



Caribbean research and action learning programme developed for more equitable and sustainable economic development

The Caribbean Green Economy Action Learning Group (GE ALG) has produced a regional programme of work to help move the region towards economic development that is aligned towards long-term prosperity, rather than simply growth, through equitable distribution of economic benefits, effective management of ecological resources and resilience to both external and internal shocks.

According to the programme of work, “Green economy offers a lens on sustainable development that highlights issues of growing priority to the region such as energy dependency, resource inefficiency -- especially in food production, energy-consumptive transport options, and a range of economic and environmental vulnerabilities. If a green economy approach can help the countries and economic actors of the region tackle these and other similar issues, while having social equity at its heart, it can make an important contribution to Caribbean development.”

The Caribbean Green Economy Action Learning Group

The GE ALG is a regional multi-disciplinary group of development professionals and academics from across the English-, French- and Spanish-speaking islands of the Caribbean, with a range of expertise including macroeconomics, planning, tourism, agriculture, rural development, gender and climate change. The group’s purpose is to identify and promote ways in which “green economy” can advance sustainable development in the Caribbean through shaping visions, perspectives, positions and actions. The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) serves as convener for the Group.

Caribbean vision for green economy

The GE ALG evolved out of an ongoing regional dialogue since 2010 facilitated by CANARI, which has engaged civil society, government, public sector, academia, and inter-governmental agencies to develop a new economic vision for the Caribbean¹. Through that dialogue, diverse perspectives have converged on a consistent vision for green economy in the Caribbean that can be summarised as:

- The region’s economy is aligned towards long-term prosperity, rather than simply growth, through equitable distribution of economic benefits, effective management of ecological resources and resilience to both external and internal shocks.
- The economy offers pathways out of poverty and towards self-advancement for Caribbean people.

¹ More information on the dialogue is available in CANARI Policy Brief No. 13: Towards a green and resilient economy for the Caribbean, which can be downloaded at <http://www.canari.org/documents/CANARIGrEcoPB13-2012final.pdf>.

- The economy generates jobs and produces goods and services that first meet the needs and demands of Caribbean people, including the poor and the vulnerable.
- Economic development policies and strategies are self-directed and maximise national and regional self-reliance through enhancing environmentally-sound, domestic production and investment.
- Social and educational policies and investments support the development of human capacity and equitable sharing of the benefits of economic activity.
- The economy celebrates and nurtures, rather than exploits or undermines, Caribbean cultural diversity and richness.
- Caribbean businesses have the motivation, capacity and incentives to generate social and environmental, as well as economic, benefits.
- Technology and innovation are encouraged and supported.
- Use of imported or high carbon sources of energy is minimised through alternative renewable sources and more efficient technologies and practices.
- Trade dependency is minimised through greater intra-regional cooperation and a wider diversity of extra-regional trading partners.
- Cross-sectoral and urban-rural economic linkages are enabled and supported.

Priority areas of work

The programme of work of the GE ALG identifies three priority areas for work:

- **Inclusive and participatory governance approaches for collaboration among governments, the private sector and civil society in building a green economy:** Good governance is essential for equity and sustainability, and progress towards green economies will not be possible without the cooperation, engagement and commitment of all major economic actors. This implies a need for new, more participatory processes of policy development and implementation, since with a few exceptions there is now little engagement of stakeholders, particularly private sector stakeholders, in public policy formulation. This activity aims to understand, promote and support the development of institutional arrangements and incentives that can result in effective multi-stakeholder processes that result in transformative policy.
- **Integrated physical planning for a green economy:** A well ordered physical space is the foundation for decent living, quality of life, efficacy of use of resources, environmental sustainability, productivity, and building sustainable local economies. Caribbean countries may be small in land but they are big in sea and sky and have not maximised these for economic development.
- **The role of small, medium and micro-enterprises, including the informal sector, in green economies:** A large portion of the Caribbean population is engaged in farming, fishing or other formal and informal small and medium-scale enterprises (SMMEs), 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.

The issues that the GE ALG will tackle will help Caribbean governments, businesses and other economic stakeholders to make decisions and formulate approaches and instruments that would support a shift to a more sustainable and equitable future.

Publications attached

A [policy brief](#) on the GE ALG

The draft [Programme of Work](#) of the GE ALG

About CANARI

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for more than 20 years. Our mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing 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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