Stakeholder Participation in Management at the Tobago Cays Marine Park

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Citation

Disclaimer

Introduction

Proposed Management Model

The Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP) is a 66 km^2 non-extractive Marine Protected Area (MPA) that was established in December 1997 under the Marine Parks Act, 1997. The Marine Park Act calls for the creation of a Marine Parks Board (MPB) of ten (10) to be populated by eight (8) government agencies and two (2) NGOs that would be nominated by the government (See Appendix 3). The Marine Parks Board would be responsible for the policy level decisions of all marine parks within the jurisdiction of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). However, during the development of the now cabinet approved TCMP Management Plan (2007-2009), it became very clear that the Marine Parks Board as envisioned by the Marine Parks Act (1997) would be too removed from the daily management process to facilitate effective adaptive management. Consequently, the TCMP Management Plan called for the establishment of a Management Committee (MC) to deal exclusively with issues pertaining to the TCMP.

The Management Committee was also envisioned as having ten (10) seats; however, unlike the National Marine Parks Board, the MC would have two government agencies (namely Fisheries Div. and the Coast Guard) and eight (8) seats filled by stakeholder groups nominated by the TCMP resources users themselves (see Appendix 3 for the full list). The primary goal of this body would be to provide recommendations to the MPB to direct policy specific to the TCMP. This model was favored on the premise that the stakeholders would have a much better appreciation of the situations on the ground, borne from their daily activities, than representatives of government agencies on the mainland, some of whom may have never been to the TCMP.

Current Management Reality

Owing primarily to the fact that the TCMP remains the only legislated Marine Park in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the organizational structure proposed by the TCMP Management Plan (2007 - 2009) has not fully materialized. Currently, the MPB consists of the eight (8) government agencies explicitly indicated in the Marine Parks Act (1997) along with two (2) NGOs (i.e. The Southern Grenadines Water Taxi Association (SGWTA) and Union Island Ecological Society (UIES)). The TCMP MC as envisioned in the management plan has never been implemented. This can be attributed principally to the fact that most of the primary stakeholder groups, which are recommended to hold a seat at the MC table, not having formal organizations (e.g. associations or cooperatives) to represent their sector.

Rationale

Recent developments with the Marine Parks regime, namely, the initiative to upgrade the South Coast Marine Conservation Area (currently a fisheries conservation area) to full Marine Park status, has once again brought the importance of operationalizing the TCMP MC to the forefront. More specifically, the addition of a second Marine Park into the MPA system would necessitate changing the structure of the management regime, especially at the MPB level. The MPB would have to be reorganized to equitably represent the fact that there is more than one MPA within the marine park system. This inevitably means that the NGOs (i.e. SGWTA & UIES) who are currently at the MPB table would have to be restructured to represent this change, as these two NGOs are specific to the TCMP context. Once this happens, the conditions for which the TCMP MC was envisioned to prevent would have materialized. That is, to ensure the issues on the ground in the TCMP are effectively presented to the decision making body (i.e. MPB).

Consequently, this study was designed to fulfill three primary objectives (see Appendix 1 for original project design):

1) assess the current level of stakeholder participation in the governance at the TCMP.

2) determine what motivates the stakeholder groups that are currently engaged in the governance mechanism to continue to participate in the process

3) assess the level of willingness of stakeholder groups that are not currently engaged in management to become part of the governance mechanism for the TCMP.

Methodology

Questionnaire Development and Enumerator Preparation

Two persons were selected to be enumerators, based on their prior experience in administering questionnaires within a very similar format. They were briefed on the objectives of the study; that is, what the data would be utilized for and how they should approach its collection. They were then given the stakeholder lists and instructed on the number of questionnaires that they were to administer to each stakeholder group. The enumerators were in constant contact with each other throughout the questionnaire administration process, to ensure that no person was interviewed twice.

Sample Selection

 The eight (8) stakeholder groups that were identified for participation in the Management Committee, as identified in the TCMP Management Plan (2007- 2009), formed the population for this study. Using this as the starting point, a list of the individuals within these eight

stakeholder groups was generated. To add a component of anonymity, these lists were then given to the two (2) enumerators who conducted twenty one (21) questionnaire surveys with different stakeholders. The enumerators were then instructed to conduct a specific number of questionnaire surveys for each stakeholder group, utilizing a stratified random sampling method (see Appendix 2 for specific numbers).

Stakeholder Interviews

Once the specific stakeholders were selected by the enumerators, the next activity was to obtain insight into the perceptions of the different sectors within the Tobago Cays Marine Park. To accomplish this, the questionnaires were administered (see Appendix 4 for a complete list of questions). This was accomplished by the enumerator reading the question to the interviewee and carefully recording his/her response to each response. In the event that the interviewee refused to answer or could not answer a question, the enumerator indicated that there was a no response to that particular question. Time and weather constraints necessitated that respondents be limited to only individuals on Union Island (particularly for fishers) and the Tobago Cays. The questions presented to the interviewees may be categorized into three themes:

1. The awareness of the current TCMP Management System.
2. Their perceptions on the effectiveness of the current management system.
3. The willingness of their sector to participate in Governance.

Data Analysis

While the questionnaires were being administered, a coding scheme was developed utilizing *Microsoft Office Excel* to allow for analysis of the data, once it was collected. Once the questionnaires were collected, they were entered into a data table utilizing the coding scheme that was developed earlier. The data table was used to conduct a series of analysis between and amongst the different stakeholder groups, the results of which are presented in the next section.

Results

This pie chart highlights the fact that 91.67 percent of interviewees consider themselves to be stakeholders of the TCMP, while 8.33 percent do not identify themselves as being stakeholders.

Figure 1 Interviewee perceptions
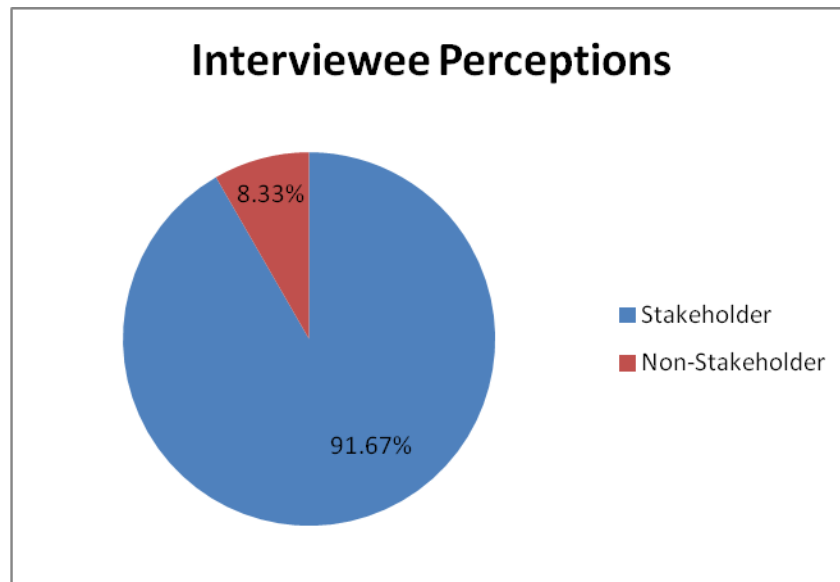
Figure 2 shows that 64 percent of persons surveyed indicated that, in their opinion, co-management body (i.e. government along with stakeholders) should be responsible for managing the TCMP. 27 percent believe that the government alone should manage the TCMP and 9 percent believe that it should be the sole responsibility of stakeholders.
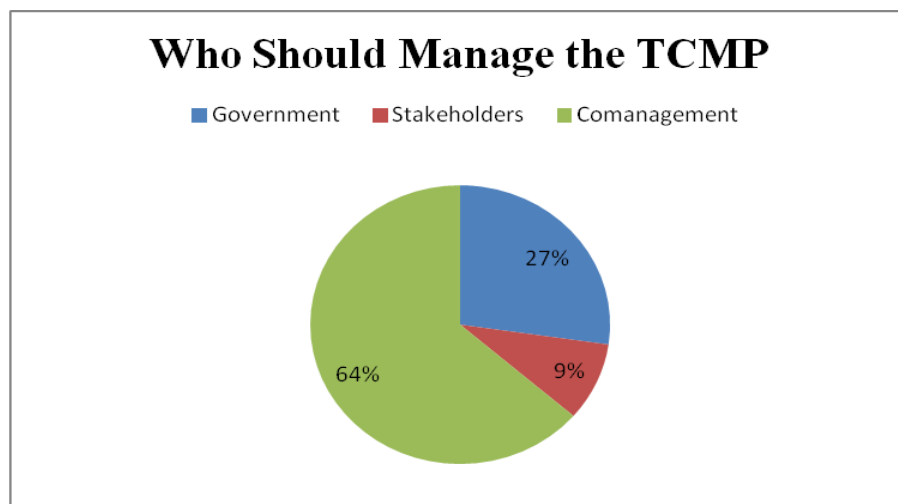
Figure 2 Who should manage the TCMP

This chart shows that 64 % of those surveyed are of the opinion that they have some form of influence over the way the TCMP is managed; 27 % believe that they have absolutely no influence in the way it is managed, and 9 % believe they have complete influence on how the MPA is managed.

Stakeholder Influence on Management

9%	
27%	■ No Influence
	■ Some Influence
64%	■ Full Influence
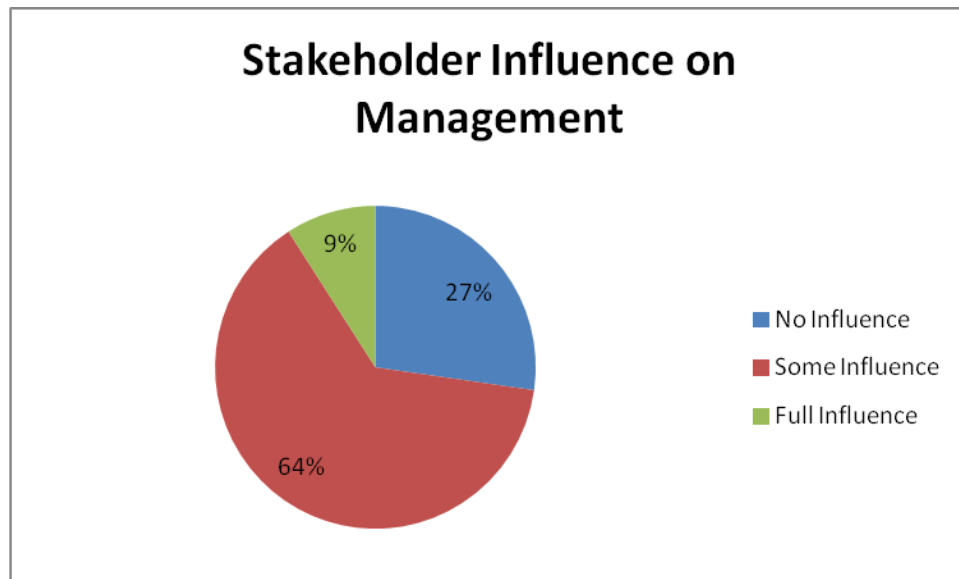
Figure 3 Stakeholder influence on management

We found that 91.67 % of the persons surveyed indicated that they think the MPA is currently being effectively managed. Conversely, the other 8.33% believe that it is not being effectively managed, because there are still areas of enforcement that require improvement.

Management Effectiveness

8%	■ Effective
92%	■ Not Effective

Figure 4 Management effectiveness

92 % of the persons surveyed indicated that they were aware of the objectives of the TCMP, while the other respondents did not respond.
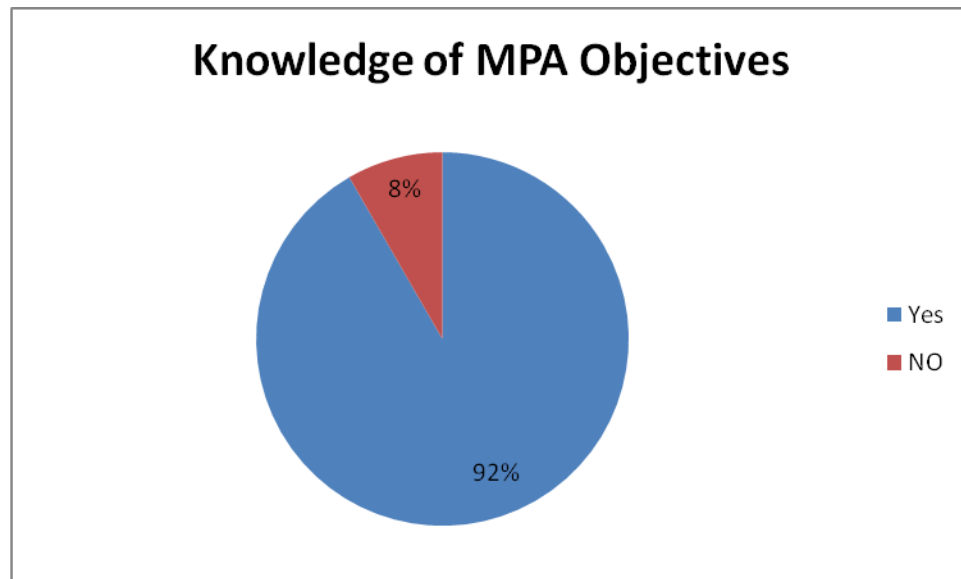
Figure 5 Knowledge of TCMP Objectives

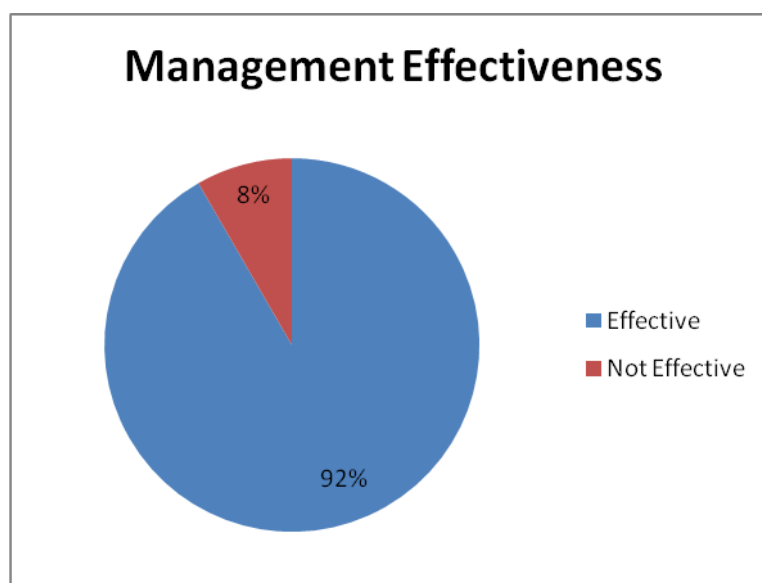# Discussion

Conceptual Underpinning of stakeholder participation

It is of critical importance to explore the concept of "stakeholder" and "stakeholder participation", in order to achieve a full understanding of the implication of including stakeholders on the MPA decision making process, by operationalizing the TCMP Management Committee as envisioned in the 2007 - 2009 Management Plan.

Freeman, (1984: 46) defines stakeholder as "*any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives*."

Achterkamp and Vos (2008) has taken the definition of stakeholders a bit further by classifying stakeholders into two categories; those who hold the "potential for collaboration" or those with the "potential for threatening." Utilizing these two typologies of "the collaborator" and "the inhibitor", Achterkamp and Vos attempts to refine the notion of stakeholder into an archetype that is readily applicable to environmental management. In other words, there are two distinct groups of people that must be considered when embarking on any form of resources management: the "influencer" and the "stakeholder." An "influencer" possesses power over an organization, irrespective of having a valid claim/stake; conversely, a "stakeholder" may have a

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legitimate claim but lacks the power to influence the decision-making body (Mitchell et a., 1997). The primary objective of stakeholder participation in resources management is to tip the balance back into the hands of those who stand to be affected, albeit negatively or positively, by any management options. Once this is successfully accomplished, the list of "collaborators" outweighs that of the "inhibitors." This has significant implications with regard to legitimacy, stakeholder buy-in and ultimately the overall success of an MPA.

The most frequently cited excuse for keeping stakeholders to the periphery of the participatory policy-making process, such as MPA management, is that stakeholders possess insufficient capacity to meaningfully contribute to policy. That is, stakeholders lack the understanding of the complexity of the issues involved or the implication of policy choices, especially when the evidence base for that policy is scientific (Fletcher, 2007). However, stakeholder participation can and should occur at the level at which the capacity of the stakeholders facilitate, since, stakeholder engagement is a process directed at increase legitimacy of decisions through the participation of the affected groups (Holzer, 2008). According to Fletcher (2007), there are three fundamental questions pertaining to stakeholder participation:

1. Who should be included?

2. At what stage in the policy-making process should participation occur?

3. What form of participation should occur?

TCMP Context

Due to the longstanding paradigm of government lead resources management that has existed throughout the Caribbean, stakeholder participation in resource management, including MPAs, is a relatively new concept. Stakeholders have typically been included in environmental management at the implementation stage; consequently, this often results in the needs and priorities of stakeholders frequently differing from the objectives of these resource management initiatives (Reed, 2008).

Within the context of the TCMP, efforts were made in the inception of the MPA designation process, to include all legitimate stakeholders into the process. However, some critical seats were left vacant at these meetings; for example, that of Grenadines Fishers. Their absence can be attributed mainly to the fact that during the period of the "stakeholder consultations, there was no formal fisher folk organization in the Grenadines. Fortunately, one such organization has since materialized in the form of the Union Island Fisher Folk Cooperative, and they are primed and ready to occupy a seat on the TCMP MC. Through the efforts of the Sustainable Grenadines Inc., a transboundary NGO operating within the Grenadines (both Vincentian and Grenadian Grenadines), there have been significant strides towards establishing formal stakeholder groups which would allow them to participate fully in management.

The survey has identified a significant disconnect with regards to the management of the TCMP; namely, the fact that more than sixty (60) percent of the water taxi operator that were surveyed were not aware that they currently have a representative on the national Marine Park Board. This represents the fact that information is not flowing effectively up and down the ranks of this stakeholder organization. This provides critical insight as it could affect the legitimacy of the representation process and holds the potential to undermine the entire stakeholder participation process.

Over ninety (90) percent of respondents surveyed indicated that there are "advantages/benefits" to stakeholder groups participating in the management of the TCMP; however, in most of the cases they were unable to identify why or how they benefit. As a result of this, we are unable to definitively determine what motivates the stakeholder groups that are currently continually engaged in the management process.

We found that approximately ninety two (92) percent of the persons surveyed indicated that they were of the opinion that the overall the TCMP is currently being effectively managed along with all the commercial activities. They noted however, that there remains room for improvement especially with regards to enforcement.

Ninety two (92) percent of respondents indicated that they were aware on the objectives of the park, which can point to the fact that the public awareness campaign of the TCMP is having some impact and the message is getting to its intended targets

It is also very important to note that sixty four (64) percent of those surveyed were of the opinion that the TCMP should be managed in coordination with the various users/stakeholder groups. This coupled with the fact that over eighty (80) percent of respondents indicated that they or a representative of the user groups would be interested in being part of the TCMP Management Committee.

When we combine the fact that approximately 92% of the persons surveyed indicated that they were aware of objectives of the TCMP, and that, in their opinion, the park is being managed effectively, indicates that the current TCMP management team is moving in the right direction with regards to implementing the current management plan.

In conclusion, the overall benefit of stakeholder participation in management planning and implementation, as is envisage in the establishment of a TCMP MC, would materialize when the insight of the various user/stakeholder groups bring their unique perspectives developed over generations of resources utilization. Once these unique perspectives are synthesised into a unified vision, it would allow for the most resilient and adaptive TCMP.

Key Learning

1. There are persons who are affected by the management actions of the TCMP but do not consider themselves to be stakeholders of the TCMP.

2. There are members of the Southern Grenadines Water Taxi Association (SGWTA) who are unaware that they are currently represented on the national Marine Parks Board.

3. The majority of stakeholders believe that over all the TCMP is currently being effectively managed; however, they noted there is a lot of room for improvement, especially with regard to enforcement.

4. Most stakeholders think that they should be partly responsible for managing the TCMP.

5. Over 80 percent of the persons surveyed indicated that they, personally or a representative of their stakeholder group, would like to be part of the TCMP Management Committee.

References

Achterkamp, M.C., and Vos, F.J. 2008. Investigating the use of the stakeholder notion in project management literature, a meta-analysis. *International Journal of Project Management* 26, no. 7:749-757.

Fletcher, S. 2007. Converting science to policy through stakeholder involvement: An analysis of the European Marine Strategy Directive. Marine pollution bulletin 54, no. 12:1881-1886.

Freeman, E. 1984. Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach. Analysis 38, no. 1.

Hoggarth, D. 2007. Tobago Cays Marine Park: 2007- 2009 Management Plan.

Holzer, B. 2008. Turning Stakeseekers Into Stakeholders: A Political Coalition Perspective on the Politics of Stakeholder Influence. Business & Society 47, no. 1:50-67.

Mitchell, R K., Agle, R.B, and Wood, J.D. 1997. Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and what really Counts. Academy of Management Review 22, no. 4:853-886.

Reed, M.S. 2008. Stakeholder participation for environmental management: A literature review. Biological Conservation 141, no. 10:2417-2431.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Marine Parks Act, 1997.

Appendix 1

***Adaptive capacity for MPA governance in the eastern Caribbean*: Follow-up Activity Form**

Please complete all sections and submit as an email attachment to Patrick.mcconney@cavehill.uwi.edu

1. Contact information

Workshop #	1	Theme of activity	Adaptive Capacity
Title of activity	Stakeholder Participation in Governance		
Organisation	Tobago Cays Marine Park		
Town/location	Clifton		
Area/parish	Union Island		
Country	St. Vincent and the Grenadines		
Activity leader	Kenneth Williams		
Title of post held	Operations Manager		
Telephone(s)	(784) 485 8191		
Facsimile(s)	(784) 485 8192		
Email address(es)	manager@tobagocays.org/landokeri@yahoo.com		
Skype name(s)	Landokeri		

We will use e-mail for most communication so give addresses that are reliable and are checked regularly. Type responses in the boxes below and they will expand to fit the text. Try to be concise but very clear.

2. What is the purpose/objective of your activity related to adaptive capacity for MPA governance? (<100 words)

To assess the current level of stakeholder participation in the governance of the TCMP. More specifically, we would examine/determine:
1. The drivers for participation in the management process by those that are currently engaged in the MPA governance.
2. The benefits of having these stakeholders participation in governance.
3. The willingness of stakeholder groups to participate in governance.

This would provide the management of the TCMP with insights that can be used to engage stakeholder groups that are not actively involved in governance.

3. What specific (measurable, verifiable) outputs will you achieve by the end of the activity? (3-5 bullet points)

Comprehensive stakeholder list.
List of benefits and drivers for participation in MPA management.
Strategy for strengthening stakeholder participation in governance.
Strategy for engaging stakeholder groups that are willing to participate in governance but are not currently involved.

4. What is your scheduled work plan and budget for the 1-4 week activity? (Insert or delete rows as necessary)

Task description (major tasks to be accomplished for deliverables)	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Cost (USD)
Development & Printing of Semi-structured interview Guides	X				50.00
Identification of stakeholders	X				0
Key Informant Interviews/focus group (1 per stakeholder group)		X			200.00
Transportation to Mayreau & Canouan for interviews			X		200.00
Report preparation (Draft)			X	X	0
2 Validation Meetings with stakeholders; Mayreau & Union Is. (venue, transportation & refreshments)				X	500.00
Final Report				X	0
Start date	January 23rd, 2012	End date	Feb 17th, 2012	Total budget for activity =	950.00

5. In the table below list the critical resources or stakeholders in the activity and their roles. (Insert or delete rows)

Critical resource or stakeholder identified	Role in implementing the activity or specific tasks
Financial resources	Cover implementation costs
Questionnaires	Primary instrument for assessing participation
Olando Harvey and Kenneth Williams	Data analysis and report preparation
Enumerators	Survey administration
Stakeholders (availability)	Target audience for information collection

6. Are there any assumptions or circumstances that may impact on successful implementation? (<100 words)

Stakeholders are willing and available to participate in the survey within our time frame

7. If you are not authorised to sign follow-up agreements on behalf of your organisation, identify the person who is

Authorised person	Kenneth Williams
Title of post held	Operations Manager

8. Any other pertinent information (<100 words)

Submitted to CERMES on (dd/mm/yy)	20/01/12	By (name)	Olando Harvey

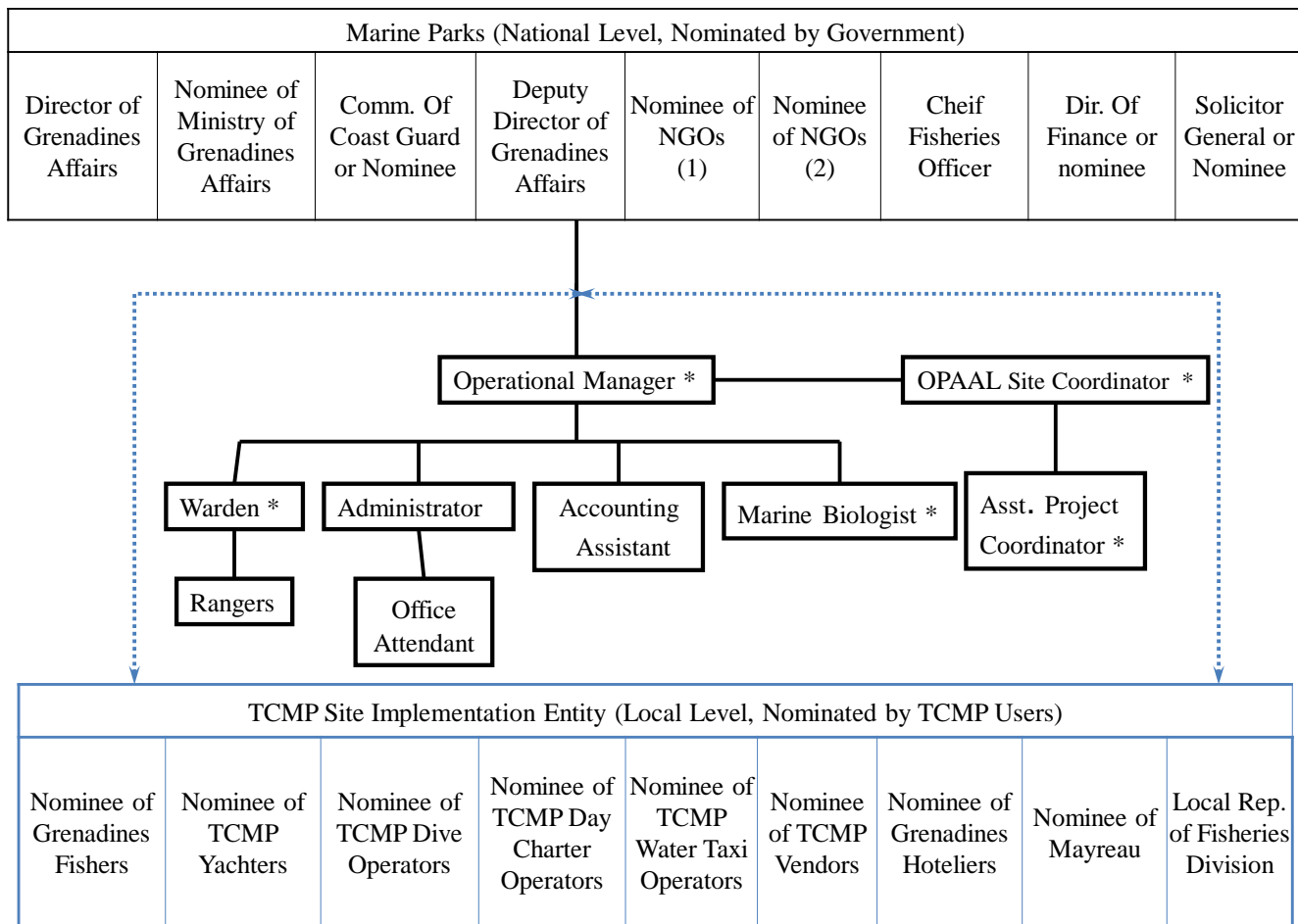**The completed form is not expected to exceed three pages in length. Thank you.**

Appendix 2

Table highlighting the number of questionnaires that were administered to each stakeholder group

Stakeholders (1°)	Number of Questionnaires
Water Taxi Operators	5
Vendors	4
Dive Operators	1
Day Tour Operators	2
Yacht Companies	1
Tourism	2
Fishers	6
NGO	1
Total	22

Appendix 3

An organizational Chart showing both the National Marine Park Board and the TCMP Management Committee along with the TCMP Staff.

Marine Parks (National Level, Nominated by Government)								
Director of Grenadines Affairs	Nominee of Ministry of Grenadines Affairs	Comm. Of Coast Guard or Nominee	Deputy Director of Grenadines Affairs	Nominee of NGOs (1)	Nominee of NGOs (2)	Cheif Fisheries Officer	Dir. Of Finance or nominee	Solicitor General or Nominee

Operational Manager * — OPAAL Site Coordinator *

Warden *   Administrator   Accounting Assistant   Marine Biologist *   Asst. Project Coordinator *

Rangers

Office Attendant

TCMP Site Implementation Entity (Local Level, Nominated by TCMP Users)								
Nominee of Grenadines Fishers	Nominee of TCMP Yachters	Nominee of TCMP Dive Operators	Nominee of TCMP Day Charter Operators	Nominee of TCMP Water Taxi Operators	Nominee of TCMP Vendors	Nominee of Grenadines Hoteliers	Nominee of Mayreau	Local Rep. of Fisheries Division

* Members of the Mgmt Committee

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Appendix 4

Stakeholder Participation in Governance
Stakeholder Surveys

This survey is being done by the Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP) so as to improve how the TCMP is being managed. You would not be identified in any reports and any information that you provide cannot be traced back to you. After this survey is completed, a copy of the report would be made available to you.

Date:_____   Key Informant Stakeholder group: _____

1. Sex: Male (   ) Female (   )

2. Age: Under 30 ( )   30 -40 ( )   41- 50 ( )   Over 50 ( )

3. What is your Primary occupation?   _____

4. How long have you been in your current occupation? _____

5. Do you know the objectives of the TCMP? Yes ( ) No ( ): please explain your answer
    _____

6. How often do you go to the TCMP? _____

7. Is your business affected by the management of the TCMP? Yes (   ) No ( ); please explain your answer:
    _____

8. Do you consider yourself to be a stakeholder of the TCMP?   Yes ( )   No ( )   Please Explain:
    _____

9. Who in your opinion should be responsible for managing the park?
    _____

10. Are you or any member of your organization part of the TCMP board of Directors?

Yes ( )   No ( ) not sure ( ); if yes who are they?
_____

11. In your opinion, are there any benefits/advantages to your stakeholder group being part of the TCMP board? Yes ( )   No ( ); if yes, can you list a few?
_____

12. Do you know any of the members of the current TCMP Board and their role in the MPA management? Yes ( ) No ( ); If yes please list them?
_____

13. Who should have the most responsibility for taking decisions about managing the TCMP?
_____

14. How much influence do you think your stakeholder group has in how the TCMP is managed?
_____

15. Would your involvement in the management board improve the management of the Park?

 Yes ( ) No ( ); please explain your answer:
_____

16. Have you ever participated in any meetings, workshops or other events organized by the TCMP? Yes ( ) Describe? ; No ( ) Why?
_____

17. Do you think the park is being managed effectively? Yes ( ) No ( ); please explain your answer:
_____

18. Are the commercial activities (vending, diving, water taxi etc.) in the park effectively managed? Yes ( ) describe? ; No ( ) Why?
_____

19. Would you or your stakeholder group be interested in being part of the TCMP board? Yes ( ) No ( ); if no, why not:
_____

20. What in your opinion can be done to get your stakeholder group to become part of the management board?
_____

Thank you for your help!