

Piloting community-based management planning for the sustainable use of forest resources in Trinidad and Tobago

Final workshop report

*Brasso Seco Visitor Centre, Brasso Seco, Trinidad
4th April 2012*

1.0 Introduction

In 2011, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago approved a new Forest Policy giving stakeholders the opportunity to participate in management of the nation's forests. There are many communities engaged in forest-based livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago, but none have attempted to develop a formal plan to sustainably manage the use of the resources on which their livelihoods depend. In addition, there is an absence of formal forest management plans developed by the Government.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization provided a grant to CANARI to implement a pilot project for the formulation of a community-based site plan for sustainable use of forest resources in Trinidad and Tobago. CANARI worked with the Forestry Division (FD) of Trinidad and Tobago to undertake this pilot project in the community of Brasso Seco in the Northern Range of Trinidad.

The duration of the project was approximately three months. The project utilized an innovative community-based approach to forest management planning through the production of an interactive map. The process for the production of the map included:

- facilitated discussions to identify forest resources;
- building the capacity of villagers to use Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers to plot the location of forest resources;
- documenting plans for forest resources through the facilitated use of video and photography in the field/forest; and
- facilitated discussions to generate forest resource profiles which include a description of each resource and a plan inclusive of measures for monitoring and evaluation.

During the implementation of the project there were two workshops with the community, four meetings and seven field days to produce an interactive map with five resource area profiles.

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This is the report of the third and final meeting to present the forest management plan to the wider community and other key stakeholders.

2.0 Objectives of Workshop

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- present the forest management plan to the Brasso Seco community and other key stakeholders;
- elicit feedback on the plan from the Brasso Seco community and other key stakeholders;
- assist with clarifying and documenting lessons learned and experiences from the process; and
- prioritise actions for the implementation of the plan.

3.0 Participants

There were twenty-seven participants most of whom were representatives from the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP) invited by the Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee (TAC). Appendix 1 lists participants and their contact information.



Photo 1: Members of the Brasso Seco TAC preparing to present the forest management plan to the wider community .

4.0 Methods

Representatives of Brasso Seco TAC, with the assistance of Forestry Division and CANARI, presented the community's ideas and plans for forest resources to the wider village community and to key stakeholders.

Discussion clarified issues, identified lessons learnt from the project and prioritised actions for implementation. Lectures with power point presentations which included links to video footage presenting segments of the plan, attractively designed written resource profiles and pictures capturing various activities throughout the project were used during the workshop. Appendix II is a copy of the agenda for the meeting, Appendix III is the presentations and Appendix IV is copies of the profiles presented.

5.0 Findings

5.1 Issues clarified

The workshop participants endorsed the plan and shared concerns about non implementation of the plan after this workshop. The President of Brasso Seco TAC indicated that this was definitely not the case as they had already started implementation of some of the actions on the plan.

5.2 Lessons learned and experiences

- There is a need to build the capacity of Brasso Seco TAC for mobilization so that more representatives from the wider community could participate in development planning.
- The mixture of tools used to facilitate the process coupled with capacity building in the use of Global Positioning System and Participatory Video, was strategic in keeping the members of Brasso Seco TAC who participated in the project interested in the project.
- The video and pictures elicited greater feedback from the participants of the workshop than the written profiles.
- The facilitation methods used were key to drawing out specific information and contributed to the members of Brasso Seco TAC owning the plan.
- The project generated a large volume of data (over 200 way points, approximately 7 000 photos and over 250 video clips).
- Multiple meetings with Brasso Seco TAC were necessary for the group to assume ownership of the plan.



Photo 2: Workshop participants listening to the presentation of the forest management plan by Brasso Seco TAC.

5.3 Prioritised actions for implementation of the plan

The Brasso Seco TAC identified the following as priority actions for implementation of the plan:

- Investigate and apply to CANARI for funding, through the Rural Livelihoods project funded by JB Fernandez, for the purchase of tools and equipment for an immediate action.
- Update information on donors and their requirements identified in the profiles.
- Develop a business plan, with the assistance of the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Ltd. (NEDCO), for proposed initiatives identified in the profiles.
- Renew efforts to draft a marketing and promotion plan for cocoa and coffee products with the assistance of the Ministry of Tourism.

6.0 Evaluation

Members of Brasso Seco TAC described the project as enjoyable and educational. They commended the approach and explained that the project not only improved their technical skills in the collection of waypoint data with GPS receivers but also contributed to improving their event planning and project coordination skills. They were also pleased with the amount of field data generated in the allocated time. The President of the TAC in his presentation reported that the project was timely and helpful as it came at a time when the group was preparing for a

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business planning exercise. The mapping and resource profiles were seen as major tools to facilitate this activity. He went on further to say that he thought that this project was a means of empowering the Brasso Seco TAC.

The project also provided an opportunity for the Forestry Division to test and build their capacity for facilitating participatory approaches to forest management planning targeted at community level stakeholders. In addition, it provided the Community Forestry Unit of the Forestry Division with the opportunity to explore the use of different pathways in communicating messages to target audiences through their assistance with the drafting of web page text, resource profiles and project reports.

CANARI gained additional insight into how participatory GIS could be used to explore community- driven requests in planning and documenting local knowledge.

7.0 Conclusion

This was the final workshop of the pilot project for the formulation of a community-based site plan for sustainable use of forest resources in Brasso Seco. The forest management plan developed by the community was reviewed and priorities for implementation identified. The evaluation and lessons learnt revealed that the process was very effective in engaging the community in forest management planning, and developing specific plans on how they can develop forest-based small businesses. CANARI, NEDCO, the Ministry of Tourism and others need to continue to provide support to the Brasso Seco community to help them to fulfil these aspirations. The results and lessons learnt need to be communicated to policy makers and other forest-based communities, so that wider application of this process across Trinidad and Tobago can be facilitated by the Community Forestry Unit of the Forestry Division.

Appendix 1 - Participant List

NAME	ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	EMAIL
Francis Francois	B. S.T.A.C.	759- 6095	
Alicia Madoo	B. S.T.A.C., PTA	332- 4620, 713- 7380	
Joseph Hernandez	B.S.T.A.C.	482- 5651	
Eddie Hill	Village Council	487- 0869	
Raymond Pereira	Farmers Association and Council	491- 5873	
V. Bissook	N.R.W.R.P.	397- 2618	
Yasin Basksh	N.R.W.R.P.	680- 4235	
Pharej Mannette	N.R.W.R.P.	716- 8299	hrrsgaara@hotmail.com
Zalika De Souza	N.R.W.R.P.	723- 1894	z-rgphoenix@hotmail.com
Nicholas Dopson	N.R.W.R.P.	719- 2513	
Akeem Cearcia???	N.R.W.R.P.		
Jera Maithand		483- 8804	
Gilian Sue Chee Kling	N.R.W.R.P.	466- 1890	
Junior Ramlogan	N.R.W.R.P.	371- 4342	
St. Rose Francis			
Mr. & Mrs. Maharaj	Verdant Vale	751- 6065	
Eversley Lewis			
Lester Fuller		472- 1120	
Cindy Jannette	Village Council	704- 7513	
Nicole Hill		498- 2299	
Carl Fitzjames	Brasso Seco TAC	493- 4358, 669- 6054	CarlFitzjames@hotmail.com
Melanie bastaldo	Brasso Seco TAC	468- 6923	
Neila Bobb-Prescott	CANARI	626- 6062	neila@canari.org

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Avita Maharaj	Community Forestry	662- 2354	communityforestryfd@gmail.com
Vashima Bhimsingh	Community Forestry	662- 2354	communityforestryfd@gmail.com
Raynaldo Phillips	Community Forestry	662- 2354	communityforestryfd@gmail.com

Appendix II - Agenda for meeting

A SPECIAL THANK YOU...

**To all the community members of the
Brasso Seco Village.**



Cocoa & Coffee House at Project Site off Brasso Rd.



CANARI
Fernandez Compound
Morvant



Forestry Division
Community Forestry
Farm Road, St Joseph



Wednesday 4th April 2012

1:00 pm

Brasso Seco Visitor's Centre

**Piloting Community-Based Management Plan
for Sustainable use of Forest Resources in
Trinidad and Tobago**

Programme

Prayer

By Joseph Hernandez,
Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee

Introduction

By Francis Francois,
*President of
Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee*

Welcome

By Raynaldo Phillips,
Community Forestry

Overview of the Project

By Neila Bobb-Prescott,
CANARI

Description of Approach

By Avita Maharaj & Vashima Bhimsingh,
Community Forestry

Presentation of Findings

By Eddy Hill & Alicia Madoo *with support
from Raynaldo Phillips*

Way Forward

By Neila Bobb-Prescott,
CANARI

Community Presentations

Vote of Thanks

By Carl Fitzjames,
Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee

About the Project...

The villagers of Brasso Seco will tell you that their village name means "dry arm of river". The village lies about thirty-five km north of the town of Arima, in the Paria Valley on the southern slopes of the Northern Range in Trinidad and Tobago. Brasso Seco sits at the base of Trinidad's highest peak, El Cerro Del Aripo, which provides the perfect environment for growing cocoa and hence this was the main livelihood for many residents until the 1960s. Today the village has a small population of about three hundred people and the main source of livelihood is from the forest.

In 2011, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago approved a new Forest Policy giving stakeholders authority to participate in management of the nation's forests. There are many communities engaged in forest-based livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago, but none have attempted to develop a formal plan to sustainably manage the use of the resources on which their livelihoods depend. The United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization has provided a grant to CANARI to implement a pilot project for the formulation of a community-based site plan for sustainable use of forest resources in Trinidad and Tobago. CANARI has begun working with the Forestry Division of Trinidad and Tobago to undertake this pilot project in the community of Brasso Seco.

The Chief objective is to pilot community-based forest management planning for the sustainable use of forest resources within a selected community in Trinidad and Tobago.

The project utilized an innovative **community-based approach** to forest management planning through the production of an interactive map. The process for the production of the map includes:

- facilitated discussions to identify forest resources;
- building the capacity of villagers to use Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers to plot the location of forest resources;
- documenting plans for forest resources through the facilitated use of video and photography in the field/forest; and facilitated discussions to generate forest resource profiles which include a description of each resource and a plan inclusive of measures for monitoring and evaluation.

Appendix III- Presentations



Piloting community-based management planning for the sustainable use of forest resources in Trinidad and Tobago

Brasso Seco Visitor's Centre,
Brasso Seco, Trinidad
4th April 2012



Background

- Approved “**Forest and Protected Areas Policy**” authorising stakeholder participation in the management of forest.
- Many communities engaged in forest-based livelihoods.



Funding and Partners

- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
- CANARI
- Trinidad and Tobago, Forestry Division



Selection Criteria

- 13 identified.
- Include
 - Potential for community-based forest management demonstrated through participation in past projects or other arrangements with Forestry Division.



- Access to forest on state lands that can be sustainably managed.
- Local knowledge base about the characteristics, changes, impacts and spatial distribution of forest resources.



Activities (How)

- Introductory and planning workshop
- Conduct field training(GPS)
- Update workshop
- Host final workshop



What we want to produce (Output)

- **Initial workshop report**
- **Site management plan** (inclusive of an interactive digital map, describing how resources are to be used sustainably by the community)
- **Final project report** including lessons learnt and recommendations



Thank you!!!



Description of Approach

Presented by: Avita Maharaj – BSc. Environmental Management &
Vashima Bhimsingh– BSc. Environmental & Natural Resource
Management

How did we go about
carrying out this
project?...

- ▶ Sensitization Meetings
- ▶ Capacity Building
- ▶ Participatory Video
- ▶ Facilitated the Development of the Forest Plan

Sensitization Meetings

1. Meetings – Four (4)
2. Field Days – Seven (7)
3. Profiling of Resources – Two (2) Days

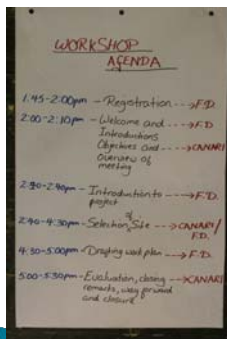
First Meeting

Met with executive of the Brasso Seco TAC to present project idea to the group who will then inform the community at large.



Second Meeting

- ▶ Introduce the project to participants
- ▶ Select and prioritise forest resources in the community that are important to maintaining their livelihoods.
- ▶ Facilitate the selection of the site for the execution of the project.
- ▶ Draft a workplan for the field work



Third Meeting

- ▶ [For Avita\Update 3 2012.02.14.pdf](#)

Fourth Meeting

And most recently a meeting was held in early March with the objective of updating the community on what was done to date and planning activities for the upcoming month.



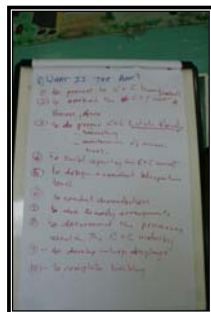
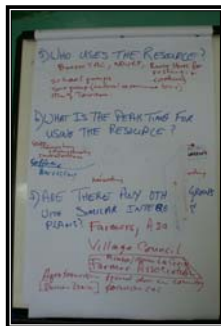
Seven Field Days

- ▶ One half day dedicated to GPS training
- ▶ 200 waypoints readings collected
- ▶ Over 7,000 photos taken
- ▶ 250 video clips taken about 50 of those taken by group members



Resource Profiling

- ▶ Questions were brain stormed by Community Forestry and CANARI
- ▶ A draft profile was done by Community Forestry on the Rivers and Springs
- ▶ The profile was then done with the group



Capacity Building

Is

a strategy used in organizations to improve its effectiveness

GPS (Global Positioning System) training



Training with the POV (Point of View) camera



Participatory Video

- ▶ Is a form of using video in development
- ▶ Focuses on participation of primary stakeholders in producing and discussing videos that concern their livelihood
- ▶ Give stakeholders a greater sense of control and ownership of the process



Facilitated the Development of the Forest Plan

The group identified eleven profiles at the first meeting however the following five were chosen these are:

- ▶ The River and Springs
- ▶ The Cocoa House
- ▶ The Cocoa and Coffee Patches
- ▶ The Forest Patch
- ▶ The Lodge Area

The group was also very influential in setting the day's agenda.

[For Avita\morning clip.avi](#)

▶ Thank you for your
attention

