



Caribbean Green Economy Policy and Practice Proposal Suggestions

The Caribbean Green Economy Action Learning Group is developing a research and action learning agenda that identifies a set of questions that the group will address in order to support the development of green economy pathways for the region. Material is available to begin work on many of the questions; the following three are suggested for immediate attention, given relevant ongoing initiatives and their critical relevance to current green economy priorities and debates:

1. How can governments, the private sector and civil society collaborate on building a green economy?

Progress towards green economies will not be possible without the cooperation and commitment of all major economic actors. This implies new, more participatory, processes of policy development and implementation, since with a few exceptions there has been little engagement of stakeholders, and particularly private sector stakeholders, in public policy formulation in the region. This activity aims to understand the kinds of institutional arrangements and incentives that can result in effective multi-stakeholder policy processes. It will draw on case studies from several countries, including Barbados and Grenada.

The Barbados Social Partnership, a framework for collaboration between Government, businesses and trade unions, was formed in 1993 “with a view to implement measures for the sustained economic development of Barbados” (<http://labour.gov.bb/social-partnership>) and has functioned since then under a series of Protocols. Under the current Protocol, the Social Partnership has responsibility for steering Barbados’s shift towards a green economy, in follow-up to the Green Economy scoping study undertaken in 2011.

The Grenada National Sustainable Development Council is another collaborative platform, with its origins in activities following up on Agenda 21, particularly the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States and UNDP’s Capacity 21 programme. Since 1996, the SDC has provided a mechanism for government, NGO and private sector dialogue on national development. While its direct impact on public policy may be limited¹, it has set a precedent for deep engagement of NGO and private sector actors in development debates, for example through the recent development of the Alternative Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy by the Non-State Actors Panel (<http://voteforthelight.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Printery-2012-MAR.-NSAP-ALTERNATIVE-GPRS.pdf>).

¹ Rosenberg, J. and L.S. Thomas. 2005. Participating or just talking? Sustainable Development Councils and the implementation of Agenda 21. *Global Environmental Politics* 5(2): 61-87.

2. Can triple bottom line methods be adapted for assessing public sector investment proposals or business investments? Where is there potential for uptake of such methods?

Caribbean governments and businesses tend to base investment decisions largely, if not entirely, on projected economic rates of return, without considering their potential environmental and social costs and benefits. Taking a “triple bottom line” approach could result in investments that generate a broader and more sustainable flow of benefits, to investors, society and the environment. There is however little practical experience with these approaches in the region, and certainly not at the level of large public or private sector investments. There is therefore a need to develop and test methods that could be demonstrated to, and potentially adopted by, governments and businesses. Invest Saint Lucia, the national investment promotion agency, is planning to develop tools for triple bottom line investment analysis, offering an opportunity for learning from an ongoing experience. The Trinidad and Tobago Project for Ecosystem Services, which is developing and testing new decision support tools aimed at introducing ecosystem services into the national planning framework, may also provide useful lessons.

3. What kinds of policy measures, institutions and programmes are able to catalyse and support sustainable micro, small and medium (SMME) enterprise development?

A large portion of the Caribbean population is engaged in farming or other small-scale enterprises, many of which are dependent on natural resources and other environmental goods and services. Given their potential to generate social and environmental as well as economic benefits and to contribute to poverty reduction, these enterprises must be considered as a key element in the shift towards green economies. The proliferation of small-scale enterprises is however constrained by a number of factors that need to be better understood. These factors include:

- the role of government programmes supporting SMMEs: what kinds of support can such programmes effectively provide and what capacities do they need to provide them?
- the capacity of individual entrepreneurs and community enterprises: can the development of skills in business planning help these enterprises develop their ideas and find the resources required to develop them?
- the role of “mediating agents”: how can non-governmental development agencies and, potentially, businesses, support capacity development of both government small business programmes and start-up SMMEs?
- lessons from success: what can be learned from the many successful sustainable SMMEs scattered around the region, and how can these enterprises support the further development of the sector?
- achieving scale through collaboration: can the constraints of small scale be overcome through platforms for collaboration among enterprises on product development, branding and marketing?

The region offers a number of learning opportunities on these issues. In Trinidad and Tobago, CANARI is supporting participatory planning processes in four rural communities to identify and develop small and micro enterprise opportunities based on the sustainable use of natural resources, and to draw policy and practice lessons from the experience. The

recently launched Caribbean Local Economic Development Program is a partnership between Caribbean and Canadian institutions to build the capacity of local governments “to encourage and support existing [small-scale] businesses, attract new ventures, and put in place services, plans and strategies that meet their needs”

(<http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/international/caribbean-local-economic-development-program.htm>). Some relevant past initiatives, such as the Saint Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme, have been well documented² and so also offer material for learning.

² e.g. Renard, Y. (2001) ‘Practical strategies for pro-poor tourism: a case study of the St. Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme’. *Pro-Poor Tourism Case Study 5*, Overseas Development Institute, International Institute for Environment and Development, and Centre for Responsible Tourism, University of Greenwich, London.