

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute  
FAO – National Forest Programme Facility

Participatory Forest Management:  
Improving policy and institutional capacity for development

**Final report on activities conducted under  
Letter of Agreement signed 5 August, 2011**

*Submitted 12 January, 2012*

## **1.0 Background**

Over the past five years, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) under its the National Forest Programme Facility (NFPF) has supported the Caribbean Natural Resource Institute (CANARI) to implement a regional project entitled “**Participatory Forest Management; Improving policy and institutional capacity for development**”. The main objectives of this project, as defined in the original project document, are to:

- build the capacity of forest stakeholders for participatory policy analysis, policy formulation and forest management through effective training, technical assistance, and regional and cross-sectoral dialogue;
- improve the institutional frameworks for participatory forest policy analysis, policy formulation and forest management, and the integration of forest policy in national sustainable development strategies, through the promotion and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices, technical assistance and training; and
- develop and transfer methods for sustainable management of forest resources.

The independent evaluation of this project, conducted in December 2010, analysed the impacts, assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of planned activities, assessed the sustainability of outcomes and outputs, discussed lessons and challenges, and proposed useful recommendations for future work.

The evaluation concluded that the project has significantly broadened the scope and understanding of forestry in the region, and has brought more stakeholders into the realm of forest management. However, although the project greatly contributed to the understanding of the concept of participatory forest management and the type of governance needed for effectively linking forest, livelihoods and poverty reduction, the evaluation noted that this enlightened understanding had not yet been fully translated into formal policy or practice.

The activities under this Letter of Agreement were designed to address the need identified in the evaluation to influence policy for and practice of participatory forest management. This would be done via implementation of a public awareness/outreach programme in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to build understanding of the concept and approaches and how these could be implemented in policy and practice. The results of the exercise and its products would be shared with the wider Caribbean.

The main project objective, as defined in the original project document, was to develop and disseminate a collection of products (radio drama, newspaper series, community caravan, video clips and posters) to communicate key messages on participatory forest

management for developing sustainable forest-based livelihoods The project was implemented in close collaboration with the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Forestry Department as the local partner and coordinator of that country's Integrated Forest Management Development Programme..

## **2.0 Project Activities**

### 2.1 Overview

The activities for this agreement comprised:

- Preparing and distributing communication products
- Implementing a campaign
- Documenting and distributing project findings

All activities have been successfully completed as outlined in the sections below.

### 2.2 Activity 1: Preparing and distributing communication products

Participatory planning for project implementation took place through communication with the Forestry Department in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Each of the communication products that were to be developed were designed to be sufficiently generic to enable their use in all of the other participating countries.

All products were conceptualised at the same time which resulted in the development of strong synergies among the products. A phased release of the communication products was envisioned, with the newspaper series planned to initiate the release, followed by the community caravan, radio drama and television production, and lastly the information posters.

All of the communication outputs were completed during the period October to December 2011.

In addition to the project outputs specified, video clips that were collected during the development of the radio magazine and at the community caravan will be used to produce a television documentary with the support of the local partner. The local partner has been provided with the list of interviewees and questions as well as the types of supporting footage that are required to develop this production. The service provider that gave support for the production of this television documentary was unable to undertake the work within the timeframe of the project and it will therefore be completed by the partner in early 2012.

With respect to the radio drama, this output will be prioritised for airing one month after the project's completion, as the product was completed in December 2011 and would have competed with holiday/Christmas season if aired in December. Airing this in January 2012 will be a useful public awareness product to start the dry season as the product contains information about fire damage to forests.

#### *2.2.1 Newspaper series*

The newspaper series was originally conceptualised as a 2-part series, using a two-page spread in a local newspaper. The content of the articles was planned to cover the topic of participatory forest management using some of the messages generated as feedback from the Action Learning Group and the participatory evaluation of the Integrated Forest Management Development Programme (IFMDP) of Saint Vincent which was conducted by CANARI earlier in the year. Four key messages were selected and in order to provide sufficient coverage and to

facilitate uptake, each message was selected to headline a separate article. Thus, instead of a two-part series, a four-part series of one-page articles was developed.

The four main messages around which the articles were built were as follows:

1. Forests contribute to 1% of the country's GDP.
2. Forest management requires everyone's efforts.
3. Livelihoods are more than a way of life but are also about a quality of life.
4. The IFMDP will contribute to people using their natural resources sustainably.

The last message was very specific to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Each article also featured supporting photographs. A 'Fast Facts' section was also included in each one-page spread to enable the placement of country-specific facts that were relevant to the main article. This material was contributed by the Forestry Department. Contact information for the Forestry Department was provided for reader feedback and general information about CANARI was also provided on the spread.

### 2.2.2 Radio magazine

The radio magazine was originally conceptualised as a radio drama developed by a contracted service provider, PCI Media Impact. Discussions with the service provider led to an expansion of the intended product, to a four-part radio magazine that included a serialised radio drama component.

The radio magazine development was planned as a participatory activity, involving several forestry stakeholders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Participants took part in a training workshop and were involved in discussing the concept of participatory forest management, identifying positive and negative values related to the management of forests, developing a values grid and creating profiles of characters that would be involved in the radio drama.

Participants developed the script for the drama, selected appropriate musical bridges and collected interviews from the public and forestry stakeholders during the workshop as some of the basic building blocks of the radio magazine.

One of the workshop participants was a radio announcer and he hosted the magazine series, entitled "Bush Talk" which was focused on the issues facing forest management and how people could become involved in the wise use and management of forests in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. After the workshop, the service provider recruited local talent to tape the radio drama series "Bush Melee".

### 2.2.3 Video clips

Video clips were captured during the course of the campaign to document the experience of groups and individuals involved in participatory forest management. The footage captured showcased the various roles of forest users. During the development of the radio magazine,



both negative and positive attitudes were outlined in role play and at the community caravan. The importance of involvement of everyone, particularly the youth, was captured in the footage.

In addition to the video clips as project outputs, a television documentary was conceptualised with the Forestry Division. This was designed to report on the experiences of groups that are represented on the IFMDP in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This video production is intended to serve as a means of documenting the concept of participatory forest management in the Caribbean by providing an overview of the work already underway in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The script which was developed will allow some stakeholders to give insight into their contributions to and perceptions of the process. The output is intended to be used as a tool for guiding similar programmes in other islands.

The suggested contributors whose interviews would carry the script are:

- Forestry Department/Ministry of Agriculture - as the main managers of the forest resource, their perspective is sought on how the approach to co-management aids or challenges their traditional approach.
- Community stakeholders (2) - as direct users of the forest, the interview questions whether their involvement in participatory forest management altered their valuation of the forest or their manner of usage.
- VINLEC/CWSA - as agencies which rely upon the ecological value of the forest deriving from watershed management, the interview seeks to find out whether their involvement in participatory forest management sharpened their understanding of the need for co-operation and collaboration in forest management for downstream benefit.

#### *2.2.4 Information posters*

Two posters were designed in tandem with two of the messages developed for the newspaper series. These posters completed a quartet of poster products developed earlier in the FAO NFPF project. The messages selected for the two posters, which were crafted in the draft communication strategy of the Forests and Livelihoods Action Learning Group for the project , were:

- Forest management requires everyone's efforts.
- Livelihoods are more than a way of life but are also about a quality of life.

The posters had a very simple design; they were low on text and high on visuals. The first poster was designed with images that emphasised the goods and services provided by forests to enable a variety of forest-based activities. The second poster emphasised livelihood activities that are enabled by forests and how participatory management ensures that these livelihoods are sustainable.

### 2.3 Activity 2: Implementing a campaign

#### *2.3.1 Community caravan*

The community caravan was designed as a one-day interactive exhibition and information exchange activity that would visit two communities in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Based on its experience on the IFMDP and on-the-ground knowledge, the Forestry Division was asked to take the lead in contacting stakeholders to participate in the caravan. Schools and

other stakeholders were also invited to participate in the activity which took place in the communities of Chateaubelair and Georgetown.

This caravan was intended to engage the participation of as many forestry stakeholders to enable two main processes: communication with the public, and communication among the stakeholders.



Four community groups, the Caribbean Youth Environment Network and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust took part in the community caravan together with the Forestry Division. These groups sent at least two representatives that interacted with visitors to the caravan and shared information on their scope of activity.

The first activity was facilitated through the mini exhibition, at which stakeholders displayed materials which demonstrated their work in forest co-management or otherwise their forest-based activities.



The groups were also provided with an opportunity to share information with other stakeholders. This process was facilitated in two sessions during each caravan day that allowed participants to reflect on project successes and to brainstorm on challenges to progress. Groups also invited membership or participation in their projects and programmes.

These two processes were planned to achieve the objectives of building awareness both among stakeholders and the general public on the experiences and opportunities in forest management especially for civil society and for persons engaged in forest-based livelihoods.

### *2.3.2 Newspaper series*

The newspaper series was carried in the Searchlight Newspaper (an independent weekly newspaper in St. Vincent and the Grenadines) over the period 4th October to 8th November 2011. This allowed for lead-up advertisement of the community caravan activity in the first three articles of the series and reporting on the caravan after its conclusion in the final publication. The Editor of the Searchlight Newspaper facilitated the placement of the articles and assisted in building of the page according to desired specifications.

### *2.3.3 Radio magazine*

The radio magazine was completed in December 2011, after the community caravan activity took place. The service provider, PCI Media Impact, encountered some setbacks in finalisation of the production mainly due to a long wait for output of the local dramatic group that was hired to record the radio drama component.

PCI Media Impact has a relationship with the local (state-owned) radio networks and the free airing of the radio magazine will be facilitated through this connection. The service provider designed a marketing and publicity campaign which includes smart phone advertising, radio

teasers and a press release for the radio series which will air in January 2012. In its evaluation report PCI Media Impact has also given its support for rebroadcast and promotion of the radio magazine series.

#### 2.3.4 Video clips

The compilation of video clips and script for a television documentary output will be completed by the local partner, through the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agency for Public Information in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Two video clips were captured during the radio magazine workshop by CANARI and two interviews with stakeholders were videotaped by the Ministry of Agriculture during the community caravan. A detailed script produced for the television documentary during the project will sufficiently guide the process of development.

#### 2.3.5 Information posters

Eighty (80) full colour copies of each of the four information posters were produced through the project. Several of these posters have already been distributed to heads of Forestry and other forest managers that were in attendance at a regional forestry conference in Jamaica in November 2011.

#### 2.4 Activity 3: Documentation and distribution of project findings

Project outputs have been posted onto the CANARI website, under the Forests and Livelihoods programme area webpage (see <http://www.canari.org/testingcommproducts.asp>) to enable wider dissemination of the project findings and the overall project report will also be posted onto this webpage.

Reports on each of the campaign activities that involved stakeholder participation - namely the radio magazine workshop and the community caravan - were distributed to participants and posted onto the CANARI website:

- <http://www.canari.org/documents/201110-CANARI-FAO-Workshop-WORKSHOP-REPORT.pdf>
- <http://www.canari.org/documents/ReportonCommunityCaravanfinal.pdf>

Video and photographic documentation of aspects of these two activities were posted onto the CANARI YouTube channel and Facebook page respectively:

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1arvMldYBbo&feature=BFa&list=PL3F641285B7F1ABF2&lf=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1arvMldYBbo&feature=BFa&list=PL3F641285B7F1ABF2&lf=plpp_video)
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEVQXQclza4&feature=BFa&list=PL3F641285B7F1ABF2&lf=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEVQXQclza4&feature=BFa&list=PL3F641285B7F1ABF2&lf=plpp_video)
- <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Caribbean-Natural-Resources-Institute/159735514051858>

and participants were sent e-mail alerts to inform them of these postings.

The audio files of the radio magazine series have been produced on compact disk to enable wider distribution and use by the Forestry Department of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as well as for supply to other Forestry Departments within the region. Sound files are inserted here:

- Radio Magazine 1: 
- Radio Magazine 2: 
- Radio Magazine 3: 
- Radio Magazine 4: 

An evaluation report on the development of the radio magazine was also prepared by PCI Media Impact and is available at: <http://www.canari.org/documents/201112-CANARI-FAO-Project-EVALUATION-REPORT.pdf>

A report on the newspaper article series inclusive of pdf versions of the articles can be found at <http://www.canari.org/documents/Newspaperseriesreportfinal.pdf>. The information posters in pdf format are available at <http://www.canari.org/documents/FAOLOA5posters.pdf>

### **3.0 Outputs and outcomes**

The following outputs of this project are as follows:

- Radio drama scripts
- Radio magazine series audio files
- Radio magazine evaluation report
- Report on newspaper article series inclusive of pdf versions of articles
- 10 minute video documentary script
- Information posters in pdf versions
- Press release for the radio drama training workshop and ii) community caravan
- Project webpage

The mix of communication products presented both active and passive means of promoting the concept and practice of participatory forest management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The local partner now has a suite of materials which can be utilised in further promotion of participatory forest management.

Project outcomes include:

- The design and delivery of these products provided opportunities to learn about other forestry stakeholders and their experiences and to develop new ideas and collaborations in future projects between and among civil society groups and government stakeholders.
- Stakeholders in participatory forest management were equipped with new skills in communication. The radio drama workshop stimulated stakeholders' interest in adopting a new strategy in public education, and led them to understand the importance of identifying positive values for promotion in public awareness activities.
- Public awareness was built through the caravan activity involving stakeholders pursuing forest-based livelihoods. The caravan activity provided good opportunities for exchange of information between these stakeholders and the public and promoted some of the viable livelihood activities in which these groups are engaged.
- Newspaper articles and posters delivered information into the public domain. Feedback on their impact was however difficult to measure, as public response to the material was not captured during the project timeline. Contact information for the Forestry Department was however supplied in these articles to provide a feedback opportunity.
- A radio magazine series was developed for use in promotion of participatory forest management. The series though not broadcast within the project timeline can be utilised in any future public awareness campaign of the local Forestry Department, both on and off radio.
- A plan was developed for development of a video documentary by the local partner. This can provide follow-up to the work which was undertaken within the project timeline.

## 4.0 Key lessons learned

The communication products developed in this project have the potential to reach a variety of audiences. Some improvements in their development may have provided a better assessment of their effectiveness. These include:

- Visitors to the community caravan appreciated the fact that the caravan was taking place outside of the capital city and in their community. The caravan is an effective way of connecting with audiences in communities with content that is relevant to them.
- On-the-ground and word of mouth advertisement is an effective means of publicising events in communities.
- The incorporation of a facilitated discussion session at the community caravan is useful for reflection, brainstorming and encouraging networking among stakeholders.
- Training in the production of radio dramas is a practical option for forestry stakeholders to communicate real issues in forest management to the public.
- Including a range of stakeholders enriched the development of the radio magazine by providing a variety of perspectives and information on participatory forest management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- The participatory development of the radio magazine is a useful process to contribute to improving understanding of roles, responsibilities and interests among stakeholders.
- Well-organized participatory workshops can include sessions to develop and record segments of the radio magazine.
- The radio magazine communicates the messages to forest users and is an effective mechanism for capturing and sharing public opinion on forest management issues.
- Establishing or developing a working relationship with media houses (radio and press) can facilitate public education and awareness campaigns which target forestry stakeholders.
- Flexibility of design of newspaper articles enabled the development of a product that was easily digested by the public and which can be stretched over a longer promotional period.
- Participatory planning of articles enabled incorporation of relevant content for the local audience.
- Building feedback opportunities into newspaper articles provides a means of monitoring and evaluating whether the articles are being read and understood.
- Photographs are able to effectively convey messages on posters as a supplement or alternative to text when literacy may be a challenge.
- Using photographs of sites and activities in the Caribbean contributes to a better understanding of messages on forest management.
- The use of video to document personal and organisational experiences in participatory forest management is a useful tool in sharing lessons learned and in encouraging wider involvement in this practice.
- Various communication products with different messages can be derived from one activity.
- Participatory development and dissemination of the communication products builds stakeholder capacity in effective communication.
- Community stakeholders in participatory forest management are eager to build their capacity in project management and financial management to secure their organisation's viability and longevity.



## 5.0 Recommendations

The use of a variety of communication products and pathways is essential when general audiences are targeted in public education and awareness exercises. The products developed in this campaign were varied and offered both active and passive forms of communication that incorporated feedback mechanisms. Some recommendations for future campaigns are:

- With respect to the planning process for development of the products, the participatory manner in which this took place is advisable in any similar campaign. The local partner is able to provide the unique country experience and therefore its input in crafting of the products is essential. Where this can be expanded among key stakeholder groups, as was done in development of the content and structure of the radio magazine and drama, the product is representative of a wider range of experiences.
- In planning the variety of products, plan collectively then develop individually. This approach enables consistency among communication products and continuity within the communication campaign. In this pilot project, the posters, newspaper articles and video documentary had strong synergies because of careful planning. This increases the impact of the campaign by reinforcement of the message and may also serve to inform of each product (e.g. newspaper article informing of the caravan activity).
- On-the-ground promotion of the campaign using a range of key 'activists' is advised to increase public support and stakeholder participation. The early planning process should incorporate identification of persons or groups that are very active in the community and who are able to mobilise communities.
- The inclusion of opportunities for stakeholder discussions during the campaign is useful to encourage collaborations and brainstorming for future projects of the groups. Forest based stakeholders in St. Vincent were not all aware of each other nor the experiences of each group, but learned of avenues for funding, training and project ideas during discussion sessions at the community caravan.
- Establish relationships with media houses to facilitate public awareness and education campaigns. These relationships can be initiated with senior managers but should be built with key departments such as news editors, photo editors and feature editors in the press and radio announcers and deejays in radio stations.

## 6. Conclusion

CANARI achieved the objectives of the project. The project has produced a suite of new communication products which have demonstrated effectiveness in a) guiding forest managers in ways of building and strengthening partnerships in participatory forest management b) promoting participatory forest management among stakeholders and the general public and c) encouraging stakeholder involvement in participatory forest management promotion. Adaptation of this campaign to other islands in the Caribbean is recommended.