

Node: Suite Summary^{1,2}

Caribbean: Institutions and decision support tools for pro-poor livelihoods in ICZM

Context

The Caribbean is a region of diverse and changing environments, economies, cultures, societies and institutions. Most human settlements and economic activity are concentrated along the coasts and the coastal zone (CZ) provides multiple services and supports multi-use livelihood strategies. Reliance on common pool resources (CPRs), especially aquatic CPRs, for local people's livelihoods is high. Poor farmers and fishers, tourism and growing industrial and service sectors place differing and competing demands on the coastal zone resources. With this diversity of important uses, there are increasingly severe conflicts among uses and users of coastal resources.

Research on Caribbean coastal zone management has emphasised natural resources. Limited attention has been given to poverty and the livelihood options of poor people in the context of broader bio-physical and socio-economic structures and processes. To achieve integrated coastal zone management a better understanding of the local processes and institutional arrangements that influence access by different stakeholders to the coastal zone resources and services is required.

Coastal conservation and development initiatives have tended to emphasise Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as the most appropriate conservation and management instrument. While such areas can make a significant contribution to biological conservation and sustainable development, it is becoming increasingly evident that they are not appropriate to all circumstances. Management instruments are needed that are suited to coastal areas where the resources may not warrant, or be able to support, MPAs. Equally, institutional arrangements and technical instruments are needed that place livelihood and poverty issues on the agenda for participatory coastal zone management and development.

This Suite examined both MPA and non-MPA situations and looked at the institutional arrangements necessary to support pro-poor integrated natural resource management. The conditions required for establishing and sustaining successful arrangements for the co-management of coastal resources in the Caribbean were examined. Different uptake promotion options were tested with policy makers, tertiary education institutions, coastal zone (resource) managers and researchers.

Research Topics

- What are the technical tools, and non-MPA management methods for coastal zone habitats, including the participatory planning methods and institutional arrangements required to support coastal zone resource management?

¹ This document summarises NRSP's work in one of its uptake promotion node: suites. For further details and links to project and project documents see <http://www.nrsp.org.uk/6.aspx>

² This document presents research funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the benefit of developing countries. The views expressed are not necessarily those of DFID.

- What are the institutional constraints to, and development options for, implementing marine protected areas (MPAs) in a way that leads to a sustained improvement in the livelihoods of poor people in the Caribbean?
- What are the conditions required for establishing and sustaining successful arrangements for the co-management of coastal resources in the Caribbean?
- How can institutional arrangements and policies that are suitable to the needs and conditions of the poor in the Caribbean region best be promoted to different audiences?

Projects

Laborie in St Lucia is a typical Caribbean coastal community. Addressing demand from that community, project R7559 (managed by the Caribbean Natural Resources Research Institute (CANARI)) (see project links below) took an holistic approach to examining a range of coastal resource use issues (see project linkages below). It investigated technical management issues and explored the role of participatory planning and local institutional arrangements for management in a non-MPA situation. Case studies focused on coastal water pollution, community based tourism development, sea urchin harvesting and management, and seaweed farming.

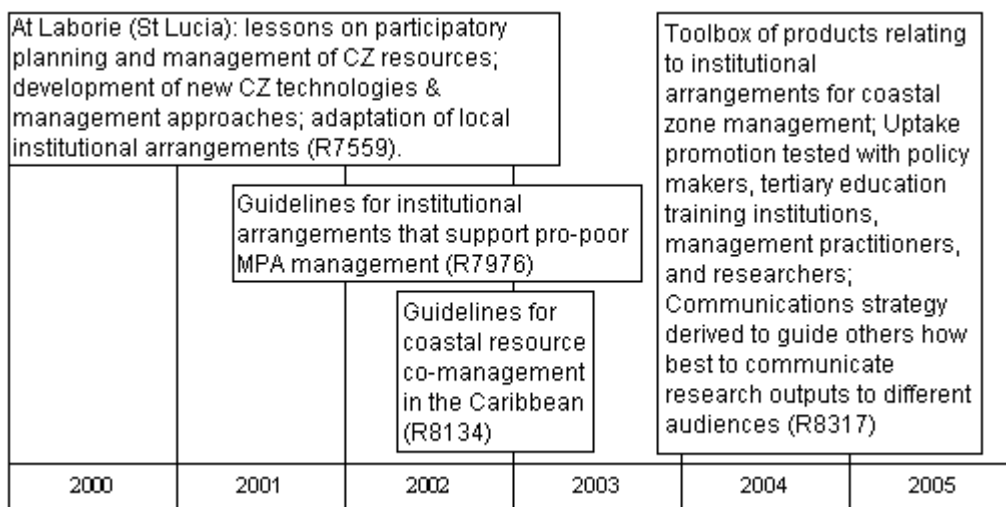
Project R7976 responded to the recognised imbalance between the wealth of data on the ecological performance of marine protected areas (MPAs) and the lack of understanding about their supporting institutions and social impacts, particularly in relation to the livelihoods of the poorest in the Caribbean. It reviewed the institutional and ecosystem characteristics of 80 Caribbean MPAs, with detailed follow-up studies at selected sites. It also examined the policies, institutions and processes (PIPS) needed for successful MPA implementation and the impacts of successfully implemented MPAs on poor peoples' livelihoods. The project consulted with a group of MPA practitioners and policy makers in order to prepare guidelines outlining ways in which MPAs can be managed and developed so that they are more sensitive to the needs of poorer groups; it also engaged with international organisations such as United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to promote the guidelines.

Project R8134 worked with a range of stakeholders, from individuals in coastal communities to national level resource managers, to examine the requirements for the establishment of successful co-management initiatives. It used six case studies as the basis for capacity building and institutional strengthening through learning by doing. The project drew on these experiences and a literature review to develop co-management guidelines, and then tracked their usage and uptake.

In order to derive common lessons from these three projects, R8317 synthesised the learning on institutional arrangements and policies for integrated coastal zone management in support of pro-poor livelihoods in the Caribbean. It developed a collection of decision support tools, a 'toolbox', for resource managers. The tools (planning methods, approaches to institutional design, guidelines for management partnerships and co-management agreements, policies and strategies for the optimisation of social and economic benefits of coastal resource use) were expected to provide guidance for policy formulation and management planning on all main aspects of pro-poor coastal management and development in the region. The project promoted the tools through four experiments, with each experiment targeting a different

audience in order to identify the best means of communicating the products. This knowledge was then used to develop a communications strategy.

Project links within Caribbean Suite 1: 2000 - 2005



Outputs

Findings

R7559 provided detailed baselines of individual coastal resources and sectors, and a large number of specific results. For example, the project determined the feasibility of the cultivation of a commercially important seaweed species, identified the issues, including the policy requirements, affecting the development of seaweed farming and formulated an action plan for the expansion of the sector. The project produced key lessons on coastal resource management in non-MPA situations (see research messages below). It concluded that MPAs are not appropriate to all circumstances (e.g. in bays such as Laborie that do not have any exceptional ecological features that make them a target for conservation) and that adaptive and flexible management approaches are required involving formal and informal institutional partnerships that address the concerns and needs of the people.

R7976 found that many Caribbean MPAs border areas of significant poverty, while others are close to pockets of “at-risk” populations, suggesting a potential for MPAs to benefit the poor and for poorer groups to impact on MPAs. The extent to which MPAs currently do benefit the poor varies considerably. Project investigations suggest that the participation of the poor in MPA management is critical both for the success of MPAs and to ensure that the needs of the poor are met. For the long-term success of MPAs, a supportive legal and policy framework is also crucial; factors that can contribute to an enabling framework are summarized in research messages below.

The findings of R8134 indicate that co-management in the Caribbean is not well developed. Most co-management initiatives have not progressed beyond consultative co-management, where the balance of power remains predominantly with the government rather than the community. From a comparative analysis of literature sources and six local case studies, 23 conditions for successful co-management in the Caribbean were defined. Conditions identified as particularly important included:

- Clearly defined membership.
- Shared recognition of a resource problem.
- Clearly defined management objectives.
- Management rules enforceable by users and management authority.
- Clearly defined resource and community boundaries.
- Flexible management approaches.
- Effective communication among stakeholders.
- Support from external agents.

Uptake and implementation of the co-management guidelines produced by the project were found to be influenced by:

- The capacity to lobby for and undertake co-management amongst government, local communities and other stakeholders.
- The need for governments to develop enabling policies to support co-management initiatives.
- The need for attitude change among government staff.

R8317 synthesised the knowledge derived from the previous three projects and developed a set of pro-poor tools for integrated coastal resources management for policy formulation and management planning. The key findings from testing the requirements for optimising uptake and communication of the toolbox products to different audiences were:

- Start with a strategy.
- Consider products and uptake pathways in tandem.
- Reinforce messages in a variety of formats.
- Consider the messenger as well as the message.
- See communication and uptake as a dynamic process.

Research messages

- Pro-poor approaches to coastal resource management and governance are needed.
- Whilst MPAs are one potential tool for managing coastal zone resources, they are not appropriate in every situation.
- Institutions that bring together multiple stakeholders in coastal zones and integrate conservation and development objectives in a flexible and adaptive approach can achieve coastal zone management objectives.
- Effective participatory management of coastal zone natural resources requires a focus on the institutional factors and conditions that determine the outcomes of natural resource governance and on the opportunities for change, intervention, action and learning-by-doing.
- MPAs have the potential to benefit the poor (through fishing, tourism; empowerment, alternative livelihood opportunities) but there are many constraints to achieving the potential. The constraints are within: the external legal, funding and policy environment; the mechanisms for MPA decision-making; the skills, attitudes and behaviour of those involved in MPA management; and the attributes of the communities.
- The legal and policy framework is critical for the long-term success of an MPA. Numerous factors can contribute to an enabling framework including: development of

systems to implement international obligations; rationalization of governance structures; effective operation of area-specific policies to guide all activities impacting the MPA; availability and effective deployment of human and material resources; and meaningful community participation.

- A significant opportunity appears to lie in developing mechanisms for the successful co-management of MPA resources. A priority for the Caribbean region is to build capacity to enable even the poorest community members to take informed and empowered decisions concerning integrated coastal management.
- Dissemination is easy. Effective dissemination that results in positive change through uptake of research messages and products is far more difficult and requires a well-defined communications strategy.

Key research products

- The sea is our garden: A report on a study of institutional and technical options for improving coastal livelihoods in Laborie, Saint Lucia.
- MPA database containing baseline information on Caribbean MPAs, including information on biophysical, management, legal and socio-economic characteristics.
- Increasing MPA effectiveness by working with local communities: guidelines for the Caribbean.
- Guidelines for coastal resource co-management in the Caribbean: communicating the concepts and conditions that favour success.
- A toolbox of decision support tools for resource managers and an associated communications strategy.
- Project FTRs (R7559; R7976; R8134; R8317).

Impacts

- R7559. The project generated long-term processes that have been integrated into the structures and work plans of local organisations, providing a basis for continuity. At Laborie, St Lucia, participation by local users in coastal zone resource management and involvement of local organisations in natural resource governance has increased. Key management agencies have been motivated to investigate new approaches to sewage management to reduce negative impacts. Through the adoption and implementation of project recommendations, the community has experienced: improved public health due to improved water quality; increased earnings from seaweed farming; more stable revenue from the sea urchin fishery; greater livelihood opportunities from local tourism; and new partnerships with national organisations such as the fisheries department.
- R7976. The guidelines on implementing pro-poor MPAs have been adopted and incorporated into wider UNEP guidelines for MPA management. Awareness has been raised on aspects of MPA management not previously researched, particularly the pro-poor perspective. The project findings have also influenced the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Caribbean socio-economic monitoring programme.
- R8134. In 2003 Grenada seine fishers accepted guidelines for a co-management initiative formulated during the project. Local capacity was built at all six project case study locations. Also in 2003, the Barbados Fisheries Advisory Committee and Belize Friends of Nature adopted project advice into their strategic plans.

- R8317. Uptake promotion work on MPA management resulted in incorporation of co-management messages into the training curriculum of the University of the West Indies and helped to increase awareness throughout the region of the broader social and livelihood aspects of coastal zone management.