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THE SUSTAINABLE GRENADINES PROJECT

SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN THE GRENADINE ISLANDS

Overview



Project Implementation Unit
Clifton, Union Island
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
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Cover photo: Palm Island and Petite Martinique from Fort Murray, Union Island

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Preface

The purpose of this booklet is to provide an overview of:

- How the Sustainable Grenadines Project came to be,
- Who is involved in it,
- How it functions,
- What it expects to achieve, and
- Where it might lead.

1 THE GRENADE ISLANDS

The Grenadine islands lie on the Grenada Bank extending some 120 km between the main islands of Grenada and St. Vincent (Figures 1a and b). There are over 30 islands, of which 9 have permanent settlements. The largest islands – Carriacou, Bequia, Union I., Canouan, Mustique, Mayreau, , Petit Martinique and (from north to south) – have towns and communities with public (schools, clinics, utilities) and private supporting infrastructure (Table 1). Others are resort islands – Palm I., Petit St. Vincent. Most others are visited by yachters, and fishers.

There is access by air to Bequia, Mustique, Canouan, Union I., and Carriacou which have airstrips for small commuter aircraft. The area is also served by two passenger and vehicle ferry systems: one between the islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; the other between Grenada and its two Grenadine Islands. Small cargo vessels and water taxis (speedboats) operate throughout the area.

The area of bank occupied by the Grenadine Islands is about 1,500 km² most of which is shallower than 50 m. Thus, the area supports the most extensive coral reefs and related habitats in the south-eastern Caribbean. All islands have a

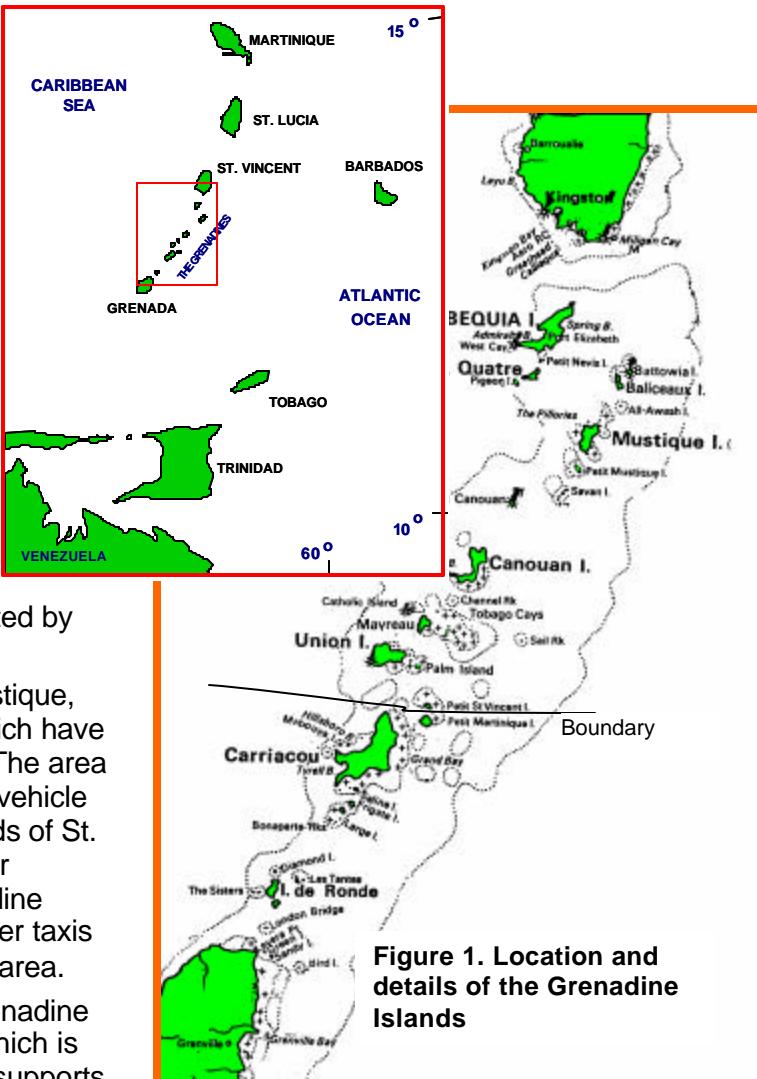


Figure 1. Location and details of the Grenadine Islands

variety of surrounding fringing, patch and barrier reefs, and there are numerous offshore reef shoals on the bank. There are reef-related seagrass and lagoon habitats and areas of extensive mangrove forests.

The international boundary between Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines runs east to west across the bank between Petit Martinique and Petit St. Vincent (Figure 1). Nonetheless, the linkages among all the Grenadine Islands on both sides of the boundary are historically strong and continue to be active. Fishing, informal trade, tourism and island social life proceed with little attention to the boundary. In both countries 'mainlanders' concede that the connections among the Grenadine islands are in most cases stronger than those with the main island.

Table 1: The inhabited Grenadine Islands (N to S)

Island	Area (km ²)	Population
Bequia	18.1	4,861
Mustique	5.2	1,104
Canouan	7.8	1,165
Mayreau	2.6	254
Union I.	8.5	2,789
Palm I.	0.5	50
Petit St. Vincent	0.5	50
Petit Martinique	2.3	1000
Carriacou	33.7	8,000
Total	69.0	19,273

The entire Grenadines area is noted for its beautiful scenery, spectacular beaches and diverse marine habitats that include coral reefs, mangroves and seabird colonies. There the emerging view by many that the entire area should be declared a transboundary World Heritage Conservation Site.

Marine-based activities are the mainstay of the economy of the area. Tourism is a major source of employment and tourism development is proceeding apace. Private sector activities include: resorts, hotels, guest houses, restaurants, SCUBA dive operators, cruise ships, day and longer-term cruise operators, crafts and shops. There are also under-utilised land-based opportunities for earnings through cultural and heritage developments that would diversify the tourism sector. Fishing is the other major source of employment in the area and has long been a source of exports to neighbouring islandsⁱ.



Tobago Cays Marine Park

The Governments of both countries perceive their Grenadine Islands as having high potential for earning foreign exchange through tourism and associated development. Both Governments also recognise the high vulnerability of the marine and terrestrial resource systems of the area to environmental degradation and the dependency of sustainable development on conservation of the resources.

Marine resource and biodiversity conservation are fundamental to sustainable livelihoods in the Grenadines. These are in turn affected by the land use practices on the islands. Thus it is necessary to consider both terrestrial and marine resource use practices in planning for biodiversity

conservation. Unplanned development and unregulated use of terrestrial and marine habitats and resources have already led to significant degradation in many areas. There are problems with:

- Overfishing,
- Near shore habitat destruction and degradation,
- Terrestrial devegetation and overgrazing,
- Sedimentation,
- Solid waste disposal from land and boat sources,
- Sewage disposal from land and boat sources,
- Recreational abuse of coral reefs.

2 THE CONCEPTS BEHIND THE PROJECT

Change towards sustainability must involve all major partners: governments, private sector and civil society. The Sustainable Grenadines Project is based on the idea that in the Grenadines, civil society partners are the least able to participate in bringing about change that is equitable and lasting. The project therefore focuses on strengthening civil society so that it can better play its role.

Phase 1 of the project explored ideas about how to achieve these aims in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders.

Primary outputs of phase 1 were:

- Stakeholder assessment and inventoryⁱⁱ
- A participatory strategic plan for the Grenadines,ⁱⁱⁱ and
- The proposal for the present phase^{iv}

The vision statement below prepared by the stakeholders in Phase 1 speaks loudly to the way that they would like their future to evolve.

A perspective that underlies the project is that the interactions among stakeholders and their relationships with their natural resources are a system that is too complex to predict and manage. With such systems, progress is more likely to be made when stakeholders are:

- Well informed,



Stakeholders work together to develop the strategic plan for the project

- Able to make meaningful input,
- Working from a common set of goals and principles.

The need for these conditions guides the Sustainable Grenadines Project which therefore focuses on enabling an environment that meets those conditions. This is achieved through a variety of activities that provide access to information, promote collective action, and facilitate the networking and linkages to allow transformative exchanges among the partners. Some of the specific types of activities that will be pursued are described below.

VISION STATEMENT FOR THE GRENADINES

We see the Grenadines as a place comprising sustainable livelihoods with equity for the people through good governance, optimal utilisation and conservation of resources and enhancement of human capacity (empowerment) Using participatory integrated sustainable development processes.

Prepared by Grenadines stakeholders in the planning process

The capacity of the individuals and organisations to engage in the process involves skills such as leadership, conflict resolution and communication as well as conventional skills such as managing money, running meetings and keeping records. These can be addressed through training.

Knowledge and information is needed for playing effective roles and may include, among other things, technical information about the natural resources, knowledge about laws and regulations, understanding processes that can be applied and knowing what agreements governments have signed and are obligated to uphold.

Knowledge and information can be obtained from many sources: the internet, literature and directly from other people. Improving channels for obtaining knowledge and information through access to documents as well as through networking among individuals and organisations will be an important aspect of capacity building.

No amount of information and training can substitute for experience. 'Learning by doing' must be an integral component of any effort to build capacity for sustainable development. The SG Project will promote this by developing and implementing projects in collaboration with Grenadines organisations and by helping them to work with regional and international organisations.

3 WHAT WILL THE PROJECT DO?

The project will pursue the aims and objectives described above through several complementary activities.

3.1 Planning workshops

The purpose of the planning workshops is to bring together stakeholders around a common interest or theme, to share their ideas and to discuss the way forward in the particular topic area. They will be a key means of developing ideas that could lead to associated projects. Their outputs will be used as the basis for developing proposals for submission to donors.

It is expected that there will be 2-3 planning workshops each year. They will generally be for one or two days each and may address a wide range of topics. Several of these were



Teachers and education officials work together in groups to develop a 'Green Schools Project'

identified in the strategic plan, including; development of water taxi associations, fisherfolk associations/comanagement, environmental awareness programmes and water resources use.

Throughout the life of the SG Project these planning workshops will provide many opportunities for individuals and organisations with similar interests to meet with counterparts from other islands and develop a shared view of how best to address the issues that concern them.

3.2 Training workshops

In the Grenadines there are numerous organizations - NGOs, CBOs and Social groups. Most of them are eager to make a difference with regard to sustainable development in the Grenadines, but are uncertain what is required of them in order that their organizations can have longevity and success. The SG Project will endeavor to determine the types of training that would assist these groups in achieving their aims, and to provide it through short training workshops that are highly practical and experiential. These are expected to address a wide range of topics related to building effective organisations, including: leadership, conflict management, group facilitation; project development, and management, proposal writing, record keeping and communications.

The SG Project aims to provide 2-3 training workshops of 1-2 days duration each year for groups of 15-20 people. This recognises that most persons attending will be volunteers and have other work responsibilities. Over the life of the SG Project these training workshops are expected to significantly increase the capacity of individuals to play effective roles in their organisations.

3.3 Attachments and exchanges

These are necessary for organizations to gain practical experience in operational management. This is an important component of the learning by doing approach. Key individuals from Grenadines organisations will be sponsored to visit successful projects and organisations with similar objectives in other parts of the Caribbean. These attachments are expected to provide Grenadines leaders with insights into and practical experience about what will be required for their organisations to achieve their aims.

The SG Project will sponsor 2-3 such attachments each year. Over the life of the Project, 10-15 individuals throughout the Grenadines will benefit from this exposure and will be contributing to sustainable development in the Grenadines.

3.4 Mini-projects

The purpose of the mini-projects is to provide small NGOs, or groups of NGOs, with the opportunity to implement a small project, valued at about US\$2,000. This component is seen as a means to achieve visible outputs in many islands while building capacity of the implementing groups in the various aspects of project implementation. Increased capacity is expected to lead to the ability of NGOs to pursue larger projects, from proposal development through implementation and reporting. As organisations move from mini-project level to the pursuit of larger projects, the Sustainable Grenadines Project will provide assistance with developing projects and sourcing funding.

There will be funding for a small number (4-5) mini-projects in each project year. By the end of the Project a total of 20-25 mini-projects will have been implemented and it is expected that there will be a significant increase in capacity and activity of NGOs. This would be evidenced by an increased number of projects being implemented by these NGOs and a much higher level of comfort among them with processes of seeking funding and meeting donor requirements for monitoring and reporting.



The memorial to the wartime mine blast is unveiled at Windward, Carriacou

3.5 Associated projects

One of the purposes of the Sustainable Grenadines Project is to bring further funding and project opportunities to the Grenadines by developing projects with local, regional and international partners. This will increase the total value of the project beyond the funding provided by The Lighthouse Foundation. In doing this, the Sustainable Grenadines Project will act primarily as a facilitator. The small number of project staff does not allow for the SG Project to play a major role in implementing associated projects.



Tobago Cays Marine Park Rangers enter Reef Check data

Where local partners are concerned, there should be a progression from mini-projects to larger projects as described above, with the SG Project providing support. Where regional and international partners are concerned, the SG Project can facilitate liaison with local partners, identify potential project activities, provide information, and help to ensure sustainability of inputs. It can even serve as matching funding in some cases, for example, the offices can provide a base for associated projects when space demands are modest.

Consequently, the SG project is seeking to develop partnerships with other donors and organisations interested in sustainable development activities in the Grenadines.

There are no specific targets for complementary funding but it would be desirable to at least match the funding provided by the Lighthouse Foundation for activities each year.

3.6 Communications and networking

Communications with and networking among Grenadines's stakeholders and the wider public in both countries are a very important aspect of the Project as regards having well informed stakeholders and transforming exchanges among them. In particular, promoting trans-boundary communication and cooperation will be a high priority. Several activities will be carried out to further these aims.

Newsletter: There will be a quarterly newsletter that provides updates on Project activities as well as important news of happenings in Grenadines, the region and beyond (to receive it see contact information below).

Internet discussion group: Stakeholders with internet access will be linked through a Sustainable Grenadines discussion group established through Yahoo groups. This provides an easy means of informing stakeholders about what is going on and of obtaining feedback. It offers a means of providing the Newsletter electronically to those who would prefer it that way, and thus saving on printing and distribution costs (to join see contact information below).

Media releases: The project will prepare media releases on all its activities during the year and provide these to newspapers, TV and radio stations in both countries.

Website: The Project will develop a website that provides basic information on the overall Project as well as a means to keep interested parties up-to-date with what is going on in the project and in associated projects. A minimal project website already exists on the UWI, Cave Hill server with a link (cavehill.uwi.edu.bb/cermes) from the CERMES home page. The proposed website will be cross-linked with the CERMES web pages and with the project documents that are currently downloadable from the CERMES site.



4 HOW IS THE PROJECT RUN?

The Project Implementation Unit has been established in Clifton, Union Island. It is staffed by the Project Manager and the Project Administrator who will implement the project core. The office space is provided by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The project is overseen by a Steering Committee^v which meets once a year to review the work of the year and consider the proposed workplan for the coming year. There is an Executive Sub-Committee that meets twice a year.

There are several partners in this project:

- Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados,
- Caribbean Conservation Association, with headquarters in Barbados,
- Projects Promotion Ltd., St. Vincent and the Grenadines,
- Carriacou Environmental Committee, Carriacou, Grenada,
- NGOs in the Grenadine Islands,
- Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines,
- Government of Grenada.



The support and input of both Governments is seen being critical in a number of areas such as:

- Endorsement of project proposals,
- Mainstreaming of civil society into sustainable development as per the St. Georges Declaration,
- Technical support for project activities,
- Networking with project stakeholders,
- Facilitation of transboundary matters,
- Integration of project activities into Government programmes,
- Providing enabling legislation where necessary.

The contacts for the SG Project are:

- Mr. Martin Barriteau, Project Manager, Sustainable Grenadines Project, Clifton, Union Island St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 784-485-8779, susgrenpm@vincysurf.com
- Ms. Alexcia Cooke, Project Administration Officer, Sustainable Grenadines Project, Clifton, Union Island, 784-485-8779, susgrenpa@vincysurf.com
- Dr. Robin Mahon, Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, Phone 246-417-4570, Fax 246-424-4204, rmahon@caribsurf.com.

This project is managed through the Office of Research, School for Graduate Studies and Research, University of the West Indies.

5 WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE PROJECT?

The Sustainable Grenadines Project is expected to make considerable strides towards sustainable development in the Grenadines and especially towards enhancing the role of civil society in this endeavor. It is important that this initiative be continued until the mechanisms and processes for resilient, adaptive governance are in place and working on an ongoing basis. It is hoped that the idea of the Grenadines as a 'World Heritage Site' will catch on in both countries and that this will become a driving force in achieving sustainability.

In order to keep the process going until it is self-supporting, it will be necessary in year four to develop a plan for Phase 3 of the project. This should include exploration of alternative sources of funding. In the long run, the initiative should be self supporting from a variety of sources, including Government, private sector and international donors. The former two should see the value of contributing to this

initiative. For Phase three, a major donor that should be considered is The Global Environmental Facility (GEF). A full-size GEF Project should be developed for the five years that could comprise Phase 3. By the time of submission to The GEF, it should be clear that the process is having a significant impact on the Grenadines, and also that continuing it could have substantial global environmental benefits.

6 END NOTES

ⁱ Chakalall,Y. S., R Mahon and H. A. Oxenford (2005). Activities of trading vessels and supplying fishers in the Grenadine Islands, Lesser Antilles. Proceedings of the Gulf & Caribbean Fisheries Institute 47: 236-263.

ⁱⁱ Mahon, R., S. Almerigi and A. Franklin. 2002. Stakeholders in sustainable development in the Grenadine islands. Sustainable Integrated Development and Biodiversity Conservation in the Grenadine Islands, Coastal and Marine Management Programme, Caribbean Conservation Association, Barbados, Version 1, 16 pp.

ⁱⁱⁱ CCA CaMMP. 2002. A participatory strategic plan for sustainable development in the Grenadines. Sustainable Integrated Development and Biodiversity Conservation in the Grenadine Islands, Coastal and Marine Management Programme, Caribbean Conservation Association, Barbados, Version 1, 55 pp.

^{iv} CCA and CERMES. 2003. Final report of Phase 1: Celebration, mini-projects and Phase 2 proposal. Sustainable Integrated Development and Biodiversity Conservation in the Grenadine Islands, Coastal and Marine Management Programme, Caribbean Conservation Association, Barbados, 29 pp.

^v Terms of reference for the Project steering Committee and its executive subcommittee

Steering Committee

- To ensure the Steering Committee (SC) is adequately representative of the stakeholders.
- To ensure the strategic direction of the project's core functions.
- To ensure accountability and transparency in the use of all project funds.
- To effect the recruitment and supervision of suitably qualified staff for the PIU.
- To select an Executive Committee from among its members.
- To examine and approve the budget of the PIU.
- To ensure the security and integrity of all project assets.
- To liaise between all stakeholders (Government, Private Sector, NGO's).
- To review and approve the work plans of the PIU.
- To review the PIU performance to Budget.
- To monitor and guide the work of the PIU.

Executive subcommittee

The EC shall comprise not more than five members of the SC and shall carry on the work of the SC between its annual meetings.