centro de Agricultura Sostenible con Tecnología Apropriada</i> (Centre for Sustainable Agriculture and Appropriate Technology)
CEBSE	<i>Centro para la Conservación y el Ecodesarrollo de la Bahía de Samaná y su Entorno Inc.</i> (Centre for the Conservation and Eco-development of the Bay of Samana and its Environment Inc.)
COSUDE	<i>Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación</i> (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DED	<i>Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst</i> (German Development Service)
DIRENA	<i>Dirección de Inventario de Recursos Naturales</i> (Natural Resource Inventory Department)
EP	Environmental Programme ( <i>Programma Ambiental</i> )
GTZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i> (German Technical Cooperation Agency)
HELVETAS	Swiss Association for International Cooperation
IDEAC	<i>Instituto de Desarrollo de la Economía Asociativa</i> (Institute of Development Economics)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSPA	National System of Protected Areas
PA	Protected Area
PO	Participating organisation
RIOD	<i>Red Internacional de Organizaciones sobre Desertificación y Sequía</i> (International NGO Network on Desertification and Drought)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEA	<i>Secretaría de Estado de Agricultura</i> (Secretariat of State for Agriculture)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UKOT	United Kingdom Overseas Territory

# 1. Introduction – Why this case study and why *Consortio Ambiental Dominicano*?

## The importance of networking and strategic alliances in strengthening the role of civil society in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation

At a time when the economic and environmental challenges facing the Caribbean seem more daunting than ever, civil society organisations (CSOs) are particularly interested in how effective networking and strategic alliances can strengthen the voice and capacity of civil society and make more effective use of limited human and financial resources. Networking has been an important focus of discussion in the Action Research and Learning Groups (ARLGs) for the projects under which this case study is being produced.<sup>1</sup> The experiences of ARLG participants in national and regional networks have been mixed. While some have been active over a long period, many others have had long periods of inactivity or have completely shut down. Challenges include difficulties in establishing an equitable governance and leadership structure; finding effective processes of dialogue and exchange between members with different organisational cultures; developing consensus on a common vision and on the approach to specific issues; and members' perception that securing funding for the network reduces what is available to their individual organisations.

Consequently, ARLG members have been particularly keen to interact with and examine the structures of networks that are functioning effectively at a national or regional level. ARLG members under the *Going from Strength to Strength* project had the opportunity to participate in panel discussions with both *Consortio Ambiental Dominicano* and the newly-formed Haitian CSO network, *Rezo Ekolo* (see CANARI 2009). ARLG members expressed a particular interest in a case study of CAD since they felt its history, governance structure and operating procedures could all provide rich lessons that could be adopted or adapted to their own contexts.

ARLG member organisations in the *Building civil society capacity for conservation in the Caribbean UKOTs*



*ARLG members meet with staff and stakeholders at Reserva Científica Ebano Verde, managed by CAD member Progressio*

project participated in a study tour to Bonaire where they were exposed to the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance, a regional network of CSOs in the Dutch Caribbean (see CANARI 2011a), which will also be documented in a case study (Cooper and McIntosh 2011, in press). They also interacted with and had a presentation from the leader of the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CANARI 2011b).

## The unique nature of the *Consortio Ambiental Dominicano*

Within this context, the *Consortio Ambiental Dominicano* (CAD) stands out, not only because it has been operating consistently for over ten years but also because it networks both CSOs and their main government partners, while providing a space for strategic alliances with the private sector. The fact that CAD has systematically documented and disseminated its achievements and procedures has not only facilitated the drafting of this case study but again provides a useful model in a region where achievements and valuable lessons are often overlooked because there is no lasting or accessible record of them.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the projects in question and the Action Research and Learning Groups see <http://www.canari.org/civil.asp>

## 2. Methodology



*CAD members work on a communication strategy during an ARLG meeting*

This case study was developed through a mix of primary and desk research, notably:

- review and analysis of a CD from CAD entitled *Sistematización de Experiencia del Consorcio Ambiental*, which contains documents and other materials related to the creation of CAD and its subsequent development;
- review of questionnaires completed by CAD member organisations and some of CAD's partners and beneficiaries (see Appendix 1 for questionnaire and Appendix 2 for full list of those who returned the questionnaire and/or were interviewed);
- phone and Skype interviews to clarify points that were not clear from the questionnaires;
- opportunistic discussions with CAD members at events at the ARLG meeting held in the Dominican Republic under the *Going from Strength to Strength* project; and
- review and analysis of presentations made by representatives of CAD at ARLG meetings.



*CAD members working on a group exercise at the first CANARI ARLG meeting*



### 3. What is CAD and where did it come from?

CAD was legally incorporated as a non-profit organisation in February 1999<sup>2</sup>. However, its origins date back to a programme started in the early 1990s by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to support environmental initiatives around the world. In 1991, SDC funding stimulated the development of the Environmental Programme (*Programa Ambiental*), which was designed to seek solutions to the problems affecting natural resources and biodiversity in the Dominican Republic. The EP sought to promote conservation strategies and sustainable use of natural resources, while taking into account the economic realities, rights and livelihoods of local people.

The EP was underpinned by a cooperation agreement between the following entities, which were called “the Participating Organisations”:

#### **International cooperation sector**

- Swiss Association for International Cooperation (Helvetas); and
- German Development Service (DED<sup>3</sup>).

#### **Government agencies**

- Natural Resource Inventory Department (*Dirección de Inventario de Recursos Naturales [DIRENA] of the Secretariat of State for Agriculture [Secretaría de Estado de Agricultura [SEA]*);
- Wildlife Department (*Dirección de Vida Silvestre of SEA*); and
- Dr Rafael Ma. Moscoso National Botanical Garden.

#### **Non-governmental organisations**

- *Fundación para el Mejoramiento Humano* (often known as *Fundación Progressio*);

- *Fundación Loma Quíta Espuela*;
- *Grupo Jaragua Inc.*;
- *Centro para la Conservación y Ecodesarrollo de la Bahía de Samaná y su Entorno Inc. (CEBSE)*; and
- *Centro de Agricultura Sostenible con Tecnología Apropriada (CASTA)*.

Helvetas provided funding from Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación (COSUDE) resources and technical expertise. DED provided technical support in the form of experts, who worked in government agencies or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help execute environmental projects and deliver specific products, which contributed to enhancing the capacity of EP members and the EP as a whole.

By working together on a consistent basis under the umbrella of the EP, the government agencies and CSOs became used to collaborating on environmental issues and a certain degree of mutual trust and respect was built. Also, through implementing EP projects together, the Participating Organisations were able to identify and document what worked best in terms of inter-institutional cooperation to maximise project impacts and efficient use of the pooled capacities and financial resources.

Toward the end of the final phase of the EP in 1998, an internal and external review and evaluation were conducted. The aim was to use this as a basis for institutionalising and “Dominicanising” the programme in order to assure its long-term sustainability. During the review process the idea emerged of creating an environmental consortium that could continue “to improve the project management skills, promote greater unity in the environmental sector and more effective inter-institutional collaboration as well as reducing dependence on international agencies” (CAD-Helvetas 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Under Executive Decree 49-99 and governed by the provisions of Act No. 520 of 26 June 1920 and its amendments.

<sup>3</sup> Now incorporated into *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*



*A delegation from Helvetas-Haiti visiting a CAD project.*



*Promoting ecotourism activities in the Biosphere Reserve Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo*

### **Box 1: Current members of CAD**

#### **Government agencies**

- Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources<sup>4</sup>
- Dr Rafael Ma. Moscoso National Botanical Garden.

#### **Non-governmental organisations**

- *Fundación para el Mejoramiento Humano (Fundación Progressio);*
- *Fundación Loma Quita Espuela;*
- *Grupo Jaragua Inc.;*
- *Centro para la Conservación y Ecodesarrollo de la Bahía de Samaná y su Entorno Inc. (CEBSE);*
- *Centro de Agricultura Sostenible con Tecnología Apropriada (CASTA);*
- *Instituto de Desarrollo de la Economía Asociativa (IDEAC);* and
- *Programa Ecomar.*

The membership of CAD differed slightly from the founding organisations because several of the government agencies had been merged into a new Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources; the international cooperation agencies were no longer formal members; and two new CSOs were added. The current membership of CAD is shown in Box 1.

Under CAD's constitution, international cooperation agencies that wish to associate themselves with CAD can become 'solidarity partners', with a voice at meetings but no vote. In the early stages, Helvetas and DED remained involved but neither organisation now operates in the Dominican Republic.

<sup>4</sup> DIRENA and Wildlife Department were integrated into the Ministry of the Environment.

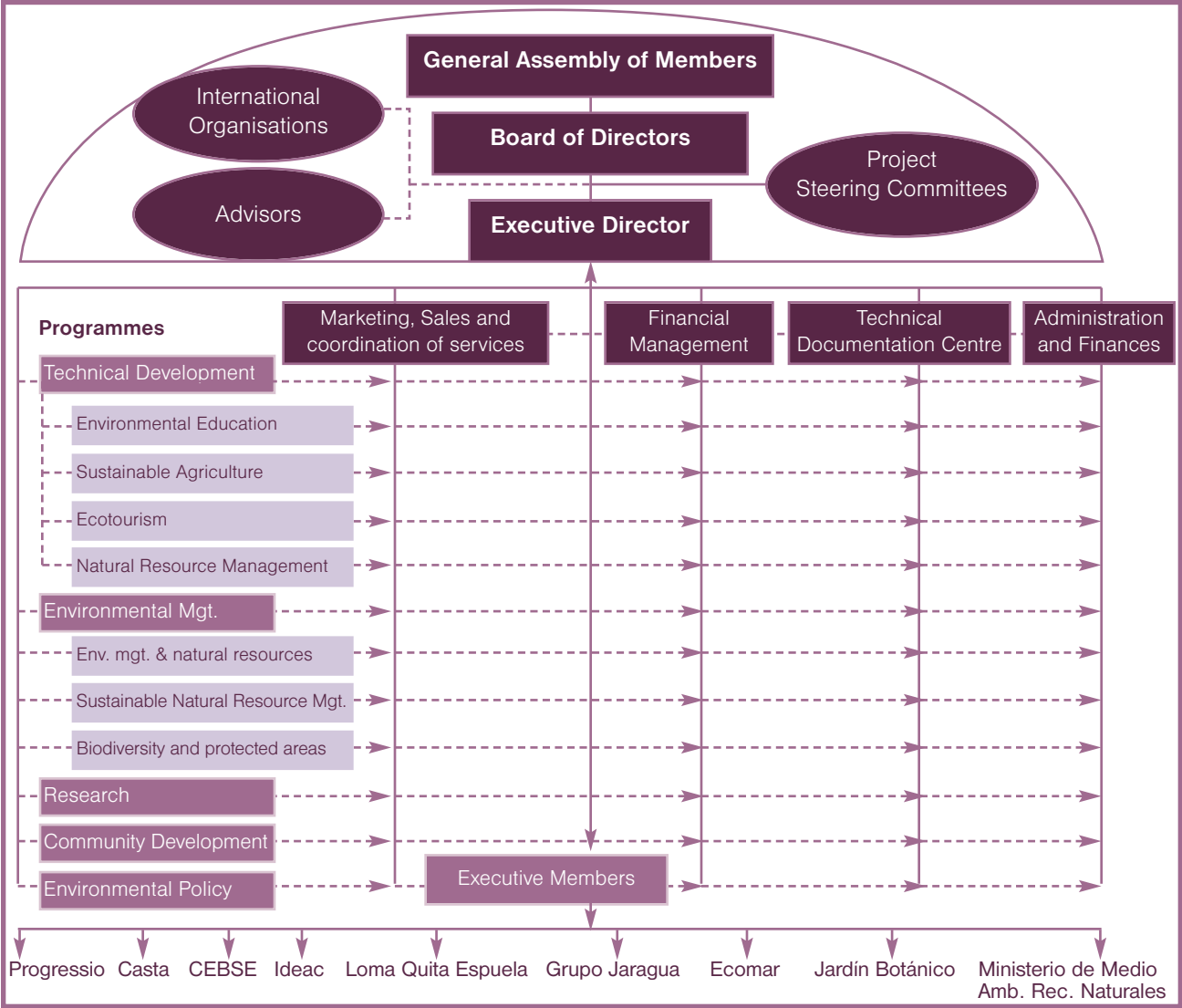
# 4. How CAD works

## 4.1. CAD’s mission, vision and values

CAD’s mission is “to promote and implement environmental solutions on the basis of the experience and expertise of its members and partners, with a view to improving the quality of the environment and livelihoods of the community” (CAD 2003a). CAD’s activities may therefore be initiated and

supported not just by its members but also by strategic partners. Indeed, CAD sees itself as a “partnership of organisations from the government, civil society and private enterprise working to conserve the environment and natural resources in the Dominican Republic” (CAD PowerPoint presentation in CANARI 2008).

**Figure 1: CAD Organisational Structure**



**Table 1: CAD governance components and functions**

Governance component	Function	Comments
General Assembly of members ( <i>Asamblea General de Socios</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elect the Board (<i>Consejo Directivo</i>)</li> <li>• Approve and/or modify by-laws and organisational structure</li> <li>• Define organisational mission and policy</li> <li>• Address issues brought to it by the Board of Directors</li> </ul>	All executive members <sup>5</sup> are automatically part of the General Assembly.
Board of Directors <i>Consejo Directivo</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision of the Executive Director</li> <li>• Helping the Executive Director to secure funding</li> <li>• Promoting CAD's good image</li> <li>• Approving the annual reports,</li> <li>• Authorising the hiring of auditors</li> <li>• Commissioning external evaluations</li> </ul>	Comprises President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and three ordinary members who are elected by members of the General Assembly for 2-year renewable terms.
Project steering committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project coordination</li> <li>• Project monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>	Appointed by the Board.  Comprises members and external experts, as needed.
Executive Director	Responsible for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inter-institutional coordination (between members and with strategic partners)</li> <li>• overseeing all administrative and financial functions</li> <li>• fundraising</li> <li>• coordinating training activities and events</li> <li>• monitoring and evaluating projects, plans and other activities</li> <li>• public relations and advocacy</li> <li>• coordinating work undertaken by advisers and consultants</li> <li>• any other tasks assigned by the Board or the President.</li> </ul> (Adapted from CAD 2003b)	Appointed by the Board.  Reports to Board and specifically to the President.  CAD secretariat/head office currently located in Santo Domingo but statutes make provision for it to be situated elsewhere.
Advisors ( <i>asesorias</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice as needed</li> </ul>	

<sup>5</sup> Executive members are those that pay membership dues and are bound by the duties and obligations laid out in CAD's statutes and the resolutions of the General Assembly. They are the only members entitled to vote on policy issues. They are also sometimes referred to as 'active' members (*socios activos*).

**Table 1 (continued): CAD governance components and functions**

Governance component	Function	Comments
Operational – Administration and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing, sales, coordinating environmental services</li> <li>• Running the Technology Documentation Centre</li> <li>• Administration and finance:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- bookkeeping and budgeting</li> <li>- managing archives and correspondence</li> <li>- general services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2010 staffing (in addition to Executive Director) was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accountant,</li> <li>• administrative assistant,</li> <li>• specialist for moderating the National Forum on Protected Areas (see Section 4.6).</li> </ul>
Operational - Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical development (environmental education, sustainable agriculture, ecotourism and natural resource management)</li> <li>• Environmental management (sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity and protected areas)</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Community development</li> <li>• Dissemination of environmental policy</li> </ul>	Programmes developed and implemented by CAD members and strategic partners.

CAD's statutes state that it:

- operates as a non-profit organisation;
- creates and facilitates strategies and solutions in the environmental sector oriented towards supporting its member organisations;
- is not affiliated with any political party or religious agenda;
- works with institutions and not with individuals; and
- does not execute projects directly, but rather through its members and strategic partners.

(summarised from CAD 2003b).

#### **4.2. CAD's governance structure**

CAD's governance structure is described in Table 1 and Figure 1.

#### **4.3. Membership structure and criteria**

CAD's membership is made up of the following categories:

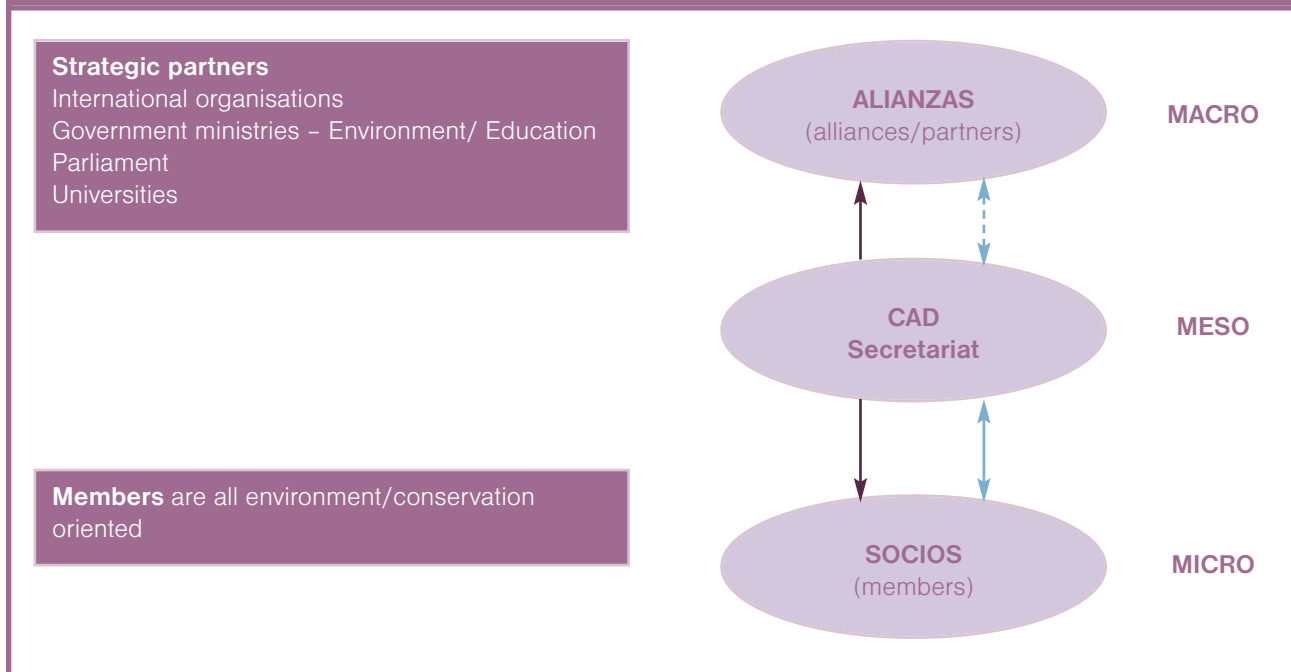
- founding members (see Section 3);
- executive (voting) members (see footnote 5). Founding members also fall into this category;
- solidarity (non-voting) partners: individuals, institutions and legal entities (companies), also sometimes referred to as strategic partners, who have no right to vote; and
- honorary members (non-voting): individuals, institutions and legal entities (companies) appointed because CAD members hold them in high esteem or believe they will add value to the organisation. They have the right to speak but not to vote.

The criteria for becoming an executive member are set out in CAD's statutes and include:

- sharing CAD's mission, vision and goals;
- being a legally constituted organisation;
- having professional and administrative credibility; and
- having proven expertise and capacity to manage projects.

(CAD 2003b)

**Figure 2: Operating at the macro, meso and micro levels** (extracted from CANARI 2010)



Applicants for executive membership are evaluated by the Board, which then decides whether to admit the applicant. The registration and membership fees are set by the Board and approved by the General Assembly. Once membership has been approved, the new executive member must pay a one-time registration fee of the equivalent of USD 2500 to CAD’s Fondo Patrimonial (Endowment Fund, see Section 4.7) (CAD 2003b)

#### 4.4. Areas of strategic focus

CAD’s main focus at present is the sustainable management of natural resources, with an emphasis on ecosystem-based management, throughout the Dominican Republic but with special attention to the border zone with Haiti.

CAD’s activities focus mainly on protected areas, buffer zones and surrounding communities. It also works in the places and regions where its members and partners work<sup>6</sup>, in order to:

- promote tried and tested sustainable environmental management practices and strategies; and
- implement activities that promote ecologically sustainable development while respecting socio-cultural traditions;

- mobilise participation from communities and private enterprise in environmental management;
- promote greater collaboration between environmental organisations to achieve synergies in protecting the environment;
- contribute to increased awareness and application of the national policy framework for sustainable management of natural resources;
- contribute to strengthening the management and operational capacities of its members; and
- contribute to environmental conservation and sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.

(extracted from CANARI 2008)

CAD describes its activities as taking place at the “micro, meso and macro” levels (see Figure 2 below). CAD’s *Currículum Institucional* (CAD 2008) states that “If CAD’s activities take place at the meso level, it means they impact both at the micro and macro level. At the macro level, we are involved with government agencies and the private sector. At the meso level, we work with other relevant organisations. And at the micro level, we are addressing the majority of the target population or beneficiaries of the activities. At the micro level, we operate through our members and other implementing

<sup>6</sup> Jarabacoa, Constanza, Villa Altigracia, Bani, Samaná, Nagua, San Francisco de Macorís, San José de Ocoa, Oviedo, Sierra de Neyba and Sierra de Barohuco.

organisations. From the meso level, the consortium has a multiplier effect, working through existing structures”.

CAD’s *strategic partners* play an important role in contributing to the achievement of CAD’s goals. In its operating procedures, strategic partners are described as “institutions or individuals with relevant capacity and experience who can positively facilitate or enhance the implementation of activities, projects, consultancy services and achievement of CAD’s goals” (CAD 2003a). They are not members and therefore not governed by the statutes. They are not entitled to the benefits or subject to the responsibilities of membership. They can be identified and/or recommended by CAD members or by other strategic partners. They can also approach CAD directly. However, any joint activities with CAD must be approved by the Board. CAD mainly targets the following for strategic partnerships:

- environmental organisations, both public and private, national and international; and
- private companies with an environmental remit.

An example is CAD’s partnership with The Nature Conservancy to implement projects on biodiversity conservation, including improving the conservation of birds and their habitats (with an emphasis on migratory birds); management of invasive species, establishment of plantations and forest nurseries in the Las Neblinas forest (CAD 2008).

#### **4.5. CAD’s methodology and approach**

CAD’s approach and methodology to implementing its areas of strategic focus are described in its *Curriculum Institucional* as:

- “developing a proactive organisation that networks environmental institutions capable of sustaining themselves over the long term;
- networking and strengthening partnerships between governmental and non-governmental agencies and international cooperation agencies with an environmental remit;
- developing strategic partnerships that support CAD’s vision and mission;
- strengthening a coordinated system for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- acting as network coordinator between key stakeholders, such as government agencies, municipal authori-

ties, NGOs, private institutions and communities (in the case of co-management) and

- adopting a regional approach to benefit from opportunities to develop activities on the management and conservation of the environment in collaboration with Haiti and other neighbouring Caribbean countries.” (CAD 2008).

#### **4.6. Coordination of the National Forum on Protected Areas**

CAD’s coordination of the National Forum on Protected Areas (NFPA) exemplifies many of these approaches and the NFPA is another example of effective collaboration between governmental, non-governmental and other organisations.

The NFPA was established in 2005 as part of the process of developing a National System of Protected Areas (NSPA). It was recognised that existing protected area legislation (Protected Areas Act 202-04 passed in 2004) contained so many serious errors and technical and legal inaccuracies that it was hindering the development of the NSPA. The NFPA was therefore created to provide support for formulating NSPA policy and a public space for discussion and analysis of, and consultation on, issues relating to the management of protected areas.

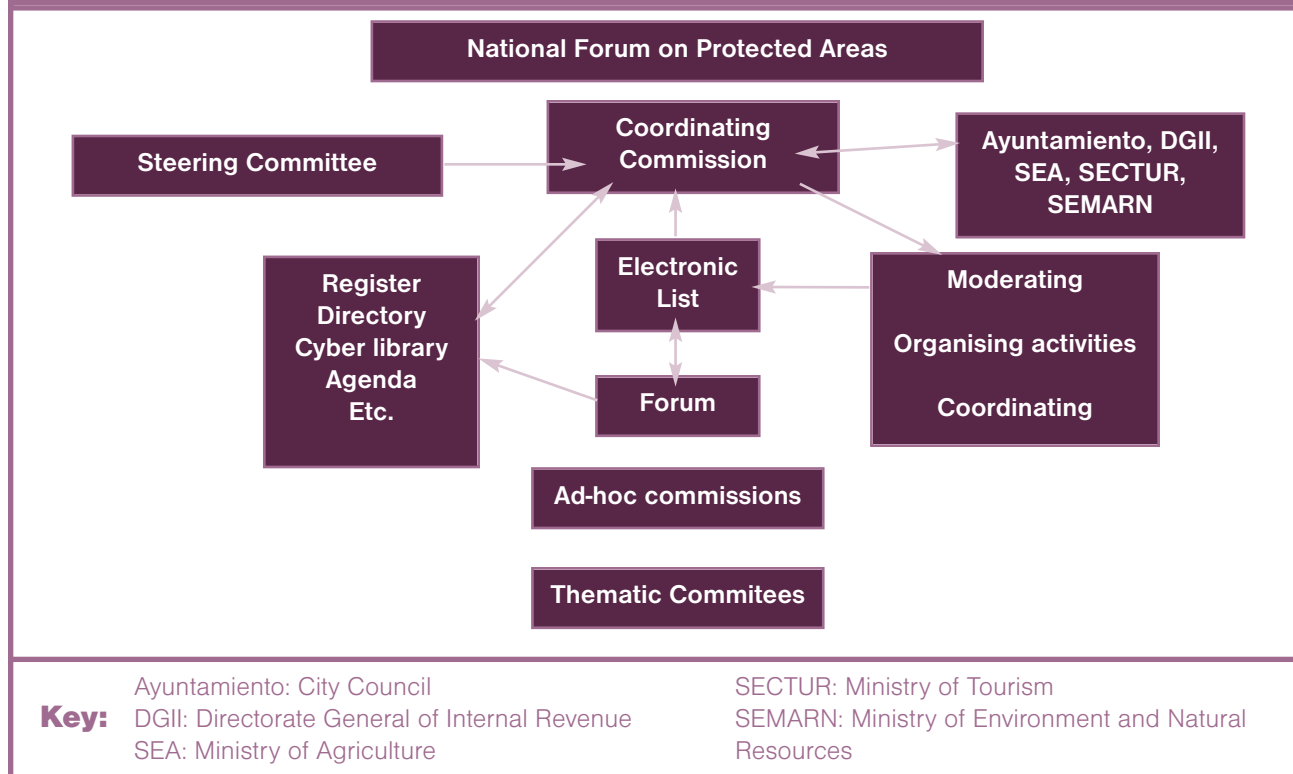
The aim of the NFPA is to promote a closer relationship between the government and civil society with regard to the management of protected areas. It also has other objectives, such as:

- ensuring that there is a participatory and transparent mechanism for planning for and monitoring and evaluation of the NSPA;
- promoting a public mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and validation of policies relating to protected areas; and
- keeping everyone who is interested, informed about NSPA (CAD-GTZ 2007).

The NFPA website<sup>7</sup> describes the Forum as “a permanent space for discussion enabling civil society organisations and key stakeholders at a national level to contribute to the consolidation and management of the NSPA. It offers an unprecedented opportunity in the country in that its users see it as a platform for advocacy, consultation and roundtable discussion on matters of fundamental public interest, grounded in principles of openness, diversity and transparency”. The NFPA facilitates discussion in which

7 (<http://www.foroap.net.do/>)

**Figure 3: Structure of the NFPA**



the public can take part “virtually, by signing up electronically, and in person by taking part in meetings and activities in different parts of in the country”. In 2007, the FNAP webpage was accessed on average eight times per day, or an average of 240 times a month and 2880 times per year. And the number of members had grown from 80 at the outset to 277. (CAD-GTZ 2007).

The NFPA was established with financial and technical support from the German *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ). The *Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo* (Technological Institute of Santo Domingo) provides logistical support for face to face meetings, while the *El Centro para el Desarrollo Agropecuario y Forestal* (Centre for Agricultural and Forest Development) hosts the website and provides related technical support. The Ministry of the Environment, through the Department of Protected Areas, also provides technical assistance.

Figure 3 outlines the structure of the NFPA.

#### 4.7. Financial sustainability

CAD has established two funds (*fondos*) that directly support the long-term financial stability of the

organisation and is involved in two others, which are mechanisms that provide long-term support to its conservation and sustainable livelihoods objectives:

#### **Fondo patrimonial**

The *fondo patrimonial* operates like an endowment or trust fund which was funded initially by the membership fee of DR pesos 100,000 (USD 2700 at current rates) that each member must pay to join CAD. In the early years, CAD also put the surplus from projects and consulting services into this fund. The capital was used to buy *certificados de inversión* (bonds) to generate interest to cover operating costs. However, neither the capital nor the interest was touched for several years, allowing the principal to increase in value significantly over 3-4 years.

Subsequently money from the *fondo patrimonial* was used to purchase CAD’s current office. This has also appreciated considerably in value and is now estimated to be worth USD 200,000, with the cash value of the fund currently at around USD 130,000. As operating costs are now much lower as a result of not paying rent, and with interest rates in the Dominican Republic comparatively high, the interest on the fondo patrimonial, which is transferred to the Operating Fund (see below), has been





Coffee produced by a women-led micro-enterprise (Cafe Baharuco)



Community-managed nursery for endemic plants, Sierra de Baharuco

able to cover up to 40% of the core operational costs that are not covered under projects.

The Board acts as trustee for the fund and decides how the money is invested and used. The decision has to be approved by the General Assembly, which has the last word on how to maintain the real value of the endowment fund.

### **Fondo de Operación (Operating fund)**

The money in the operating fund is used to cover day-to-day operational expenses. It comprises the interest from the *fondo patrimonial* (40%) and the sums budgeted under projects and consultancies (60%) for the CAD Secretariat's administrative and operational expenses and, in some cases, a portion of the Executive Director's salary. If a consultancy makes a surplus, it is now retained in the operating fund. The interest from the *fondo patrimonial* is also used to finance the NFPA (see Section 4.6).

### **Fondo social**

The *fondo social* (social fund) is a revolving fund for micro-credit loans, which currently has capital of about DR pesos1 million (USD 26,200). It was created as an outcome of a project called “Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Sierra de Bahoruco” executed between 2003 and 2006. The project involved grants to support initiatives that would benefit local communities and a micro-credit scheme for micro-enterprises focusing on agriculture and food production. The legacy of the latter was the fondo social, which is managed by CAD member, IDEAC. The loans made under this fund are revolving and are intended to strengthen community

initiatives in *Sierra de Bahoruco*. Recipients include pig farmers and small associations or enterprises producing coffee, honey and yoghurt.

### **Fondo Zorzal**

CAD is also in the process of co-establishing the *Fondo Zorzal* (Thrush Fund), which it describes as a *fondo de hermandad* (brotherhood fund), with the help of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the *Two Worlds One Bird Carbon Project*<sup>8</sup> to conserve the Bicknell's thrush (*catharus bicknelli*), a rare, threatened songbird that breeds in high elevation areas of eastern Canada and the U.S. and winters in the mountainous forests of the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Cuba (<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/organization/newsarchive/11-19-10.html>).

The objective of this fund is to finance research on and monitoring of the Bicknell's thrush in the Dominican Republic. The fund received seed capital of USD2,500 from the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. This is being supplemented by an innovative scheme operated by the ice cream company, *Helados Bon*. In November 2010, *Helados Bon* created a special ‘conservation’ ice-cream, *Choco-Maple*, directly inspired by the Bicknell's Thrush. The flavour captures elements from the thrush's breeding (maple) and wintering (chocolate) ranges, and the chocolate is organic (<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/organization/newsarchive/11-19-10.html>). A contribution of 20% of the price of the ice cream is transferred to the *Fondo Zorzal*. *Helados Bon* also issues special ‘choco-maple bonds’ (*bonos choco maple*), which can be purchased by customers, with each one providing a direct contribution of about USD 4 to the fund.

<sup>8</sup> See [http://www.dominicanaonline.org/DiccionarioMedioAmbiente/es/documentos/pago\\_Proyecto\\_Zorzal\\_Republica\\_Dominicana.pdf](http://www.dominicanaonline.org/DiccionarioMedioAmbiente/es/documentos/pago_Proyecto_Zorzal_Republica_Dominicana.pdf).

## 5. What has worked well - reflections from CAD members and partners

In the interviews and questionnaires, a number of common themes and catchphrases emerged to describe CAD's main areas of success; these are used below to describe what has worked well.

### **Unity in diversity - developing and internalising a shared and unifying identity**

As part of the transition from the externally-funded and administered EP to a nationally-owned, 'Dominicanised' network, members had to develop consensus on:

- the new structure of the network;
- a mission and unifying vision compatible with the strategic focus of each of the members;
- how to foster transparent inter-agency cooperation; and
- how to coordinate the networking and collaboration between members and make best use of their respective areas of expertise, skills and capacity.

This process - and the decisions taken - acted as an important unifying mechanism, which underpins much of how CAD operates today. Members see CAD as a unified organisation, yet one in which member organisations can retain their different cultures and at times disagree on specific issues, without this derailing the core common purpose to which they are all committed.

### **Tolerance and valuing differences - a culture of mutual respect**

CAD has successfully overcome the challenge of having member organisations with different priorities and areas of strategic focus based on diverse philosophies, missions and visions. It has done so by promoting a culture of tolerance and mutual respect, which recognises that there is value in having diversity within the network. "When you practice tolerance within CAD, this is not seen as a concession, condescension or indulgence but rather as a form of respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich

diversity that makes up the organisation" (CAD member 2010, pers.comm). CAD members have also come to recognise that accepting constructive criticism can lead to positive change that benefits everyone.

At the second *Going from Strength to Strength* meeting in 2009, another CAD member noted that respecting the individuality of each of the member organisations has been and will remain the key to CAD's existence. "It's about an attitude that gives due consideration to our differences, that is willing to accept ways of being and working that differ from one's own, that accepts plurality.....It is not a matter of allowing something bad but rather considering different and legitimate points of view, changing your mind in a legitimate conflict of interest.....And as conflict is inherent in the environmental sector, tolerance is a very valuable attribute which has to be fostered in CAD" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010).

Another key contributor to effective relationships is members' flexibility and willingness to work together in teams. Depending on the circumstances, a team may act both as an 'operational' team (coordinating work and implementing activities) and as a 'mediating' team (resolving problems and identifying and mediating internal and external conflicts).

### **Straightforward rules preserve friendship - transparency in actions and between members**

CAD has recognised that the commitment to unity and mutual respect needs to be underpinned by clear policies and procedures both for individuals and member organisations. Consequently, members drafted the *Reglamento de Funcionamiento del CAD* (operating procedures) in 2003, which remain in force today.

In the words of one of its partners, this has enabled CAD to "manage a very complex space that admits actors with conflicting opinions on the same issue and find a way to be

the point of equilibrium and generate respect for others' opinions" (member of partner organisation, pers. comm. 2010). The structure of CAD has also led to "the opening of a space for inter-sectoral dialogue on the issue of environmental management" (member of a partner organisation, pers. comm. 2010).

### **Not losing sight of its strategic objectives – CAD has remained true to its mission and principles**

From the outset, CAD clearly defined not only strategic objectives but also some cross-cutting approaches and principles that should underpin all its programmes and projects. These include co-management, participation, gender sensitivity and inter-institutional cooperation. CAD also incorporated its key strategies into the organisation's formal rules and operating procedures and developed mechanisms to regularly monitor their implementation. This has helped CAD and the individual member organisations to stay focused on activities that support CAD's mission. It also resulted in CAD developing and maintaining a clear and consistent public image.

### **Recognising that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts - the value of exploiting synergies**

CAD's active promotion of inter-agency cooperation brings together organisations with complementary skills and approaches to collaborate on achieving common objectives. This pooling of capacities and resources is designed to achieve more effective project implementation and results. Or, as one interviewee put it, [CAD is] "a 'space for synergy', where the results achieved by the consortium are greater than what could have been achieved through the individual efforts of each of the members" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010). Promoting cooperation between agencies and sectors has also contributed to raising CAD's profile. A similar philosophy is reflected in the promotion of internal collaboration between members where CAD also seeks to exploit mutually beneficial synergies.

### **Creating strategic alliances that support CAD's mission and promote significant change in the environmental sector**

CAD has established important alliances with the private sector. Before establishing this type of strategic partnership, CAD tries to ensure that the relationship will support its mission and result in both CAD and the partner organisation enhancing their roles as effective 'change agents' and advocates for the environment. These alliances have resulted in additional capital for investment in environmental conservation. There has also been a spin-off benefit to CAD in terms of access to entrepreneurial expertise in areas such as business planning and effective administrative procedures, some of which are still gaps in the *Menu Tecnológico* (see below).

A good example of such an alliance is the partnership with the ice cream company, *Helados Bon* (Eco-Bon), facilitated by CAD's president, who is also the President of this company. *Helados Bon* organised an exhibition in March 2009 to raise awareness of the importance of conserving the environment and natural resources and to recognise the contribution of certain participants (including CAD and the Ministry of the Environment) in contributing to the conservation of *Loma Quita Espuela*, an important montane cloud forest reserve.

CAD is also involved with a range of partners through its membership of commissions and working groups in the environmental sector, such as:

- National Steering Committee for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme;
- Inter-agency Expert Group to Combat Desertification and Drought;
- Network of Non-Governmental Organisations Combating Desertification and Drought (where CAD acts as alternate focal point);
- Coordinating Committee for the Forest Dialogue Forum;
- National Dominican Commission for United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Sub-Commission of Life Sciences;
- National Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature;
- Climate Change Group;
- Dominican Republic Coalition for Principle 10; and
- Important Bird Area Committee.

9 For more detailed information on the *Menu Tecnológico*, see CAD-Helvetas 2006, which describes the origin, planning and documentation of the tools and methods.

## **Developing, testing and sharing tools and methods – the ‘Menu Tecnológico’**

The *Menu Tecnológico*<sup>9</sup> is a set of tools and methods, based on tried and tested sustainable practices in areas such as ecotourism, sustainable agriculture, capacity building in community-based management of natural resources and environmental education. Many of these tools and methods have been enshrined in handbooks and guidelines, which are then used by CAD members and their partners in their training and consultancies. The *Menu Tecnológico* draws on the specialist expertise of CAD members, partners and other organisations and their practical experience, particularly that derived from the EP. For example, CEBSE shared its expertise in community-based ecotourism and Progressio its experience of protected area and natural resource management.

The purpose of the *Menu Tecnológico* is to facilitate the sharing and transfer of the tools and methods to others. To support the initial stage of the process, CAD created a ‘transfer fund’ to cover training costs and provide small grants to support activities at the community level.

## **The round table approach where everyone has an equal voice**

CAD has instituted a ‘round table’ approach to discussions among members or at Board level, so-called because “the legendary knights who sat at the roundtable were all equal. There was no leader, unlike at other mediaeval tables. There is no privileged position at a roundtable, and for this reason no one individual or organisation dominates the others.” (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010).

CAD has found that this strategy promotes active listening and continuous dialogue and helps create understanding across organisational barriers and cultures. It disarms opposition to new approaches, reduces scepticism and mistrust and, above all, reduces the normal power imbalances between government agencies and NGOs. Members have become less concerned about issues such as loss of control or having to admit their mistakes in a public forum, resulting in greater focus on the common goals and trying to negotiate areas of difference. And the round table approach helps to keep communication flowing between members even when they disagree.



*Panel discussion with CAD members at the second CANARI ARLG meeting*

## **Being visible raises CAD’s profile – the value of documenting and disseminating CAD’s experiences**

CAD has systematically documented its experiences and processes at each stage of its development, and continues to do so. As well as learning from these internally, it has disseminated the lessons learned and its tried and tested tools and methods, for example, through its CD on the *Sistematización de Experiencia del Consorcio Ambiental*, and the *Menu Tecnológico*. This strategy has resulted in CAD having a high profile both in the Dominican Republic and the wider Caribbean.

## **CAD’s private sector partnerships – bringing an entrepreneurial approach to conservation**

CAD has benefitted from having a businessman as its President, who has played a key role in creating strategic alliances and partnerships and developing innovative projects in support of CAD’s objectives. He is elected in his capacity as President of the *Fundación Loma Quita Espuela* (CAD founder/executive member) but he is also the President of the *La Loma* company, which sells macadamia nuts produced by farmers in the buffer zone of the *Loma Quita Espuela* protected area as part of an organic agro-forestry initiative. He is also the President of the *Empresas BON* group, where he has applied his entrepreneurial skills to the development of innovative initiatives such as the *Eco-Bon* (Eco-Bond) and the *chocomple* ice creams sold in support of the *Fondo Zorzal* (see Section 4.7).

## 6. What could work better - reflections and recommendations

### **CAD needs to strengthen its fundraising capacity and clarify the respective fundraising roles of the executive and the individual members**

CAD's financial sustainability emerged as an area of concern in the interviews and surveys. While continuous strategic fundraising is clearly essential to CAD's long-term financial sustainability, an interviewee noted that "One of CAD's weaknesses is the lack of member participation in the process of developing CAD into a self-sustaining organisation" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010). The priority accorded to fundraising was also perceived to be low in comparison with other strategies, such as developing strategic alliances, leading one interviewee to complain that CAD "appears to dedicate itself more to the outside world than to its members" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010).

This situation is compounded by the sense that members are deriving fewer tangible financial benefits than in the days when funding came to them directly from the EP. "It seems that the members expect CAD to work like the EP, forgetting that CAD is its members," said one representative of a member organisation (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010) while another noted, "...I think it is not so much a case of what can CAD do for us, but rather what we can do for CAD. It is not a separate entity, it is the union of all of us and we ought to use this platform with intelligence" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010).

Greater clarity is therefore needed on what is best done by the network as a whole and what by individual organisations; how funds will be raised for the network (e.g. is it the role of the Executive Director alone or also the Board as indicated in organisational documents; is there a need for a professional fundraiser or new skills to be built); and how funds will be allocated when they are received (for example, the proportion retained for central administrative functions versus the amounts disbursed to members/projects). It would also be useful to review CAD's fundraising strategy to ensure it is adequately diversified and not overly dependent on any one donor or sector as well as its financial management systems.

### **CAD needs to review its strategic focus in light of changes in the external environment**

One member commented, "CAD has played an important role in the environmental sector of the Dominican Republic

because it influenced and continues to influence environmental national policy and legislation as well as conservation strategies. However, it is necessary to re-evaluate the institution, to define and re-orient activities with a greater impact both with respect to the areas of activities of the members as well as in others of national interest. CAD needs to be redesigned to ensure its relevance in the face of the dynamic changes occurring in the environmental sector" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010).

Another characterised this as a need for a comprehensive review of CAD's focus, "We have to meet, review and revise CAD's plans and programmes, analyse where we are and where we want to go, whether we all want to stay, analyse applications to join. We need to do this under the leadership of someone with the vision and energy to ensure success", as well as "ensure greater participation of CAD members in decision making and the benefits generated" and "the aim is to ensure that all members collaborate in an equitable manner to make CAD stronger" and that "CAD can really help strengthen its members" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010).

The development of a five-year strategic plan could both address these points and provide a more coherent and accessible summary, for both internal and external audiences, of CAD's strategic focus, operational strategies and programmes, which now have to be inferred from a number of diverse and sometimes relatively inaccessible documents.

### **CAD should review its governance and staffing structure**

The responses to the questionnaires raised a number of points in this area, all of which could again be reviewed within the context of a strategic planning process. Specific points included:

- the need to strengthen the executive structure, "because it could provide more support to members and work towards sustainable financial independence and less restrictive funding, strategic planning and developing alternatives to attain institutional sustainability" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010).
- the need to strengthen programme and project monitoring and evaluation, for example CAD "should have more staff to be able to follow-up the various activities it carries out with different members." (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010).

## 7. Has CAD made a difference? – an evaluation of the results of its work



*CAD-coordinated presentation to Congress advocating the inclusion of environmental considerations in the revised Constitution of the Dominican Republic.*

**CAD is recognised nationally and internationally as an innovative, influential environmental network, from which others can learn.**

Both nationally and regionally, CAD is recognised as a groundbreaking environmental network of multi-sectoral interests. It is known as a network that successfully promotes and establishes strategic alliances and facilitates participation of and coordination between all stakeholders (governmental agencies, grassroots and community organisations, NGOs, academia, private sector, international cooperation agencies and the wider public) that have enhanced the conservation and management of natural resources in the Dominican Republic.

CAD was described by an interviewee as “an important example of government-civil society linkages, both through its actions as a network as well as in the development of environmental policy and practices” (member of a partner organisation, pers. comm. 2010). It was also suggested that “the CAD model is worthy of replication at the regional and international level” (member of a partner organisation, pers. comm. 2010). This sentiment was endorsed by the ARLG members under the *Going from Strength to Strength* project during

their meeting in the Dominican Republic, where participants were particularly struck by the fact that CAD continues to function effectively even when members cannot reach consensus on everything whereas this has been a stumbling block for many other environmental networks.

A Helvetas consultant, who provided technical assistance to CAD, also noted that while co-management is continuing to evolve in the Dominican Republic, CAD’s strategic focus on co-management “has served as a good example in other areas of [Helvetas] work, particularly in Guatemala in the *Pro Bosque* project” (former Helvetas consultant and CAD advisor, pers. comm. 2010).

**CAD has contributed to civil society organisations having greater influence on and involvement in the governance of natural resources and the management of protected areas.**

The collective voice of CAD’s civil society members and partners has played an important role in lobbying for the creation of an independent Ministry of the Environment and in formulating the Act (64-00) that enabled this. CAD’s NGO members also helped to formulate the Protected Areas Act (enacted) and the Biodiversity Act and Forest Act (currently being reviewed by the *Cámara del Senado* (Senate). It is a measure of the high regard in which CAD members are held that the Senate has also invited them to be part of the team now reviewing these Acts and others relating to water, coastal and marine resources, and biosafety. The NFPA is another forum through which CSOs can gain a better understanding of environmental policy issues and therefore a more informed contribution to the decision-making process.

The work of CAD members directly with community groups has helped to strengthen the capacity of community members to participate in decision-making and management of natural resources. Also, by providing consultancy services and professional training based on the *Menu Tecnológico*, and project management services

to other organisations that support communities (including the private sector and local government), it has contributed indirectly to successful implementation of livelihoods-oriented environmental projects that have benefitted community groups and civil society in general. The development of the Biosphere Reserve *Jaragua-Barahuco-Enriquillo* is a good example of this type of collaboration.

Another successful example of involving the community in the management of natural resources took place under the *Manejo de Recursos Naturales en forma sostenible en la Sierra de Bahoruco* project. CAD member, *Fundación Progreso*, built the capacity of community groups to grow the local endemic *Magnolia hamori Howard* and other native species and established a nursery that is operated by the community. Community committees for the protection of springs and other aquifers were also created in the project area. The Forestry Department of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources also collaborated at the local level. This included provision of training in natural resource management and monitoring for the *Parque Nacional Sierra de Bahoruco* for local staff of the Ministry and other community members.

This project also launched the *Red Local de Agricultura Sostenible* (Local Network for Sustainable Agriculture) with the support of CAD member, CASTA. This involved creating, and involving local communities in a special management area for coffee farming in order to minimize the environmental degradation of the *Sierra de Bahoruco*. The same project supported the establishment of micro-enterprises in organic coffee produced by women, yogurt production, rearing of pigs, beekeeping and poultry farming (CAD 2007).

By creating spaces, such as the NFPA, for roundtable discussions and participatory decision-making, CAD has not only increased civil society's voice in environmental policy-making but has also raised all stakeholders' awareness of, and buy-in for, participatory processes as a means of building consensus around common goals and effective achievement of common goals through the pooling of expertise.

### **CAD has played a key role in raising stakeholder awareness of and stimulating wider public participation in discussion of conservation issues**

CAD has contributed significantly to raising public awareness of environmental issues, notably through its

coordination of the NFPA. Although the Forum's primary focus is on protected areas, CAD has used this space to facilitate discussion of wider environmental issues, such as the case in 2009-2010 of a cement factory near a protected area that provoked such a strong a public outcry that the project was stopped. The use of electronic media has been particularly successful in broadening participation in discussions. The website is accessed by a wide range of individuals and organisations and activity has increased rapidly, mainly in the form of blogs on environmental issues<sup>10</sup>.

In March 2007, a public consultation was carried out via the Forum's 'theme of the month', to evaluate the effectiveness of the Forum in terms of promoting and facilitating co-management and participation. In terms of its effectiveness as a tool for increased participation, the report (Vega 2007) found a consensus that the Forum had been a useful and appropriate mechanism for dialogue and discussion between the state and civil society on policies and activities relating to the management of the NSPA. It was highly valued both by the environmental community in the Dominican Republic and by international cooperation agencies.

Respondents to the survey also noted that "...one of CAD's major contributions has been its leadership in setting up and strengthening the NFPA as an open, participative, round-table space" (CAD member, pers. comm. 2010) while another emphasised the importance of "the electronic discussion platform for protected areas, which keeps everyone aware of what is happening in the area of conservation" (member of a partner organisation, pers. comm. 2010).

### **CAD has contributed to strengthening the capacity of its member organisations**

CAD has provided members with opportunities to analyse their strengths and weaknesses and to strengthen their capacity through exchange with other members and partners. As a result, member organisations developed stronger governance structures, new policies and procedures, and more effective approaches to carrying out their work. For example, CAD's government members have adopted a more participatory and collaborative approach to their work in protected areas and the buffer zones, as a result of their professional exchanges and collaboration with NGOs.

The development and sharing of the tools and methods enshrined in the *Menu Tecnológico* played a significant

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.accionverde.com/2009/08/08/aportaciones-al-foroap-foro-nacional-de-areas-protegidas/> also <http://fatimaporreal.com/2009/05/>

role in strengthening the technical capacities of CAD's members. The process enabled CAD members to strengthen their organisational management, technical and facilitation skills while building the capacity of the target organisations.

A survey in 2003 found that the *Menu Tecnológico* was not only highly rated by both CAD members and the target audience but that there had been tangible benefits, for example, in terms of increased income generation. The survey also found that CAD members were committed to continuing and expanding the process of sharing and dissemination (CAD-Helvetas 2006).

In their survey responses, CAD members and partner organisations also identified the following benefits of their involvement in the development and dissemination of the *Menu Tecnológico* in terms of increased organisational capacity:

- acquisition of new tools and methods and validation of existing ones;
- improved ability to access funds for conservation and development; and
- capacity to train community members where valuable species grow in improved management practices and sustainable harvesting.

### **CAD has contributed to strengthening the capacity of partner organisations to play an effective role in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management**

As noted above, the project in the *Sierra de Bahoruco* which CAD implemented between 2003 and 2006, had a strong impact on building the capacity of community based organisations. In addition to the work by *Progreso* cited above, *Grupo Jaragua* promoted public education and awareness of environmental issues as well as creating and strengthening the local government environmental units.

Similarly, CEBSE used its practical experience of ecotourism to conduct a survey with interested local community groups of natural attractions in the area. IDEAC was responsible for administering the *fondo social* for the project, and became a member of CAD during the project implementation phase.

Interviewees from community-based organisations that CAD has worked with identified the following as areas in which their capacities had been built through CAD:

- ecotourism policy development;
- natural resource management ;

- administrative skills;
- planning, and specifically development of business plans for the sustainable use of natural resources;

Other areas where survey respondents (members and partner organisations) identified a CAD contribution to building partners' capacity were:

- institutional strengthening of the Inter-agency Task Force to Combat Desertification and Drought;
- facilitating increased technical capacity in the National Steering Committee of the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme;
- creating the roundtable for dialogue on forests as a key part of its role on the Board and Coordinating Committee for this process.
- the technical support provided during the design of a reengineered NSPA to ensure the financial sustainability of the protected areas in the Dominican Republic.
- the creation of Environmental Management Units under a 2003 CAD project, which has improved environmental planning, monitoring and feedback in three municipalities in the south of the country; and
- improved capacity of grassroots organisations to participate in interventions on the sustainable use of arid zones, through CAD's dissemination of information and capacity building in the context of Network of Non-Governmental Organisations Combating Desertification and Drought.

### **CAD has contributed to promoting and testing effective and equitable strategies for co-management of natural resources**

Because NGO members of CAD have almost 20 years experience, notably under the EP, of participatory natural resource management, CAD has contributed significantly to the promotion of and capacity building for co-management. In particular, it has encouraged the participation of all stakeholders, and especially grassroots organisations, in the management of natural resources.

One of the tangible results has been the inclusion of co-management in the policies relating to the NSPA (SEMARN 2007). The 2000 Act 64-00 on the Environment and Natural Resources created the legal basis for civil society co-management of protected areas, with community participation enshrined as one of the fundamental principles of policies developed under this legislation (CAD-GTZ 2007). A subsequent report found that there was a high degree of civil society participation in the management of 11 protected areas, under varying



types of management regime (SEMARN-GTZ 2008).

A 2007 report found that, from a local perspective, the implementation of co-management mechanisms had clearly improved the management of some of the protected areas and the involvement of various regional and local, public and private interests in the planning for the protected area had resulted in decentralised administration of conservation management units (CAD-GTZ 2007).

SEMARN-GTZ 2008 also identified the following impacts of co-management (also sometimes referred to as shared management [*gestión compartida*]):

- improved mutual trust through the integration and participation of communities;
- friendlier communications between civil society and government agencies through the creation of spaces to present arguments for and against the management arrangements;
- identification of better ways of integrating conservation with sustainable use of resources; and
- more productive projects developed and managed locally, resulting in a reduction in conflicts in the protected areas and buffer zones.

(SEMARN-GTZ 2008).

In a panel discussion and evaluation conducted under the NFPA on co-management and community participation it was found that “There are successful cases, like the scientific reserves *Ébano Verde*, *Loma Quita Espuela* and *Loma Guaconejo*, as well as the natural monuments of *Salto el Limón* and *Salto de la Damajagua*. Obviously, each case has strengths and weaknesses, but thanks to co-management we can see high levels of compliance with the objectives established when the co-management agreements were made and some empowerment of the local organisations who derive benefits (some more than others) from the co-managed protected areas.” (CAD-GTZ 2007, Vega 2007)

### **CAD has contributed to shaping environmental policy and legislation in the Dominican Republic and to mainstreaming environmental considerations into other policies**

One of the areas in which CAD has been particularly influential is in shaping national environmental policy, both directly by serving on relevant committees and providing formal input to policy processes, and indirectly

by strengthening the capacity of partner organisations to do the same. Examples cited by interviewees or on CAD’s website include CAD’s contributions to:

- developing national strategies for the conservation of biodiversity;
- developing the National Programme of Action to Combat Desertification and Drought;
- the process of creating and structuring the National Programme for Payment of Environmental Services;
- improving policies and practice relating to management of river catchments and land use planning through participation in local development projects and networking;
- re-engineering the National System of Protected Areas to ensure its long-term financial viability in the Dominican Republic;
- shaping environmental laws, especially those relating to protected areas, forests and water;
- discussions about revising the Constitution of the Dominican Republic resulting in the incorporation of a series of collective and individual environmental rights of considerable scope;
- drafting Act 64-00 on the Environment and Natural Resources (*Ley General sobre Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales*), Act 67 on Protected Areas (*Ley de Áreas Protegidas*) and the ‘Sectorial’ Act on Protected Areas (*Ley Sectorial de Áreas Protegidas*).

CAD also contributed to developing the successful proposal to declare two protected areas (*Parque del Este* and *Biosfera Enriquillo-Jaragua*) as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. CAD government member, the Secretariat of State for Environment and Natural Resource Management (now a Ministry), in its capacity as administrator of the Biosphere Reserve, also participated in the development of the management plan for the National Park of the *Sierra de Bahoruco*. This meant that it could hold regional meetings for the promotion of the biosphere reserve under the project.

11 Managed by CAD member Fundación Progressio

12 Co-managed by CAD member, Fundación Quita Espuela

## 8. In conclusion



*The President of CAD talking to farmers about possible alternative crops, such as macadamia nuts.*

There are many lessons, recommendations and conclusions that could be drawn from CAD's ten years of operation, many of which validate the findings of earlier CANARI case studies, including the one on CANARI itself<sup>13</sup>. However, the two that are highlighted here are particularly clear findings from the CAD experience and are included with the hope that they can help to strengthen other organisations, institutions and networks in the Caribbean and shape a new relationship between them and their development partners.

### **Strategic investments by international cooperation agencies can support the building of effective local institutions**

One of the main reasons that CAD has been able to implement its strategic objectives consistently over the past ten years has been the support of its international cooperation partners and the manner in which this has been provided. COSUDE, Helvetas and DED financed and coordinated the Environmental Programme, which created the initial space for exchange, dialogue and collaboration between diverse interests and organisations in the Dominican Republic and beyond. However, the process of creating CAD arose out of the growing sense of

local ownership, which the international agencies deliberately fostered so that the programmes would remain sustainable once they withdrew their investment. The planned withdrawal of the original agencies also paved the way for the United Nations Environment Programme and GTZ to enter the arena as partners, so that the stream of funding and technical support continued. GTZ then acted as the catalyst for the development of the NFPA but without seeking to dictate the exact format or processes. Finally, the CAD mechanism for retaining cooperation agencies as solidarity partners has proved a successful way of facilitating a continuing exchange of ideas and access to expertise on an informal basis.

### **Effective networking needs to be based on a common vision and processes that facilitate equitable dialogue but consensus may not always be possible**

CAD's round table approach has reduced the normal power imbalances that exist in discussions between CSOs and government agencies. However, this does not mean that civil society and government members will always have the same perspective on issues. While reaching agreement between members is the most desirable outcome, it has not always been possible for CAD members to reach consensus. However, this is not seen as an insurmountable obstacle, provided there is continued focus on the common vision and commitment to continuing the dialogue. Or as the President of CAD expressed it, "The most important thing that our members have learned is to accept disagreement and continue the discussions at the roundtable .... Reaching consensus is not the objective in itself, because sometimes it is simply not possible. But what the members do is keep working together and trying to understand each other ....just like a couple that fights all day but makes up again at night" (CANARI 2009).

<sup>13</sup> CANARI 2009. Thirty years in support of participatory natural resource management: the experience of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)



*Women coffee producers in the Sierra de Barahuco*



*A delegation from Helvetas-Haiti examines the products of a micro-enterprise in the Sierra de Baharuco*

### **Equitable dialogue and systematic mediation and negotiation help to manage natural resource conflicts**

Conflicts are an inherent part of natural resource management and particularly management that is sensitive to local livelihoods. CAD has managed these effectively, notably through the round table process, by:

- identifying and acknowledging environmental problems and the conflicts they may generate;
- analysing the different aspects of and interests underlying the environmental conflict;
- acknowledging and accepting the diverse views that exist on the same issue;
- fostering communication based on open exchange of different viewpoints;
- identifying innovative solutions to mitigate socio-environmental conflicts; and
- remaining committed to the search for common goals; and
- taking into account the interests of all sectors and users, especially those in the community, so that they have an opportunity to play a role in management.

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## Appendix 1: Questionnaire [translated from Spanish]

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Dear colleagues

The questionnaire below forms part of the research we are doing for a case study of CAD. We would be grateful if you could provide answers to the questions below as well as comment and suggestions.

1. How has CAD influenced your work/the work of your organisation? Please provide examples.
2. Have you observed CAD influencing others (at the local, national, regional or international level)? Please provide examples.
3. Based on your experience of working with CAD, what do you think has been CAD's most important contribution to the country's environmental sector? Please provide examples.
4. In general, what would you say have been CAD's greatest successes and challenges as an environmental network?
5. How could CAD improve its work (mission, vision, goals, activities) to provide more effective support to the environmental sector in the Dominican Republic and contribute effectively and strategically to the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources? Please be specific.
6. Any other relevant comments, opinions or observations?

**Many thanks for your collaboration and support**

## **Appendix 2: List of interviewees and organisations who were sent and returned questionnaires**

### **1. Organisations that were sent a questionnaire**

*Agencia de Cooperación Alemana GTZ/GTI - PROGEREN*  
*Centro de Agricultura Sostenible con Tecnología Apropriada (CASTA)*  
*Centro de Información Ambiental*  
*Centro para la Conservación y Ecodesarrollo de la Bahía de Samaná y su Entorno Inc. (CEBSE)*  
*El Jardín Botánico Dr. Rafael Ma. Moscoso*  
*Fundación Loma Quita Espuela*  
*Fundación para el Mejoramiento Humano (Fundación Progressio)*  
*Grupo Jaragua Inc.*  
*Grupo Técnico Interinstitucional*  
*Instituto de Desarrollo de la Economía Asociativa (IDEAC)*  
*Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales*  
*Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)*  
*Programa Ecomar*  
*Senado de la República Dominicana*  
*The Nature Conservancy*

### **2. Organisations that returned a questionnaire**

*Centro de Información Ambiental*  
*Centro para la Conservación y Ecodesarrollo de la Bahía de Samaná y su Entorno Inc. (CEBSE)*  
*El Jardín Botánico Dr. Rafael Ma. Moscoso*  
*Fundación Loma Quita Espuela*  
*Fundación para el Mejoramiento Humano (Fundación Progressio)*  
*Grupo Jaragua Inc.*  
*Grupo Técnico Interinstitucional*  
*Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales*  
*Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)*

### **3. Persons interviewed (by Skype, telephone or face-to-face):**

*Sr. José Ángeles, Administration Manager, Fundación Progressio*  
*Lic. Yvonne Arias, Executive Director, Grupo Jaragua*  
*Sr. Reinhard Bader, former Helvetas advisor and consultant (also responded to questionnaire)*  
*Lic. Aleyda Capella, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales*  
*Sr. Ramón Castillo, Manager, Ebano Verde Reserve, Fundación Progressio*  
*Sr. Ramón Díaz, Coordinador Técnico, Recursos Forestales, Mesa de Dialogo de Bosques, Ministerio del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales*  
*Sr. Pedro García Brito, Officer, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales*  
*Sr. Ricardo Garcia, Jardín Botánico Nacional*  
*Lic. Patricia Lamelas, Executive Director, CEBSE*  
*Lic. María Eugenia Morales, Encargada de Recursos Naturales, UNDP*  
*Lic. Priscilia Peña, Protected Areas Dept, Ministerio del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales*  
*Sr. Jesús Moreno Portalatún, President of CAD and Managing Director, Helados Bon y La Loma*  
*Sr. Sesar Rodriguez, Executive Director, CAD*  
*Lic. Marianna Szabo, Technical Coordinator, Centro de Información Ambiental*





## Caribbean Natural Resources Institute

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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