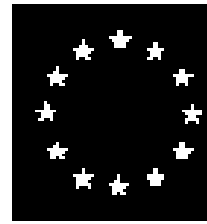




THE NATIONAL
FOREST PROGRAMME
FACILITY



Forests & Livelihoods Exchange Visits Concept Note

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)

1. Context

The focus of the development of communities in the Caribbean, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), currently revolves primarily around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the need for adaptation to climate change, yet paradoxically little attention is being paid to the critical role of forests in contributing to these objectives. National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) rarely reflect the contribution of forests to human well-being, either in terms of environmental services or the goods on which many people depend for food, medicine and revenue generation. Similarly, while practice on the ground is changing, formal forest policy in most countries has not been reviewed or revised to reflect the actual or potential role of forests in ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG7) or contributing to livelihoods.

However, the need to explore and optimise the linkages between forests and livelihoods is evident. Rural poverty has increased in many Caribbean SIDS as a result of the decline of the banana and sugar industries. While tourism is being advanced as the main economic alternative, it also contributes to an increased demand for the services provided by forests, notably water. Predicted climate change trends in the region, such as sea level rise and, in the Greater Antilles, drier rainy seasons, make it all the more pressing to develop interlinked sustainable forest management and rural livelihood strategies.

Implementation of strategies to manage forest goods and services for development of sustainable rural livelihoods must take place in an institutional context that facilitates integrated and cross-sectoral policy making, planning and management. However, forest management institutions in Caribbean SIDS remain for the most part both highly centralised and isolated. Links to policy and decision-makers in cross-cutting areas such as rural development, entrepreneurial development and poverty alleviation remain weak and there are few examples of integrated planning to address the increasing and competing demands on the forest resources, for example for tourism and residential development.

There is also a need for more systematic evaluation and documentation of the socio-economic impacts of various forest management strategies. For example, most participatory forest management schemes are premised on the assumption that this will provide benefits for the communities and community members involved, yet few quantify their socio-economic objectives so there is little other than anecdotal evidence to support this.

2. Forests and Livelihoods Programme

The **vision** of CANARI's *Forests and Livelihoods* programme is:

Improved livelihoods and reduced levels of poverty through participatory institutions for forest management that facilitate conservation, wise use and the equitable distribution of forest goods and services that are critical to development.

The overall **goal** of the programme is:

To identify, analyse, promote, and build capacity at the regional, national and local levels for institutional arrangements and management of forest resources which ensure the sustainable use of forest resources and optimise the socio-economic contribution of forest resources to the rural poor of the insular Caribbean.

The programme focuses on research and capacity building activities designed to maximise the contribution of forests to improving the quality of life of poor people in rural communities in Caribbean islands. The programme looks at the contribution of forests in terms of both 'forest goods' (e.g. timber, craft materials, medicinal plants) and 'ecological services' (e.g. preventing soil erosion, contributing to improved water quantity and quality, providing landscape beauty). The programme's definition of livelihoods also goes beyond just the ability for people to earn money from forest resources (although this is important) to include other aspects of quality of life including individual's and community's access to a range of other important assets – natural, social, human and physical (for example a clean environment, basic social services and infrastructure, opportunities for recreation and relaxation).

There are currently two main projects under this programme to which others will be added as research gaps or opportunities are identified:

- A regional project on ***“Practices and policies that improve forest management and the livelihoods of the rural poor in the insular Caribbean”*** funded by the European Commission's Programme on Tropical Forests and other Forests in Developing Countries [2007-2010]. The project is being conducted in the following countries: Barbados, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago.
- A regional project entitled ***“Participatory Forest Management: Improving policy and institutional capacity for development”*** [2006-2009]. This project is being implemented in partnership with the forestry departments of the project countries, with funding support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through its National Forest Programme Facility (NFPF). The project is being conducted in the following countries: Barbados, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago. Jamaica, which has its own NFPF project, is participating in and contributing to regional activities.

3. Purpose of the Exchange Visits

The Exchange Visits on Forests and Livelihoods is a mechanism established under the EC-funded project on *“Practices and policies that improve forest management and the livelihoods of the rural poor in the insular Caribbean.”* The project caters for up to eight exchange or study visits between organisations or informal groupings of forest stakeholders in the project countries. The projects are to be executed in the latter portion of 2009 and early 2010.

The Exchange Visits will contribute to the overall objective of the project to identify, promote, and build capacity for institutional arrangements which optimise the socio-economic contribution of forest resources to the rural poor of the insular Caribbean through examining a case study of practical efforts to enhance benefits to the rural poor from the use and management of forests to analyse lessons learnt and recommendations for how the experience can contribute to other initiatives in the project countries.

4. Format of the Exchange Visits

Exchange Visits will be run as brief (2-3 day) field trips to bring a small team (4-6 stakeholders) from the country or other project countries together with stakeholders directly involved in the case study. This field observation and direct interaction among stakeholders will facilitate joint analysis of lessons learnt and recommendations for how the experience can contribute to other initiatives in the project countries. Visits will be hosted by the local organisation responsible for the initiative being examined and facilitated by an expert in the field. A report of the Visit will be developed by the facilitator with input from the participants. This will be circulated to participants and used to inform additional communication products for identified target audiences.

5. Objectives of the Exchange Visits

The Exchange Visits will:

- facilitate participatory analysis of lessons on institutional arrangements (policies, practices, legislation, structures, approaches, etc.) that optimise the socio-economic benefits to rural poor from forests;
- enhance knowledge of key change agents who are positioned to catalyse and facilitate change in their sectors and countries about institutional arrangements (policies, practices, legislation, structures, approaches, etc.) that optimise the socio-economic benefits to rural poor from forests;
- build or enhance relationships among stakeholders across the project countries working on forests and livelihoods.

6. Desired results of the Exchange Visits

- Brief report, including photos and/or video clips, of the Visit documenting the lessons learnt from the initiative, analysis of livelihood benefits from the institutional

arrangement that can be communicated to other stakeholders, and capacity and relationships built among participants in the exchange visit

- Change agents participating in the Exchange Visits equipped with ideas and inspired to catalyse or facilitate initiatives that enhance the benefits from forests to the rural poor;
- Built or enhanced relationships and peer support among stakeholders working in the area of forests and livelihoods who interacted during the Exchange Visits.

7. Focus of the Exchange Visits

The members of the Action Learning Group (ALG) for the Forests and Livelihoods Programme have identified thematic areas for this activity. They are:

- Building capacity for community participation in management
- Protected area management to enhance livelihoods
- Using community tourism to benefit people and forests
- Building small businesses based on the sustainable use of forest resources

National and regional Exchange Visits will be implemented to examine practical case studies in each of these areas.

8. Scheduling, duration, and programme outline

The Exchange Visits will be held during the period August 2009 – May 2010.

They will be 2-3 days in length and take place at the site of the initiative. They will include field visits to observe the initiative in action, interviews with key stakeholders (including the local community) and group discussion and analysis of lessons. Participants will reside in or in close proximity to the location of the initiative.

9. Target Group for the Exchange Visits

The teams of participants for Exchange Visits will comprise of representatives from government, private sector and civil society, including forest users, from the forestry and poverty reduction and rural livelihoods sectors and other relevant sectors (e.g. tourism, agriculture) in the 8 core countries that have been selected as the focus of this project, as well as representatives of relevant regional organisations and technical and financial support agencies.

Visiting participants will be selected who can contribute skills, knowledge or experience to analysing the lessons from the case studies examined in the Exchange Visits **and** who are in a position to serve as “change agents” by sharing and applying learning from the Exchange Visits within their countries, institutions and sectors.

Local participants will be those stakeholders with key interests, rights and responsibilities in the initiative being examined.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Participants on the Exchange Visits shall:

- a) actively, openly and respectfully participate in discussions during the Visit so as to contribute to the analysis of the lessons from the initiative being examined;
- b) review the report of the Visit and input any comments;
- c) disseminate, shape opinion and apply project learning and identify opportunities for linkages and dissemination of learning within their own sector, country, or regional or international initiatives in which they are involved.

CANARI shall:

- a) identify suitable Exchange Visits in collaboration with the ALG on Forests and Livelihoods;
- b) collaborate with the local host organisation to plan the programme;
- c) coordinate logistical arrangements for the Visits;

The local host organisation shall:

- a) collaborate with CANARI to plan the programme;
- b) assist CANARI to identify local providers of venue, accommodation, meals and transport;
- c) assist with the identification and mobilisation of local stakeholders to participate in the Visit;
- d) fully participate in the Exchange Visit discussions and analysis of lessons.

The facilitator shall:

- a) develop a programme for the Visit in collaboration with the local host organisation and CANARI;
- b) facilitate the Visit to ensure full participation of local stakeholders and visitors and to achieve the desired objectives and results;
- c) capture photographs and video clips of the Visit;
- d) draft the report of the Visit for review by participants.