



**CARIBBEAN NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE  
(CANARI)**

**THE IMPACT OF THE MANKÓTÈ PROJECT ON  
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT IN SAINT LUCIA**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has long been involved in the testing, training and promotion of participatory approaches to natural resource management in the region (Charles 2000). Participation is defined in the Institute's Strategic Plan (1996-2005) as:

“...a process of planning and decision-making which facilitates dialogue among all concerned parties, and which leads to a more equitable distribution of power among them. Participation is needed to ensure that planning processes benefit from local and popular knowledge, respect and build upon traditional systems, integrate resource a management efforts into their larger context, improve effectiveness and efficiency, and contribute to broader goals of community empowerment and development.” (CANARI 1996)

As part of the development of its strategic plan for the period 2006-2010, CANARI decided to undertake a longitudinal review of its experience at the Mankôtè Mangrove, Saint Lucia to determine the extent to which its promotion of participatory approaches in the Mankôtè context had influenced policy in other sectors and learn how it did so.

The advocacy by CANARI and local charcoal producers for community participation in the management of Mankôtè Mangrove was a pioneering project initiated in the early 1980s. Mankôtè is an important mangrove area in south eastern Saint Lucia where an open access regime had led to various activities that threatened the integrity of the mangrove. The development of collaborative management arrangements for Mankôtè required the skilful development of partnerships between CANARI<sup>1</sup>, the Aupicon Charcoal and Agricultural Producers Group (ACAPG) and a number of government and non governmental entities. The partnership included the Forestry Department, Department of Fisheries, Central Planning Unit of the Ministry of Planning, and Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT), each with its own resource management policies and articles of legislation with implications for the management of Mankôtè. CANARI's involvement with Mankôtè and the ACAPG continued for over twenty years.

Since the involvement of CANARI in the Mankôtè case in 1981, the concepts and practices of participatory natural resource management have become more widely accepted within Saint Lucia, regionally and internationally. In Saint Lucia, there has been a succession of partnerships between government and non-governmental entities to address natural resource management challenges based on participatory approaches, some of which have received international acclaim. Examples in the fisheries sector include the development of the Soufriere Marine Management Association (established in July 1995), and the management of the seamoss and sea urchin industry. In the forestry sector, examples include the establishment of community-based water catchment groups (e.g. Talvern Water Catchment Group, Thomazo Water Catchment Group), Fond Gens Libre Nature Heritage Tourism Project and the advent of co-management based approaches to non-timber forest products.

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<sup>1</sup> When the project was initiated, the Institute was known as the Eastern Caribbean Natural Area Management Program or ECNAMP. CANARI came into being in 1989 and this name is used throughout the document for ease of reference.

Since Saint Lucia achieved independence in 1979 there has been an evolution occurring in its environmental policies. The policies have increasingly adjusted from the strictly resource control regimes of its colonial past to reflect broader national and international agendas of sustainable development and a broader spectrum of developmental issues (e.g. sustainable livelihoods). This has included public institutions being receptive to the notion of devolving and democratising processes in the management of state owned resources and Mankôtè stands out as the earliest example of this devolution in Saint Lucia.

This review argues that the Mankôtè Mangrove experience, and CANARI's sustained role in heightening institutional recognition of the credibility of community-based partnerships in sustainable resource management, has played a role in this evolution of natural resource policies in Saint Lucia and the wider Caribbean.

This policy analysis study aims to define the nature and extent of the impact of the Mankôtè experience, and the facilitating and catalytic role that CANARI played, on the development of conservation policy in Saint Lucia by:

- examining the policy context in which the Mankôtè project took place and the role of CANARI in advancing participatory processes and co-management arrangements;
- defining the nature and extent of the impact of the Mankôtè experience on conservation policy in terms of advancing adoption of participatory based approaches to natural resource management (NRM) in Saint Lucia; and
- presenting the pathways through which policy uptake of the principles of participatory based approaches was achieved.

### Methodology

This study involved a desk based literature review, interviews with individuals and a focus group discussion with current Forestry Department staff that had been directly involved in the Mankôtè project and were familiar with participatory-based initiatives implemented by the Department since then. Open-ended interviews were also conducted with a leader of the Apicon Charcoal and Agricultural Producers Group, the National Biodiversity Coordinator, an officer of the SLNT, two senior staff members of the Fisheries Department and a former staff member currently with the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States-Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (OECS-ESDU) (Appendix 1).

## ***1.1 The Mankôtè Mangrove Story***

There are many threats to wetland ecosystems in Saint Lucia today. They are often viewed as breeding grounds for mosquitoes and regarded as a health threat that should be eradicated. They are frequently targeted as landfill sites for solid waste disposal and/or land reclamation sites for upscale housing and resort development. Mankôtè Mangrove is a 63 ha basin type mangrove located on the southeast Atlantic coast of Saint Lucia. While this may be considered small by international standards, it is the largest remaining stand of mangrove area left in Saint Lucia. It represents 20% of the total mangrove area in Saint Lucia and contains a variety of mangal species which including the red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans* and *Avicennia schaueriana*), white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*) and buttonwood (*Conocarpus erecta*) (Portecop and Benito-Espinal 1985).

The Mankôtè Mangrove had been under use and misuse since the closure in 1960 of an American air base established on the site, when it was returned to the government and the people began exploiting it mainly for subsistence based activities including fishing, charcoal production and harvesting poles for props in the construction industry (Geoghegan and Smith, 1998). Mankôtè became the main supply of charcoal for about 15,000 residents of Vieux Fort and others in the southeast portion of the island (WRI 2000). The charcoal producers who were working in the mangroves were poor landless individuals and families of the lowest social and economic levels in the society. Because of their lack of options, their dependence on the mangrove was great.

Research efforts of CANARI in 1981 in conjunction with a local secondary school produced interesting findings showing that the local charcoal producers practiced a number of management measures to sustain the resource base. The students report noted that harvesters practiced cutting on a rotational basis. Their report notes that “the larger branches of the tree are cut, but...the base of the trunk is always left” (pp. 4, VFSS 1981). Harvesters allowed the trees to regenerate for two or three years before cutting. The students recommended that “Government should ... look into the possibility of legalizing the situation of the producers presently working in the area. Such a measure would be very [beneficial] to them, and would contribute to the protection of the mangrove, since the people would be even more concerned with the proper management of the resource” (pp. 6, VFSS 1981).

## ***1.2 Establishing the co-management arrangements***

In 1981 the Saint Lucia Government requested the assistance of the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA) in designing a project to determine the conservation and development requirements for the south east coast of Saint Lucia (Geoghegan 1984). The project involved consultations with various interested parties to determine locations for priority action which included Mankôtè.

The project was placed under the auspices of the Central Planning Unit and an Advisory and Coordinating Committee consisting of interested governmental and non-governmental groups who provided project oversight. The Committee comprised of representatives from ECNAMP, the SLNT, the Department of Fisheries, the Saint Lucia Naturalist Society, Saint Lucia National Development Cooperation (NDC) and the Ministry of Tourism. It was agreed that the project would take an integrated approach incorporating socio-cultural and socio-economic as well as bio-physical criteria in decision making, and the Committee determined the following objectives:

1. A management plan that would meet conservation objectives while contributing to the economic development of the area and respecting the socio-cultural attitudes of the people.
2. Public participation in the decisions made as well as in the actual implementation of the measures.
3. The use of the site as an educational tool, especially for schools in the surrounding area.
4. Experimentation with planning and environmental education methods and use of this experiment as an example.
5. The acceptance of the management plan by Government, and the implementation of the recommendations.

(Geoghegan 1984).

This arrangement formed the institutional basis for a “learning experience for all the actors involved” in Mankôtè, including ECNAMP (pp. 8 Renard 1985).

## ***1.3 Activities in the co-management process***

Mankôtè was declared a marine reserve in 1986 under the Fisheries Act (1984) and no extractive activity was allowed without authorization, and entry into the reserve was subject to the approval of the Department of Fisheries. At the start of the project “there were those who argued for strict protection of the mangrove, including the elimination of all harvesting. Others felt that the impact of the harvesting could be reduced to levels compatible with conservation objectives and this argument has prevailed (Geoghegan and Smith 2002).

The strategy that was used to manage Mankótè included the following three components (Geoghegan and Smith 1998).

1) Mitigation of the impact of harvesting through improved techniques that encourage vigorous regeneration

The early stages of implementing the co-management arrangement involved dialogue with the charcoal producers, obtaining information on traditional harvest practices and management measures. Procedures as to areas to be cut, the informal rotation system and how it was affected by seasonal changes in the water level, and reasons for the selection of the species were obtained.

A monitoring programme was established in 1986, designed to estimate the rate of exploitation and trends in the status of the mangrove tree biomass. The Forestry Department collaborated with CANARI in the monitoring of permanent sample plots within the mangrove and in providing technical advice to the ACAPG (Fig. 1). Analysis of data for the period 1989-92, revealed a reversal in the trend of mangrove degradation which existed under the open access conditions to one of improved regeneration under the communal property regime. Clear cutting and indiscriminate slashing were commonly practiced under the open access system which led to the degradation of the mangrove. The security provided by the communal property regime led to a change in cutting practices by charcoal producers which had resulted in improved tree biomass by 1992 (Smith and Berkes 1993).



**Fig. 1 Forestry Officer with ACAPG member collecting data on tree diameter in Mankótè**

2) Reduction of the pressure on the resource base by offering alternative fuelwood supplies and income sources to the charcoal producers

The severity of the over harvesting problem at Mankôtè was brought to the attention of the Forestry Department, which was at that time conducting research on the demand for fuelwood and charcoal and recognized this demand to be an important cause of deforestation. As a countermeasure, the Forestry Department had designed a project to be funded by the Organization of American States (OAS) to establish woodlots with a fast growing leguminous tree (*Leuceana leucocephala*). In 1982, the Department secured a grant of US\$10,000 which was used to establish the first community woodlot in Aupicon to provide the ACAPG with an alternative source of fuel wood. The Department located suitable public lands under the NDC for the *Leuceana* woodlot to support the ACAPG demand for charcoal with the long term vision of reducing the Group's dependency on harvesting from the mangrove (Andrew and Raymond, 2000). This 'alternative' viewpoint of the Forestry Department satisfied their conservation objectives. However, ECNAMP considered Aupicon to be an additional source of fuelwood for ACAPG needs.

The charcoal producers were hired to fence off the 25 acre plot and plant seedlings. In the first year of the project 14 acres were planted (Geoghegan 1984). Although the members of the ACAPG have been able to harvest from the woodlot, this has not proven to be as efficient a system as the rotational harvesting from the mangrove<sup>2</sup>.

The livelihood arrangements eventually expanded to incorporate a tour guiding operation within the reserve with an established viewing tower and a well maintained trail (Fig.2). Funding was secured for infrastructure including the viewing tower in 1994 but tours only got underway in mid 1997 (Geoghegan and Smith 1998).

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<sup>2</sup> Focus group meeting with Forestry Officers revealed that due to the slow growth rate of the *Leuceana*, ACAPG members decided to grow short term crops (e.g. cucumber, pumpkin) while they continued to producing charcoal at Mankôtè.



**Fig. 2. A school tour being conducted by ACAPG member**

- 3) Securing of lasting protection through replacement of open access system with communal management among the mangrove users, and through continuous education, lobbying, and public relations

The Department of Fisheries eventually acknowledged that the presence of the ACAPG allowed the Department to manage the area effectively through a strategy of user participation rather than its own direct involvement. In September 1996, the Department formalized the longstanding de facto agreement authorizing the ACAPG members and no others, to use the mangrove for purposes of managed cutting for fuelwood (Hudson 1997, Geoghegan and Smith 1998). They were declared to be a Local Fisheries Management Authority and became the first community group to be granted a management role over state property in Saint Lucia.

However today, circumstances have changed and reports out of the Department of Fisheries, SLNT, Forestry Department and from one of the ACAPG's leaders indicates that the group is now largely defunct as individual members have opted to pursue independent alternative livelihood strategies. The conditions for such a change in the ACAPG is not unique among community based groups who occasionally suffer organisational setbacks due to a variety of factors. Such factors can include the out migration of members, particularly among the leadership. In some instances, groups can be artificially sustained by external support and develop dependency tendencies which can result in failure once this support system is withdrawn. Consideration should also be

given to the primary reason for this group's existence and if members felt that the group no longer serves their individual interests. The primary objective of the ACAPG was the achievement of sustainable livelihoods for its members through charcoal production under a communal access regime versus the former open access regime. Some members no longer wish to produce charcoal and seek higher returns through producing props and posts from the mangrove material. A group cannot be expected to persist if it no longer meets its member's expectations.

**Table 1. Institutions and chronology of key events involved in the Mankôtè project**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1980	CCA-ECNAMP	Regional assessment on priorities for conservation action in the islands of the Lesser Antilles.
1981	GOSL	Requests assistance of CCA in designing project to determine conservation and development requirements for south eastern Saint Lucia.
1981	GOSL-CCA	ECNAMP part of Advisory and Coordinating Committee with Government Departments.
1982	Forestry Department	Procures OAS grant for establishing community woodlots. Forestry invited by ECNAMP to provide assistance to Mankôtè charcoal producers. First woodlot established at Aupicon for benefit of Aupicon Charcoal and Agricultural Producers Group (ACAPG). Forestry Department commences partnering with CANARI and ACAPG in monitoring of mangrove plots.
1984	OECS	OECS Harmonised Fisheries Legislation.
1984	Department of Fisheries	Passage of Fisheries Act with regulatory arrangements including Local Fisheries Management Authority (LFMA).
1986	Department of Fisheries	Organisation of charcoal producers into the ACAPG which is then granted authorised use of Mankôtè as an LFMA.
1996	Department of Fisheries	Formalisation of the longstanding de facto agreement authorising ACAPG members and no others to use the mangrove for purposes of managed cutting for fuelwood.

#### ***1.4 Fisheries policy context***

The readiness by the Government of Saint Lucia to adopt a conservation and development plan for the south east coast was complemented by an institutional and policy framework which helped to foster the success of the Mankôtè project.

Among these was the OECS Harmonized Fisheries Legislation, which “provided member states of the OECS with a common set of principles upon which to create their own laws and regulations for the management of fisheries resources” (Brown 1998). This was modelled on fisheries legislation passed in 1983 in Vanuatu of the Pacific Island soon after the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was signed. The legislation was designed to provide support for Vanuatu’s active culture of village-based marine resource management. The OECS Fisheries Officers recognized that there was scope for a similar arrangement in the OECS and it took form in the Local Fisheries Management Authorities (LFMAs). This was especially important since given the small size of most regional Fisheries Departments, it was felt that community based management could encourage compliance more than centrally based management systems.

The innovative institutional component known as the Local Fisheries Management Authorities (LFMA) was defined as:

*“A body (organization) representing fishermen in a designated fisheries management area that has been vested with the legal authority to make locally applicable by-laws to regulate the conduct of fisheries operations in fisheries management, in the said designated area” (Saint Lucia Fisheries Act, 10, 1984).*

The Saint Lucia Fisheries Act goes on to state that the Minister may, by a notice published in the Gazette:

- a) Designate an area as a local fisheries management area;
- b) Designate any local authority, fishermen’s cop-operative or fishermen’s association or other appropriate body representing fishermen in the area as *the Local Fisheries Management Authority for that area*
- c) Where there is no appropriate body representing fishermen in the area, promote the formation of such a body.

The Saint Lucia Fisheries Act also states that the Chief Fisheries Officer shall, to the extent he deems it practicable, provide to any Local Fisheries Management Authority, such assistance as may be reasonably necessary for the performance of its functions.

This Act laid the formal foundation for the establishment of collaborative management and would entail the devolution of central authority and responsibility to local institutions. The informal grouping of charcoal producers was encouraged by CANARI, with the support of the Department of Fisheries, to establish a more formal body. This arrangement was necessary in order for the Department of Fisheries to acknowledge the group legally as an LFMA and formally extend access rights and privileges to Mankôtè. It was also thought that through this means they would have a vested interest in

protecting the mangrove - their source of livelihood - and take a more conservation oriented approach to harvesting. It was also thought that they would have cause to serve as "watchdogs" of their own livelihood. Thus ACAPG gave the Department of Fisheries, its earliest "face to face" encounter with co-management [Peter Murray *en voce*, OECS-ESDU].

### ***1.5 Forest policy context***

At the time of development of the co-management process in Mankôtè, the Forestry policy emphasis was to preserve the "island's fragile watershed and to protect endangered species that inhabited it; social forestry was not a well developed part of [its] mission" (Koester 1990). However, the Department was engaged in two activities during this period which illustrate an unwritten policy that supported trends towards participatory management.

The Forestry Department in the 1980s faced problems with squatting in the forest reserve and illegal hunting pressure on wildlife resources. Although less formalised than the Fisheries policy, the Forestry Department showed early signs of interest in forest management through partnership-based arrangements. It took form in the promotion of the agroforestry based 'Taungya' system which the Department employed to stem the flow of squatters in the Forest Reserve who were growing bananas in the Forest Reserve during the late 1970s.

The Forest, Soil and Water Conservation Act (1946), gave authority to the Chief Forest Officer to grant written permission for "tenancy agreement" for activities to be conducted in the Forest Reserve. This permitted the Taungya arrangement, which established a two-year contract between a squatter and the Department to reforest the denuded site, while the squatter secured livelihood benefits. The squatter maintained mahogany seedlings on site until they were 'free to grow' while his banana crop matured. If the squatters kept their side of the bargain, on completion of the contracted period they could be granted access to another site which needed reforestation. However, the system fell into disrepute when the terms of such arrangements were not upheld by participating farmers (CCA 1991).

Although the arrangement was between individual squatters and the Forestry Department, it stands out as a possible policy precursor to the acceptance of organised collaborative management arrangements to achieve natural resource management on public property as occurred in Mankôtè. It set up an inter-generational experience during the 1970s to early 1980s where the Department's policy on agroforestry encountered the participatory based concept of "co-management" in Mankôtè.

The Forestry Department's project to establish the first community woodlot in Aupicon to provide the ACAPG with an alternative source of fuel wood was another example of practice that supported an increasing trend towards co-management and improved livelihoods. However, while the Forestry Department was involved in the project from 1982, the relations between the Department and the charcoal producers was defined as

poor. A 1987 report to ECNAMP (Carnegie 1987 *in* Koester 1990) stated that the Aupicon Project had experienced limited success up to that point due to:

1. The Forestry Department's lack of familiarity with community-led approaches to resource management.
2. A lack of organization on the part of the producers which served to limit their involvement.

## ***2.0 The feedback loop: translating experience into policy***

The catalytic process of effecting policy change has been described by policy analysts in a range of models. These include the incrementalist model (Lindblom 1980), the mixed scanning model (Walt 1994), policy as arguments (Juma and Clarke 1995), policy as a social experiment and policy as an interactive learning process (Chambers 1983 *in* Sutton 1999). CANARI's approach to impacting on the Natural Resource Management (NRM) policy environment best approximates to Chambers' definition:

- *Policy as a social experiment:* social change occurs largely through a process of trial and error. The approach is based in the experimental approach of the natural sciences.
- *Policy as interactive learning:* This approach is rooted in a criticism of development policy as being 'top-down', not generated from the communities in which policies are implemented. It argues for an 'actor perspective, emphasising the need to take into account the opinions of individuals, agencies, and social groups that have a stake in how a system evolves. The approach promotes an interaction and sharing of ideas between those who make policy and those who are influenced most directly by the outcome'.

Establishing whether a specific project or policy based research has resulted in direct impact on national policy change is difficult. Tracking such impacts requires defining specific indicators and outputs at the onset of the field based project or research. Mayers and Bass (1999) note that often, impact on policy is more 'sensed' than clearly seen. They also note that "in general it is necessary to be wary of the fact that there are many links" and this leads to the "difficulty of pointing to any correlations, let alone causation."

Although this review did not establish direct causation for policy change as a result of the Mankôtè project, interviews with individuals and agencies familiar with CANARI's work at Mankôtè revealed a strong awareness of its mandate of fostering participatory approaches to NRM and interviewees regarded the Institute as being an early advocate of the approach in Saint Lucia. The impact of the Mankôtè project on NRM policies was largely possible through CANARI retaining a close affiliation to the organisations who were engaged in the Mankôtè experience and through the Institute's application of a range of strategies that helped secure its place in being regarded as a partner in Saint Lucia. This approach enabled CANARI to directly influence policy development. The following outlines some of the events and policy changes that have occurred since Mankôtè and reflects on the extent of Institute's influence on organizational policies by institution or socio-cultural norms that bear on participatory approaches.

## ***2.1 Department of Fisheries***

The Department of Fisheries acknowledges that its collaboration with CANARI on the Mankôtè project was its first experience that produced evidence that co-management arrangements could work in Saint Lucia. It also established a basis for securing a relationship between the Department and CANARI that proved fruitful on future projects. The Mankôtè project demonstrated to the Department that securing livelihood generation was a valid approach to resource management in an era known more for advocating strict resource protection. The project also exposed the Department to the participatory processes facilitated by CANARI, which included stakeholder identification, conflict management, and participatory based resource mapping all of which requires sensitivity to local knowledge, language and issues of equity. This knowledge and experience has since been applied to the co-management of sea urchins, sea moss and in Marine Protected Areas. Two of these examples are highlighted below.

### ***The Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA)***

The Soufriere Marine Management Area is an example of a fruitful collaboration between the Department of Fisheries and CANARI that built on the Mankôtè experience. The SMMA was declared in 1995 and has since become a focus of research in the region on co-management and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The SMMA continues to evolve and adapt based on the principles of the participatory based approaches introduced from its inception. The experience built on a partnership and an institutional familiarity established between CANARI and the Fisheries Department from the Mankôtè project.

The establishment of the SMMA was brought about as a result of the levels of competition occurring over marine resources in the community of Soufriere on the southwest coast of Saint Lucia. The situation had deteriorated to a point of serious conflict, most of which centred on the use of near shore reefs by divers and fishers and the use of traditional fishing beaches between anchoring yachtsmen and net fishers. In both instances, the fishers felt that they were displaced and deprived of access to their traditional fishing zones. The negotiation process was facilitated by CANARI and the Department of Fisheries over an eighteen month period which began in 1992 with stakeholder identification and an evaluation of their rights and responsibilities. It culminated in the drafting of a document entitled “*Agreement on the use and management of coastal resources in Soufriere*” which outlined a “series of understandings” agreed upon by participants during consultation (CANARI 1997).

### ***People and the Sea Project (2003)***

This project was the result of a collaborative initiative between CANARI, Department of Fisheries, Laborie Development Planning Committee and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex. The project was aimed at testing and documenting institutional arrangements and technical approaches to support sustainable coastal livelihoods in Saint Lucia.

“The project built on the experience of CANARI and other organizations in the field of participatory [NRM] over the past two decades. It recognized that the policy context, in Saint Lucia and other parts of the Caribbean region, had become more favourable to participatory approaches, that there was an explicit demand among resource management and development agencies for methods and tools which they can use in their efforts towards establishing participatory management regimes and implementing pro-poor approaches to [NRM], and that the region has accumulated a wealth of experience it should be analysing, distilling and disseminating. The project also recognized that the rationale for participation to be refined, and that the impact of participatory approaches on the fundamental goals of poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and social equity needs to be assessed.

The primary focus of the project was on testing and developing specific tools and methods, as applied to the management of reefs and reef resources, in two main areas:

- Participatory institutions: the project aimed at testing, developing, refining and documenting methods that increase the effective participation of stakeholders in all stages of planning and management.
- Sustainable use: the project also sought to explore and document technologies and management tools which can enhance the social and economic benefits derived from sustainable use of coastal resources, and particularly from the reef fishery, sea urchin harvesting, seaweed cultivation and heritage tourism

The second focus of this project was an evaluation of the impact of participation on the sustainability of resource use and on the livelihoods of people. Thirdly, the project aimed at providing guidance towards the identification of alternatives to Marine Protected Areas” (CANARI 2003).

## ***2.2 Fisheries Department and the LFMA regulations***

In 1986, the ACAPG was made an LFMA because there was no other existing mechanism to grant them the authority/rights it was then thought that they needed. However, discussions with the Fisheries Department revealed that there were issues concerning the LFMAs which required legislative or regulatory clarity. The Fisheries Department had realised that organisations like the ACAPG did not “legally” fit the description of an LFMA since they did not constitute “[bodies] representing fishermen”.<sup>3</sup>

This placed the ACAPG, and similar community-based LFMAs which were not constituted of fishers, on tenuous ground and threatened the very institutional arrangement that had facilitated the Mankôtè management arrangements.

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<sup>3</sup> In the case of the ACAPG, they at least consisted of some individuals who were part-time fishermen. In another instance, the ecotourism-based Desbarras Turtle Watch Group, had an entirely different constitution (i.e. Turtle watchers) and had been granted LFMA status.

Currently, the Fisheries Department is in the process of revising the Fisheries regulations and intends to address the caveat that stipulates that an LFMA should consist of fisherfolk. The regulations are being revised to be *more inclusive of community groups* who may not consist of fisherfolk but who are involved in the ***management of fishery resources***. This would thereby secure the ACAPG and other groups whose status as LFMA's had been precarious under the Act (e.g. Desbarras Turtle Watch Group, the Mabouya Environment Group (a school based LFMA)) and indicates a willingness on the part of the Department to test, learn, adapt and improve upon policy based arrangements (*S. George, Deputy Chief Fisheries Officer en voce, 2005*).

### ***2.3 The Forestry Department***

The Forestry Department considers the Mankótè project to be a pivotal experience that led to the Department adopting participatory management strategies. Although at the time of development of the co-management process in Mankótè, the Forestry policy emphasis was on protection of ecosystems, by the mid 1990s the Forestry Department had expanded the social component of its programme in a strong partnership with CANARI.

In May 2005, a meeting was held with the senior staff of the Forestry Department<sup>4</sup> all of whom had been involved at various times in the Mankótè project and who have since been responsible for subsequent participatory forest management projects. They revealed that they had come to associate the use of the term ‘co-management’ very closely with CANARI and the Mankótè experience. They distinguished between the community-based activities conducted under co-management versus the agroforestry agenda that the Department keenly promoted in the 1980s. CANARI was regarded by the Department to have acted as a “broker” on behalf of the ACAPG and the SLNT. The Department drew on its experience in Mankótè and partnered with the Institute in implementing subsequent participatory initiatives and outlined a six-step participatory methodology that served as the basis for future participatory projects. The steps below were outlined for a community based watershed programme undertaken by the Department:

1. Identification of priority areas critical to watershed management.
2. The identification of community leaders and efforts to sensitise them to issues of degradation.
3. The role of extension staff in community-based stakeholder assessment and community-based constraints.
4. Use of participatory problem analysis which would involve members of selected communities.
5. Participatory project planning, preparation of action plans, and monitoring for projects identified by the community
6. Participatory implementation of action plans.

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<sup>4</sup> Forestry Staff meeting consisted of the Chief Forest Officer, two Assistant Chief Forest Officers, Wildlife Officer and the Environmental Education Officer.

The projects listed in Table 2 below were undertaken based on this approach.

**Table 2: Chronology of participatory based initiatives supported by the Forestry Department**

Year	Community Group	Activities	Institutions
1991	Darban Community Forestry Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Woodlot establishment</li> <li>○ Hot pepper cultivation</li> <li>○ Mini nursery</li> </ul>	Technical assistance by Forestry Project management assistance by CANARI
1992	Ital Farm Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Woodlot establishment,</li> <li>○ Nursery,</li> <li>○ Reforestation on Crown lands</li> </ul>	Technical assistance by Forestry Project management assistance by CANARI
1994	Pierrot Youth Group	Pierrot Tree Nursery	Technical assistance by Forestry Project management assistance by CANARI
1996	Thomazo Water Catchment Group, Talvan Water Catchment Group	Watershed management	Technical assistance by Forestry Financial assistance by CANARI
2000	Gros Piton Tour Guides Association, Fond Gen Libre	Ecotourism	WWF/USAID, ENCORE, Forestry Department CANARI

The Forestry Department’s formal policy arrangements unfortunately remain outdated and “there is no current statement of forest policy and... no current forest management plan” (Renard 2004). However, in spite of this lack of formal policy progress, the Department has shown willingness over the years to incorporate the lessons learnt from its direct involvement in the Mankôtè and other projects and to apply the principles of participatory approaches in practice. This is illustrated in the Forestry Department’s work in watershed management and with non-timber forest products, discussed below.

### ***Watershed management***

In 1996, the Forestry Department submitted a project proposal to CANARI for funding a project in five communities where watersheds were considered to be in a critical state. The Department received a grant of US\$2,306 from CANARI for implementation. The intention was to engage farmers and other community members in effective watershed management with Forestry providing technical and financial assistance. In this instance, the Forestry Department was seeking to influence land use management in a *private land tenure* context. The project led to the formation of five community-based Water Catchment Groups who engaged in riverbank stabilisation activities on farm lands and public awareness activities in their respective communities. The five groups were;

Thomazo Water Catchment Group, Talvan Water Catchment Group, Micoud Water Catchment Group, Citon and Etangs Water Catchment Group and the Anse la Raye Water Catchment Group. The Talvan and Thomazo Water Catchment Groups are the only two that have survived and remain fairly active. The Talvan Group is a registered organization with the Ministry of Social Transformation and it consists of a core membership of approximately 25 individuals.

The Forestry Department truly led the initiative with its substantial in-kind contribution. It is noteworthy that although the grant from CANARI was quite small it resulted in assisting the Department in achieving a significant mobilisation impact.

### ***Non-Timber Forest Products***

In 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Forestry Department and the Saint Lucia Rural Enterprises Project (SLREP) collaborated on an initiative that sought to engage various stakeholders in the management of the rapidly disappearing latanyé palm which is used to produce brooms. The project led to the establishment of a Latanyé Task Force which consisted of rural broom producers, a major broom exporter, Forestry Department representatives, SLREP and Ministry of Agriculture representatives. The Task Force subsequently facilitated cooperation between the Forestry Department and broom makers who were interested in cultivating the palm on their private lands. Financial and technical assistance, as well as planting materials were provided to interested broom producers with the understanding that Forestry would in turn monitor production data from their plots. This is an ongoing initiative for which the Department is currently seeking support from the UNDP.

## ***2.4 Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT) and the System of Protected Areas***

The SLNT was at the origin of the Government of St. Lucia's request to the CCA/ECNAMP for assistance in designing the conservation project for the south east coast. It was one of the institutions on the Advisory and Coordinating Committee which oversaw the Mankôtè project from its inception. Prior to the Mankôtè experience, SLNT, like the other natural resource management institutions at the time, was primarily focussed on the protection of the resource base. The Trust was introduced to participatory approaches primarily through its experience on the Mankôtè project and although the Trust has not managed to incorporate the practices in terms of its formal written policy, it has sought to implement the principles of participatory approaches by way of practice (D. Le Bourne *en voce*, 2005). Two of these initiatives are outlined below.

### ***System of Protected Areas***

In 1988, SLNT led the development of a new model for participatory management of common resources based on extensive collaboration among governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as significant planning and management role for communities, with co-management as its ultimate goal" (Hudson 1994). This model was called the "System of Protected Areas". This model was developed in partnership with ten other agencies, including CANARI. Reasons why the model emerged include the following:

- a. Saint Lucia had an uncommon situation in which some institutions already had responsibility for certain protected areas, yet no one agency had the resources to assume oversight of all of them.
- b. Co-management arrangements for certain natural resources already existed and had demonstrated the feasibility and desirability of such an approach.
- c. The failure or weakness of traditional protected area models found elsewhere in the region

The preparation for this model involved wide public participation in approximately 20 public consultations held island wide. While the work was prepared in 1992 under the auspices of the SLNT, it has not been formally approved by Government (GOSL 2000). However, the model is still referred to as a guide by some government agencies and an opportunity currently exists for its review under the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods (OPAAL) Project.

### ***Saint Lucia Coastal/Wetland Ecosystem Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods Project***

In 2001, the SLNT led the development of the "Saint Lucia Coastal/Wetland Ecosystem Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods Project" which has since metamorphosed into the regional OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods Project (OPAAL). This regional project which was launched in December 2004 is geared towards strengthening national and regional capacities in the sound management of protected areas. It also seeks to provide "benefits to target groups associated with project supported Protected Areas,

particularly where...there is a dependency on the resources for livelihood support” (Nichols 2004). The Trust is serving as the executing agency for implementation of the Saint Lucia component of OPAAL which focuses on the proposed Pointe Sable National Park Protected Area that includes the Mankôtè mangrove.

### ***2.5 National Biodiversity and Strategy Action Plan***

The development of national natural resource management policies in the post Mankôtè era has often involved the same organizations or players who participated in the Mankôtè project. This is illustrated by the process of development of the National Biodiversity and Strategy Action Plan which resulted from a broad based national consultation with participation from several of the parties that had been involved in Mankôtè, including CANARI, SLNT, Forestry Department and the Department of Fisheries.

Saint Lucia ratified the UNCBD in 1993 and its National Biodiversity and Strategy Action Plan (under the section institutional and legal context) notes that “the country has established a small number of innovative participatory and collaborative natural resource management arrangements which provide examples of institutional arrangements which may be suitable to other areas.”

The Action Plan went on to acknowledge that to achieve the target of sustainable development requires the adoption of a “new approach to development”. The outlined approach is to be based on “the principles of equity, sustainability and social justice”. To achieve these objectives, the strategy advocates “adopting new management systems” characterized by the following elements which are essential to co-management:

- Equity: all stakeholders should have the opportunity to access the country’s natural capital, and to generate benefits from the use of natural resources;
- Participation: all sectors of the society should have the opportunity to participate in the formulation and implementation of decisions which affect their lives and their future;
- Institutional collaboration: management requires functional linkages and collaborative approaches among a wide range of institutions within government and civil society
- Decentralization and co-management: whenever desirable and possible, management arrangements should be decentralized, and institutional collaboration should be governed by formal co-management agreements:
- Transparency: the rationale for policies and decision, as well as the modalities of their implementation, should be accessible to all within society;
- Optimal sustainable use: uses of biological resources must be sustainable. They must also be optimized, in order to ensure that they contribute fully as possible to social and economic development;
- Respect for and reliance on experience and tradition: in the design and implementation of new systems, there is need to build on the assets of the past, in a realistic manner (GOSL 2000)

## ***2.6 Community Based Heritage Tourism and participatory based approaches***

Community based heritage tourism is another significant sector that has seen increasing efforts to involve stakeholders through participatory based approaches, often involving the same organisations which had been stakeholders in the Mankótè Project. This is reflected in a 2000 survey conducted with various agencies (including six who had been involved in Mankótè) to determine organisational philosophy and policies towards participation<sup>5</sup>. The data were collected using the open ended interview approach with representatives of the organisations working to promote a community based heritage tourism project in the Fond Gens Libre community in the Southwest of Saint Lucia. The survey respondents included the following:

- 1) Former coordinator of the ENCORE<sup>6</sup> project
- 2) Acting Chief Forestry Officer (Forestry Department)
- 3) Minister of Planning, (then Parliamentary Representative of the Area)
- 4) Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture
- 5) Community Development Officer, Ministry of Community Development
- 6) Chief Fisheries Officer, Department of Fisheries
- 7) Director of the Saint Lucia National Trust
- 8) Director of the Soufriere Regional Development
- 9) Coordinator of Saint Lucia Heritage Tourism Development Project, (Ministry of Tourism)
- 10) Director of Caribbean Natural Resource Institute (CANARI)
- 11) Community Liaison Officer (Saint Lucia Rural Development Project).

The following summarises the key findings of the survey:

- 82 percent of the organisations perceived participation of local people to be an essential factor for successful and sustainable natural resource development and management.
- Capacity building and the development of a sustainable product within the community were also cited as key objectives for participation.
- 72 percent expressed the view that there should be a revival of the traditional ("koudmeh") practice. This was a traditional cooperative system where community members voluntarily commit labour, material, or money to assist another member or a common cause.
- 45 percent of the agencies had policies for participation of local people.
- Non-governmental and parastatal organizations were more likely to have participatory policy, which has been used as the main objective for project intervention. In some of these organisations, funding agencies required participatory policies as a conditionality for funding projects.
- Poor leadership and the lack of the capacity within the community to effectively manage projects was a major lesson learnt by 54.5 percent of the agencies.

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<sup>5</sup> Survey conducted by Adams Toussaint, a senior Forest Officer, in partial fulfilment of his undergraduate degree at Hartwick University, New York.

<sup>6</sup> Environmental and Coastal Resources project (1998) was a USAID supported initiative implemented in St. Lucia and Dominica.

- The collection and use of local knowledge was cited as being important to 90.9 percent of the agencies.
- The majority (90.9%) of these agencies did not have a legal framework for participation. Two agencies were in the process for developing such a framework.
- 82 percent of the respondents indicated that efforts were made to secure participation of women.

### ***3.0 Impact of Mankôtè on Donor agencies***

The experience of Mankôtè and other community forestry activities in Saint Lucia illustrates the value of small grants, and the place of a small grant facility in an advocacy programme such as that of CANARI. Over the years, small grants have given CANARI the opportunity to be responsive and to support/consolidate emerging changes in policy and practice within partner agencies, they have helped people to test new ideas without the burden of managing large projects, and they have provided a range of pilot projects from which much has been learned. The study shows that "a CANARI with small grant facilities" has much more impact than "a CANARI without..." (Yves Renard, *en voce* 2005). The process may be summarised as follows:

1. Pilot project implementation leads to policy impact as it reveals management issues and policy needs.
2. Small grant funding can provide funding to pilot projects as well as a stimulus to promoting policy change and training of "change agents".

### **3.0 Conclusion**

The value of the Mankôtè Mangrove experience is largely the result of a collaborative arrangement between CANARI and NRM partner agencies in Saint Lucia (i.e. Forestry Department, Department of Fisheries and Saint Lucia National Trust) in which CANARI played a facilitating role between these state agencies and the community based resource users (i.e. ACAPG).

The project took shape in a natural resource management policy context that had to some degree started making tentative steps towards co-management based arrangements (see Sec. 1.3 and 1.4). The timeliness of these emerging policy constructs provided CANARI with leverage and paved the way for Mankôtè as a primary test case in co-management.

Mankôtè resulted in a learning process that evolved over two decades within a dynamic institutional context that saw:

1. the strengthening of participatory elements in Mankôtè.
2. concurrent increase in participatory elements in policy and practice in Saint Lucia

This research makes a case for the key role of Mankôtè in promoting / stimulating participatory based approaches in NRM policy and practice in St. Lucia. It revealed that CANARI achieved significant impact on effecting policy change in relation to NRM policies in St. Lucia through the following pathways:

- Having secured the confidence of NRM agencies through partnership on Mankôtè, CANARI was invited to participate on subsequent projects as a partner and was able to continue promoting participatory resource management (e.g. SMMA).
- Distillation and incorporation of lessons learnt from the Mankôtè experience in training programmes and teaching materials that have been provided to institutions at national (and regional) level.
- The collaborative experience between CANARI and the NRM agencies in Mankôtè led to the Institute being approached by these agencies for subsequent provision of technical assistance and grant support (e.g. Water Catchment Groups, Forestry and Fisheries Departments).
- Some individuals have since left the organizations that were directly involved in the Mankôtè project but continue to exert influence on the natural resource management policy processes in their new portfolios. This has resulted in a complementary effect on policy influence as not only those who learnt directly from Mankôtè but others from subsequent initiatives (e.g. SMMA, Water Catchment Groups) act as “change agents” and are able to shape emerging national natural resource management policies.

- The collaboration between CANARI and the NRM institutions in Mankôtè paved the way for the Institute to be invited to participate in subsequent national NRM policy development processes.

Over the past twenty years there has been an overall increase in policy based initiatives that have sought to advance civil society participation in NRM from national, regional and global sources which have undoubtedly influenced the Saint Lucia NRM policy context. However, the local institutional partners (i.e. Forestry Department, Fisheries Department, Ministry of Planning and the Saint Lucia National Trust) who were involved in Mankôtè were clearly won over by this participatory based experience and readily point to specific CANARI interventions in Mankôtè as influencing NRM policy development.

CANARI as a regional technical research organisation had to overcome initial mistrust of its intent by these agencies and to demonstrate its commitment to being regarded as a partner in sustainable resource management. Mankôtè provided CANARI with an opportunity to establish and develop partnerships with the local NRM agencies which served as the basis for successful future collaboration. Equally important is the understanding the Institute gained in working with formal versus informal organisational structures in natural resource management. While the Mankôtè project has impacted on NRM policy processes in Saint Lucia, CANARI did not set out to achieve policy impact as an intentional project objective. This was not a policy based project set up to extract policy type lessons for real world problems. The methods and lessons of the participatory approach arose out of the natural interaction between stakeholders and their attempts to understand problems confronted in Mankôtè and find solutions. CANARI has since been associated with its agenda of promoting participatory approaches to NRM. Such shifts in institutional attitudes have been aided by key “change agents” who saw the value in the tools of participatory approaches (e.g. stakeholder analysis, participatory planning, equity, local knowledge) being advocated by CANARI. They saw beyond the initial heavy costs of participatory approaches and were prepared to invest in such approaches for long term gains.

Although there has not been a ready adoption of these approaches into formal policy (e.g. legislation, management plans), in many instances there has been an effort to implement it in practice by these NRM agencies. This is revealed in the efforts placed on securing community-based partnerships and incorporating local knowledge of natural resources (e.g. SMMA, TWCG). There remains a great need for agencies to foster civil society participation in NRM policy development and subsequent NR management when appropriate.

While significant strides have been made in advancing participation in the Saint Lucia NRM policy context, some substantial challenges remain to be addressed if participatory initiatives are to be sustainable and truly beneficial to civil society partners. Many such partnerships involving community based organizations, including the ACAPG, have run into difficulties due to limited organisational capacity. The role of and process for external facilitation in organisational capacity building is critical. Key issues to be considered for enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations to engage in participatory natural resource management on a sustained basis includes strengthening

leadership capability, addressing livelihood needs and the provision of strategic, supportive interventions by NRM agencies.

APPENDIX: Persons consulted as part of this policy review process

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## **Caribbean Natural Resources Institute**

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is an independent, regional research and technical assistance organisation concerned with issues of sustainable development in the insular Caribbean.

CANARI's mission is to create avenues for the equitable participation and effective collaboration of Caribbean communities and institutions in managing the use of natural resources critical to development.

Based in Trinidad and Tobago the Institute has specific interest and extensive experience in the identification and promotion of participatory and collaborative approaches to natural resource management.

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