



CANARI POLICY BRIEF No.12

Building capacity to facilitate stakeholder participation in forest management in the Caribbean islands

Forests & Livelihoods Programme

Summary

Participatory forest management (PFM) is increasingly being recognised in the Caribbean islands as a key approach to facilitate the sustainable use and management of forests, while providing increased and sustained benefits to livelihoods of forest users. Despite this recognition, few forest managers (including those working in the government agencies with formal authority for forest management) have the required capacity to effectively facilitate processes to engage stakeholders in forest management. Supporting forest managers to build their skills, knowledge and experience in facilitating PFM is a vital element for national forest management programmes in the Caribbean islands.

Key messages

- **Participatory forest management increases and sustains benefits to stakeholders.**
- **Forest managers in the Caribbean need to have the capacity to facilitate participatory processes for effective management of forest goods and services to ensure that the resources are conserved and people benefit.**

Introduction

What do we mean by facilitating participatory forest management (PFM)?

PFM can be defined as *structured collaboration among stakeholders in which they influence and share control over decisions which determine how forest resources are conserved, accessed, used, transformed and marketed*. Facilitation can be defined as the process of helping groups or individuals come to a common objective without imposing or dictating an outcome. The concept of “facilitating PFM” therefore

can be summarised as a process of helping stakeholders to share control over decisions which manage forest goods and services.

What is happening in PFM in the Caribbean islands?

National forest programmes in the Caribbean islands have included PFM in varying degrees. A wide range of initiatives exist. These include formal partnerships and agreements with the government agencies responsible (usually the forestry department), detailing specific responsibilities in the management of forests, and informal involvement of communities and other stakeholders in forest management. Jamaica and the

Box 1: Definition of “stakeholder”

The individuals, groups and organisations that are involved in or may be affected by a change in the conditions governing the management and use of a resource, space or sector” (p. 3, Geoghegan *et al* 2004). Stakeholders include governments, commercial and non-commercial users, interested organisations and community groups.

This policy brief was produced by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute as an output of the project "Building capacity for participatory forest management for good governance in the Caribbean region" funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization under its Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Support Programme for African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP-FLEGT Programme).





Forest managers facilitating a session on mapping relationships among stakeholders at Blue and John Crow Mountain National Park in Jamaica.

Dominican Republic have established formal mechanisms for community participation in forest management. Many other countries do not have formal mechanisms but they all offer a favourable policy environment for PFM. These include countries that are signatory to multilateral environmental agreements that recommend consultative and participatory approaches and countries that are implementing projects with PFM.

Is there capacity to facilitate PFM?

Although PFM is included in some national forest programmes, the capacity to facilitate PFM in the region is weak¹. Jamaica has the only national forest pro-



Forest managers assisting villagers of Colihaut with group work on stakeholder analysis at Syndicate Visitor Center in Dominica.

Box 2: Definition of “forest manager”

Individuals or organisations involved in guiding the effective use of forests (directly or indirectly for example through work in policy influence, sustainable livelihoods, education) including government agencies with responsibility for managing forests (e.g. environmental management departments, protected area departments) as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), the private sector (e.g. consultants) and academia”.

gramme in the region with two trained “Rural Sociologists” - professionals who are dedicated to helping communities residing near forests to participate in management. Despite the efforts of some forestry departments to provide in-house capacity building and organisations like CANARI that provide training and mentoring, and notable efforts by some foresters to individually build their capacities and to mentor others, professional foresters in forest departments are generally not exposed to formal training in PFM facilitation. There are few opportunities for professional development in this area. Further, foresters in the region have increasingly recognised that for PFM to work, a wider cadre of forest managers other than government personnel need to have the capacity to facilitate PFM.

What are the benefits of PFM?

Contributes to building consensus on controversial issues

During 2007 to 2010, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago contracted CANARI as an independent facilitator in the participatory development of a national forest policy and a protected areas policy. During the initial stages of development of these policies, six controversial issues were identified. CANARI drafted one page summaries of each of the issues and included a few questions on each sheet to encourage analysis and negotiation. These sheets were used to generate recommendations in facilitated focus group discussions which were further refined in separate meetings with key stakeholders. The end result was a

¹ See <http://canari.org/forestmanagement.asp> for detailed analysis of national policy frameworks for PFM in the English-speaking Caribbean



Forest manager facilitating a session to evaluate a workshop to create a plan for building partnerships to support development of community tourism livelihoods in Colihaut, Dominica with villagers.

high level of consensus on some very challenging issues for forest management.

Identifies opportunities to enhance livelihoods

The islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines experienced wide scale flooding and land slippage after intense rains in April 2011. The Orange Hill Development Organisation had been managing two small projects geared at improving livelihoods but because of the flooding challenge, funding for forest-based livelihood projects was redirected. Forest managers facilitated a session with members of the CBO which identified strategies for improving or maintaining their forest-based livelihoods during the period of recovery when external support was suspended.

Builds the capacity of civil society organisations

The Co-operative Development Division Office of the Government of Dominica, the Dominica Beekeepers Co-operative Society Ltd. (DBCS) and the Pure Blossom Co-operative Society Ltd. (PBCS) facilitated a session to build the capacity of DBCS for PFM. One of the key outcomes was that participants felt that they were now more aware of the rights, roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders which would help them to make better decisions about the design and implementation of projects to improve forest-based livelihoods.

Gives voice to civil society organisations

During the establishment of a Local Forest Management Committee (LFMC) in the Morant Riverside Watershed Management Unit, Jamaica, forest managers facilitated a session with stakeholders from surrounding villages who were implementing

projects geared to improving livelihoods. Participants reported that the sessions highlighted the importance of the groups meeting regularly to coordinate activities and assisted them in projecting a clear voice to the government on how forest resources should be managed to support sustainable forest-based livelihoods.

Promotes awareness on forest management issues

Forest officers from Saint Lucia's Forestry Department facilitated sessions to guide the establishment of a management committee for the Millet Bird Sanctuary and Nature Trail. Two years had passed since the formulation of a management plan for the area and the representatives of key organisations had changed. The new representatives were not familiar with the project and found the sessions were useful in describing the situation on the ground and in helping them to gain a better understanding of the context in which the Sanctuary is to be managed.

What are challenges to doing PFM?

Capacity to facilitate

Key capacities for a facilitator of participatory processes include:

- having, or being perceived to have, a neutral perspective so that all views can be equitably considered and that negotiation among different interests can be achieved;
- having a world view and philosophy that places people at the heart of development, and respects and values the contributions of all people;
- possessing a culture and focus that are process-oriented and not solely interested in the results of the process;
- being responsive and able to adapt the process to respond to emerging needs and interests;
- having advanced skills in communication (particularly listening skills), negotiation and conflict management;
- having knowledge about the theory and practice of participatory planning and management, with relevant examples of real life application;
- knowledgeable about the local context, including an understanding of the natural ecosystems, management systems, legal and policy framework, and the stakeholders.

Capacity to participate

Effective participation requires that all stakeholders involved have the capacity to participate. Organisations as well as individuals need the capacity to participate. Capacity encompasses a range of elements (world view/philosophy, culture, structure, adaptive culture and strategies, linkages, skills, knowledge and abilities and material resources) which need to be considered collectively.

Time

Participatory processes require identification and mobilisation of stakeholders, communication among them, and often debate and negotiation (and sometimes conflict management) before a decision can be reached by consensus. This is an iterative process and demands adequate time to facilitate stakeholder engagement and to enable adaptation to the changing situation. Limited time can correspondingly limit the effectiveness or depth of participation.

References

Geoghegan, T., Y. Renard & N.A. Brown. 2004. Guidelines for Participatory Planning: A Manual for Caribbean Natural Resource Managers and Planners. Caribbean Natural Resources Institute Guidelines Series 4. Port of Spain: CANARI.

Other CANARI publications that may be of interest to you:

- **CANARI. 2002. Assessing Capacity for Participatory Natural Resource Management. CANARI Guidelines Series No 3. Laventille: CANARI.**
- **CANARI. 2004. Guidelines for Stakeholder Identification and Analysis: A Manual for Caribbean Natural Resource managers and Planners. CANARI Guidelines Series No 5. Laventille: CANARI.**
- **CANARI 2010 Community participation in natural resource management: lessons from Caribbean small island states. CANARI Issues Paper No 1. Laventille: CANARI.**

What can I do?

- Advocate for and support PFM approaches that ensure that stakeholders equitably share control over decisions which manage forest goods and services.
- Insist on having independent and skilled facilitators when engaging in participatory processes.
- Support capacity building (training, exchange visits, action research and learning projects) of forest managers for facilitating participatory forest management.
- Support and pilot the development and implementation of projects, plans, policies, and legislation to create the enabling environment for facilitation of participatory forest management.

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 and facilitate equitable participation and effective collaboration in the management of natural resources critical to development in the Caribbean islands, so that people will have a better quality of life and natural resources will be conserved, through action learning and research, capacity building and fostering partnerships.

For more information please contact:

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
Fernandes Industrial Centre
Building 7, Eastern Main Road,
Laventille, Trinidad. W.I.

Tel: (868) 626-6062 • Fax: (868) 626-1788
Email: info@canari.org • Website: www.canari.org