

Policy Perspectives

Perspectives on resource management and environmental policy from the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), Faculty of Science and Technology, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados.

The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) has initiated this occasional outreach publication, **Policy Perspectives**, primarily in order to share some of the lessons learnt from ongoing research. The interdisciplinary applied research at CERMES emphasizes learning-by-doing through the collaboration of researchers, beneficiaries and other interested parties. The information in these policy briefs may be used by policy-makers and their advisers to strengthen the linkages between research outputs and policy-making in the Caribbean. This connection is often weak in marine resource governance, but is especially important to develop in complex adaptive social-ecological systems.

Adaptive capacity for marine protected area (MPA) governance in the eastern Caribbean

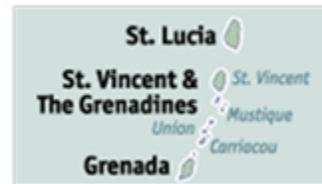
Overview

Developing adaptive capacity for marine protected area (MPA) governance in the eastern Caribbean is essential for sustainable biodiversity conservation and livelihoods, taking into account social and ecological uncertainties including climate change. Grenada, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are striving to meet national, regional and international goals for MPAs. Delivered by an international team with considerable practical experience, this project approached MPA capacity development at the five MPA sites located in the three countries through information exchange, tailored training, and assistance with learning-by-doing to bring about beneficial changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices.

The project addressed MPA management effectiveness, communication, community engagement, adaptive and ecosystem-based management, reforming governance and participatory monitoring. The 12 month initiative was grant funded through a NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Cooperative Agreement from 1 October 2011 to 1 October 2012. It was implemented by CERMES of The University of the West Indies in partnership with the five MPA sites.

This Policy Perspective outlines in brief what was done, but more important it sets out some of the key learning from the project and views of the participants in terms of the future directions they consider essential for capacity development. Further information can be obtained from the CERMES web site, including project outputs as downloads.

Background



Grenada, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are among the Member States of the OECS participating in the Caribbean Challenge. An

investigation of MPAs in the Caribbean suggested that a high level of priority should be given to building capacity.

The CERMES study on 'Marine resource governance in the Caribbean' (MarGov project) found that building adaptive capacity for MPA governance was particularly important. It is critical to address governance if progress is to be made in achieving the goals of the St George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability and Caribbean Challenge. CERMES sought partnership in addressing this.

The overall goal of the project was to strengthen adaptive capacity building for the governance of MPAs in the eastern Caribbean based on resilience thinking at the site level. Project objectives were to:

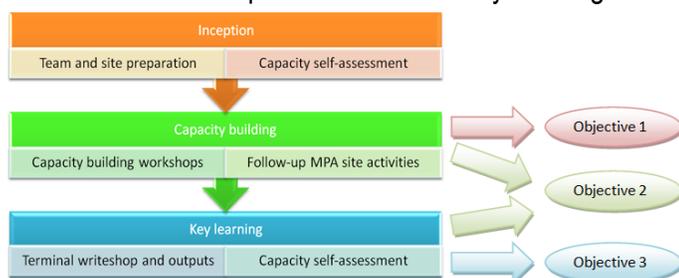
1. Develop the adaptive capacity of key stakeholders in Grenada for MPA governance mainly through four linked training workshops with follow-up practical learning by doing
2. Extend the above capacity development to Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines for a limited comparison of MPA sites so as to inform potential replication

- Document and foster learning from the outcomes of objectives 1 and 2 regionally and internationally through use of multiple media for communication with MPA interests

The five participating MPAs in the three countries were:

- Sandy Island Oyster Bed (SIOBMPA)
- Molinere/Beausejour (MBMPA)
- Woburn/Clarke's Court Bay (WCCBMPA)
- Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA)
- Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP)

The implementation strategy comprised an initial capacity assessment, three capacity building workshops with follow-up field activities, a terminal capacity assessment and a collaborative writeshop to document the key learning.



Policy advice from key learning

The writeshop held at the end of the project served to distil from the key learning several policy recommendations for different stakeholders and at multiple levels. They include:

For regional and national MPA agencies/boards

- ❖ Develop regional level capacity for MPA governance by social networking of sites within and among countries
- ❖ Encourage and promote exchange visits among MPAs on a regular basis including for joint implementation of projects and training based on their different capacities
- ❖ Develop site level capacity by investing in the capacity of leaders and enabling them to use newly developed capacity at their sites by implementing small projects
- ❖ Facilitate learning by doing approaches to developing capacity; conduct experiments designed for learning
- ❖ Treat governance reform as a necessary component of adaptation and an asset for developing resilience, not as a sign of failure and inadequate performance; learn

For site level MPA managers and boards

- ❖ Use the easily available and affordable communication technology of the internet (e.g. email, downloads, lists, voice, etc.) to connect to Caribbean and global matters concerning MPAs; share the information gained widely
- ❖ Call upon national and regional specialists to inform the site planning and decision making such as on climate change, resilience, adaptive management, ecosystem based management; this is often available free of cost
- ❖ Delegate authority and responsibility to board members and staff to encourage capacity development and new learning that will also facilitate adaptive management
- ❖ Encourage and provide incentives for innovation and creativity in order to pursue new opportunities not only solve old problems; such diversity aids resilience
- ❖ Incorporate participatory monitoring and evaluation of governance (e.g. in management effectiveness) as an asset to enhance performance and assist sustainability

For local or community level stakeholders

- ❖ Play an active role in MPA governance by not only demanding communication and engagement, but also by seeking to build up your MPA through collaboration
- ❖ Facilitate an ecosystem-based approach by bring in a wide array of actors and issues in a systematic way to contribute to problem-solving and opportunity creation
- ❖ Ensure you are aware of your MPA strategic and other plans, and that your role in adaptive capacity is clear

For big international NGOs and donor agencies

- ❖ Tailor interventions to take into account the need to develop multi-level adaptive capacity for governance at a pace appropriate for the beneficiary countries/MPAs
- ❖ Pay more attention to building core competencies and capacity, including basic funding and staffing, rather than focus on adding more new tools and techniques

This policy brief is an output of the CERMES project on *Adaptive capacity for MPA governance in the eastern Caribbean*. It was prepared with the aid of a Coral Reef Conservation Program International Coral Reef Conservation Cooperative Agreement. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for non-commercial use provided suitable credit is given. Additional information is available on the CERMES web site, including downloadable project outputs.