



INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT: BENEFITTING PEOPLE?

Many coastal communities are now finding ways in which they can translate coastal resources into economic opportunities. This briefing paper advocates that civil society is in a position to assist policy makers in the sustainable use and management of coastal resources but only if they are empowered to do so.

The coastal zone and people's livelihoods

The lives of many people in rural coastal areas are directly dependent on the use of coastal resources. Yet, policies for livelihood concerns have often been inadequately addressed in coastal zone management (CZM), tourism, land use and rural development.



Coastal communities are often among the poorest and most underdeveloped in Trinidad. Often, the emphasis is on short-term poverty alleviation rather than on long-term integrated strategies, which promote sustainable livelihoods and natural resource conservation.

Local communities often complain that national plans do not reflect or respond to their livelihood needs, traditions and cultural patterns because they have not been consulted about or involved in the planning process.

Hotel construction promoted in a national policy, for example, may provide benefits to the community in the form of improved road access, water and electricity supply, or improved waste management, but may not necessarily contribute to the social and cultural quality of life desired by the local people.

ICZM and coastal communities

Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) is proactive and equitable CZM which seeks to meet the needs of coastal communities through holistic, long-term socio-economic and natural resource development.

ICZM considers the options for expanding employment opportunities using local natural resources and skills. For example, community-based tourism offers a possible way to encourage small-scale, locally-owned tourism enterprises that can generate employment and revenue at the community level, contribute to reducing fiscal leakages, and reduce the impact of large numbers of visitors on the environmental landscape.

Many coastal communities are now finding ways in which they can translate a natural resource into an economic opportunity that benefits both themselves and the resource. In this way, ICZM allows communities to find ways to help themselves by ensuring that policies and management practices preserve the health of the natural environment on which communities may depend.

When coastal communities embark on initiatives, it not only provides a means of income, but also enhances community pride and empowerment.



Nature Seekers, a community-based organisation in the community of Matura, has pioneered the protection of sea turtles on the North East coast of Trinidad and in so doing, has:

- Increased domestic and international tourism to the north east coast (turtle tours)
- Stimulated the construction of host homes for researchers and visitors, both local and foreign
- Expanded its operations to include nature tour guiding

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The need for capacity-building and empowerment within civil society

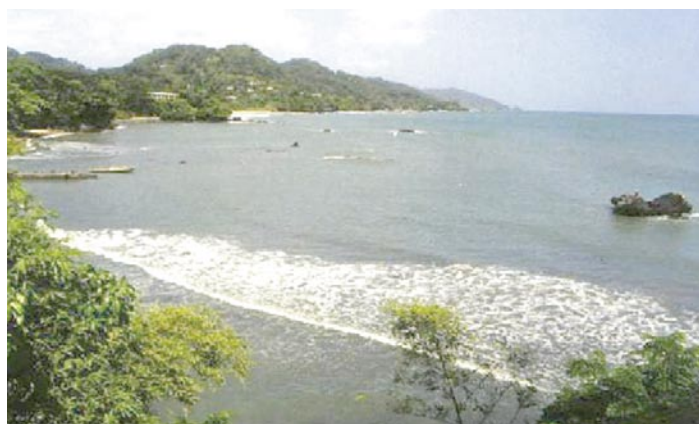
Policy-shapers and decision-makers often have the most power to influence and effect changes in the management of coastal resources, but cannot do this alone. Effective CZM relies on the insights, perceptions and commitment of multiple actors from civil society, private sector and government.



Coastal communities, community-based and non-governmental organisations, research and academic institutions and the private sector are often willing to play an active role but require capacity-building and supporting institutional frameworks for them to participate effectively in the sustainable use and management of natural resources.

Elements of capacity that need to be addressed include:

- **World view:** a coherent frame of reference that can be used to interpret the operating environment and define a place in that environment. This should include a clear vision and mission.
- **Culture:** a way of doing things that enables the achievement of objectives and a belief that there can be an effective impact.
- **Structure:** a clear definition of roles, functions, lines of communication and mechanisms for accountability.
- **Adaptive strategies:** practices and policies that enable adaptation and response to changes in the operating environment.
- **Skills:** knowledge, abilities and competencies.
- **Material resources:** technology, finance and equipment.
- **Linkages:** an ability to develop and manage relationships with individuals, groups and organisations in pursuit of overall goals.



Questions to consider for Trinidad's ICZM:

1. Who are the civil society stakeholders?
2. What other stakeholders should be involved?
3. What are civil society's capacity-building needs?
4. How can ICZM help improve livelihoods?
5. How can government implement participatory processes in ICZM?

CANARI would like your views!

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is an independent, regional, technical assistance organisation with more than 20 years of experience on issues of conservation, the environment, and sustainable development in the islands of the 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.

The Institute has specific interest and extensive experience in the identification and promotion of participatory approaches to natural resource management.

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