Communicating for Conservation

A communication toolkit for Caribbean civil society organisations working in biodiversity conservation

CANARI

DARWIN INITIATIVE

Commonwealth Foundation

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEC	Certificate of Environmental Clearance
CEPA	Communication, Education and Public Awareness
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna
COP	Conference of the Parties to the Convention
CSO	Civil society organisation
Darwin	Darwin Initiative
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EMA	Environmental Management Authority
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KAB	Knowledge, attitudes and behaviours
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PV	Participatory video
UKOTs	United Kingdom Overseas Territories
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Rationale

As the threats to our natural resources have multiplied, the role of civil society has increased in importance. Its role is now critical, not only in helping to conserve what is left of our biodiversity but also in communicating the critical contribution that biodiversity makes to our quality of life

Long before members of the international community signed the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992, the importance of protecting and conserving the Earth's plant and animal life and the habitats and ecosystems in which they live, was known to many. However, in an era that is faced with threats to food security and a range of livelihoods, now, more than ever, the need for continued focus on biological conservation must be understood and promoted.

Within the Caribbean, these issues are of even greater importance, as it is a 'biodiversity hotspot'[1] and a region in which the livelihoods of many are tied to natural resources. Those people, like you, who are involved in biodiversity conservation, are well aware of this, but communicating this to the wider society is often challenging. This may be so for several reasons:

- civil society organisations (CSOs) do not promote their activities beyond their local area of activity;

- they do not have the capacity (assets, funds, skills) to enable them to promote or sustain campaigns in biological conservation;

- their work in biodiversity conservation is not recognised as contributing to development or to be of relevance to the public; and

- biodiversity conservation is not recognised as being relevant to national development.

As a result of these constraints, the work done by your organisations in conserving biodiversity risks being overlooked by policy makers and decision makers. Your work lacks buy-in from the public. When this happens, you see less progress being made in ensuring that critical natural resources are protected, conserved or used wisely, and poor planning decisions are made. This also leads to a worsening of the effects of other environmental issues like climate change.

Purpose

This toolkit was developed to provide your organisation with a guide that will help you to develop a strategic approach to building the critical knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (abbreviated as KAB) among the public and policy makers, as you undertake positive action in biodiversity conservation.

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1 'Biodiversity hotspot': a region with high species richness, which is under threat.

The toolkit provides you with various options to build your voice in advocacy, to address key decision makers and to influence policy. You can use both the products of your work and current scientific information to promote action which supports international commitments and local priorities for biodiversity. In this way, you will be better equipped to take on your role as facilitators, mobilisers and change agents in your own country.

The toolkit highlights and advises on low- and no-cost pathways for effectively getting messages out to different people and organisations (your audiences). It provides ideas on receiving feedback from these audiences even when you have little access to funds for communication activities.

Some of the content for this toolkit has been extracted from another publication produced by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute: Communicating climate change - A toolbox for local organisations in the Caribbean (CANARI, 2009).

The toolkit is primarily designed for civil society organisations working in Caribbean United Kingdom Overseas Territories (UKOTs) as an output of the 2009-2012 Commonwealth Foundation project implemented by CANARI, under funding from the Darwin Initiative (Darwin). However, it is also suitable for use in other Caribbean islands from which some examples of effective communication practices are drawn.

How to use this toolbox

This toolbox is divided into six sections as follows:

Section 1 gives an overview of communication on biodiversity conservation and things you should keep in mind when communicating.

Section 2 looks at the value of biodiversity in the Caribbean and why biodiversity conservation is important to this region. It emphasises key areas of concern including policy that requires action.

Section 3 will guide you to understand how to get started in developing a communication plan on biodiversity conservation.

Section 4 describes how to fit into the agenda of critical audiences.

Section 5 presents a range of tools that you can use when communicating with different types of audiences

Section 6 provides guidance on how you can evaluate your communication plan.

Some parts of the document are highlighted as a quick 'how-to' guide. Other parts are highlighted to provide examples and case studies to explain some of the concepts or give background to the information presented in the particular section of the toolkit. The highlighted areas therefore provide you with a quick reference which can to assist you in your use of the toolkit.

Communicating on biodiversity conservation
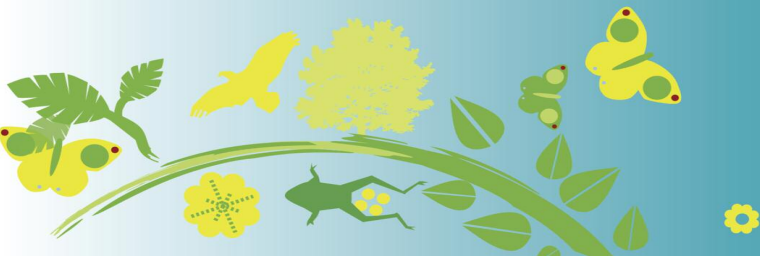
Building consensus that is critical

In 2002, signatories to the decade-old CBD agreed to ambitious targets for 2010, the year which was declared "The International Year for Biodiversity". The key target in mind was "To achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth".

Leading international publications, among them New Scientist (Zukerman, 2010) and Science (Butchart et al, 2010), as well as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2010) reported that the target was not met, and indications were that in fact, the rate of decline of species had not halted or in some cases, even slowed down.

The central statement of the CBD's 2010 target aimed at poverty alleviation and the benefit of all life on Earth, should be sufficient reason to have positive engagement of all parties towards this goal; but the reality however shows something rather different.

One of the main reasons for this failure was because policy and key decision makers were not persuaded by scientists and biodiversity conservationists that agendas for development should be adjusted to accommodate conservation needs. Additionally, for those countries in which policy was implemented to address biodiversity decline, low public awareness and/or buy-in to conservation needs also contributed to the failure to meet targets.

What this points to, is the need for more work to be done to build and sustain awareness among a wide range of audiences to the critical importance of biodiversity conservation. Your work in communicating the urgency of the situation in order to mobilise positive action is therefore critical.

Being active in biodiversity conservation is part of this communication. The action you take on 'the ground' needs to be transferred to a wider audience outside your active group. There are many ways in which you can deliver messages that will build knowledge, change attitudes and effect positive behaviour.

One key thing to remember is that communication should be an important consideration when undertaking activities: develop a plan for communication before you implement projects and don't leave communication as an afterthought; this would ensure that your activity itself becomes a means of awareness building and advocacy for biodiversity conservation within the wider society.

Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation

More than one hundred and fifty countries of the world have agreed that the world's biodiversity is under threat and needs to be protected. Their agreement is demonstrated in these countries' signing to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Listed below are key strategies in place at the international and national levels to assist in the realisation of biodiversity conservation.

The Convention on Biological Diversity

The CBD was presented at the 1992 UN Conference of Environment and Development, more popularly known as the "Rio Earth Summit" . This Convention sets out the main commitments of countries to maintaining the global environment while carrying out their development. One hundred and ninety three countries are parties to the Convention. There are three main goals of the convention: the conserving of biological diversity, the sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of the use of the world's genetic resources.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

One of the mechanisms put in place to assist countries in achievement of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity's three main goals is the development of a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Each country makes use of this plan for the mainstreaming of Convention's key principles into national planning activities. In 2004, at the Seventh Conference of Parties to the Convention (COP-7) there was agreement for adoption of a multi-annual programme of work to monitor progress in achievement of a 2010 Biodiversity Target. The target was to stop the decline in biodiversity by the end of 2010.[2]

Communication, Education and Public Awareness

The CBD recognises that a positive approach to biodiversity conservation is built by increasing awareness. The Convention's Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) programme seeks to do this by ensuring the effective transfer or translation of scientific and technical information to people, building awareness of issues impacting on biodiversity and raising the profile on the value of biodiversity to our everyday lives.[3] The programme also promotes and explains the purpose of the Convention and how the work done under the Convention helps to ensure equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity and genetic resources globally.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) is an international agreement that countries voluntarily subscribe to in order to address the exploitation of endangered species of plants and animals, by limiting their international trade. This is not confined to the live specimens but also products derived from them such as food products, clothing, curios and musical instruments. CITES provides a framework that signatory countries adopt in the formulation of national laws that enable implementation of the agreement at the national level.

The Darwin Initiative

The Darwin Initiative was established as a mechanism of the UK Government to assist countries in the achievement of their commitments under three major conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. Its work is done through funding of projects with partners in countries that are rich in biodiversity but poor in resources and with the input of UK biodiversity expertise.

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2 Convention on Biological Diversity webpage: http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/
3 Communication, Education and Public Awareness programme, CBD - http://www.cbd.int/cepa/

What motivates your communication? The communication objective.

Your communication on biodiversity conservation may be motivated by several reasons:

- to let others know about the work you and others are doing to protect and conserve species and their habitats;

- to let others know why biodiversity needs to be protected and conserved;

- to encourage others to support and become involved in activities related to biodiversity conservation; and

- to influence policy and key decision makers to mainstream biodiversity conservation into the planning process.

These motivations can be broadly grouped into two main categories that define the objective of your communication, these categories are: i) public education and awareness and ii) advocacy.

i) Communication for public education and awareness

Educating the public and building its awareness of biodiversity conservation can be challenging, largely because of the mixed nature of the public. This audience is quite varied and so the attitudes, motivations and agendas of its component sectors present a collage of starting points, with some being very receptive to the notion of conservation while others need to be convinced of the value of this type of activity.

Public education and awareness activities aim to increase people's knowledge and change their attitudes and behaviour. To do this effectively, you need to:

- understand what their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours are before you start communicating;

- decide what you want them to know and how you hope they will act by the end of your activity;

- determine what you will communicate to achieve this; and

- decide how you are going to measure this change.

ii) Communication for advocacy

While certain policies and laws exist within a country to address biodiversity conservation, some of these are not actively enforced and some may require amendment to address current issues and respond to changing circumstances. This is where you become an advocate.

Advocacy is a very powerful role for civil society organisations when well developed through careful research and presentation of key issues. Advocacy is not about 'blowing

hot air', but it is about leveraging and building support for critical actions on the part of policy makers and key stakeholders to address current and emerging threats, and promoting proactive rather than reactive action.

Advocacy action must be bolstered by sound scientific facts, international obligations and the promotion of success stories from the field. Your advocacy is primarily addressed to a specific audience of decision makers, but the support for your advocacy action is gained through positive buy-in of others. It is therefore critical that you make the connections to 'the benefit of all life on earth' explicit rather than implicit, since decisions pertaining to developmental planning are often made in isolation from biodiversity concerns.

Advocacy in action

In Trinidad, a private nature facility, the Asa Wright Nature Centre successfully lobbied to bring a halt to the operation of a quarry near its boundary. The Centre, world renowned as a bird-watching haven, lies in the Arima Valley of the Northern Range. This area also is a site for deposits of aggregate, which is in heavy demand for local construction activities and the Centre lies uphill of several Government and private quarries.

Prior to 2007, all quarry operators required a Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) issued by the Environmental Management Authority before beginning operations. In 2007, the law governing quarry operations was amended to limit this stipulation to quarries in excess of 150 acres (60.7 hectares). This amendment was not well received by most conservationists, as it essentially gave most quarry operators in Trinidad freedom to excavate the landscape without regulation.

When one of the quarries near the Centre began expansion of its operation in a direction that faced the Centre's main bird viewing gallery, the Centre's Board and Chief Executive Officer hosted a media conference at the Centre and also invited the Ministers of the Environment and Energy to a discussion on the matter. The immediate issue of the particular quarry activity, involving heavy machinery movement, blasting and heavy generation of particulate matter in the surrounding area, was outlined and the Centre also raised other ongoing issues with quarry operations and its view that jurisdiction over quarrying be placed under the Environmental Management Authority (EMA).

This public action led to the immediate halting of the new quarry activity by the Energy Minister and a commitment to look at the other issues. Heavy local media coverage of the issue yielded feedback from the public in newspaper blogs, television morning news shows and radio call-in programmes and featured positive support for the action and the work of the Centre. The very focused advocacy action of the Centre resulted in positive feedback by decision makers and stimulated new debate in the wider public on the CEC stipulation.

Getting the facts right and keeping them current

It is important when building a case for advocacy work, that you have facts at your fingertips. These must be obtained from reputable sources and as far as possible, you should ensure that the information is up-to-date.

Obtain copies of and become familiar with the laws that govern environmental matters in your country. Sometimes one issue is covered by several pieces of legislation, so follow the paper trail and ensure that you have sound knowledge of the issues and the loopholes.

You can also obtain information from researchers, scientists and institutions that gather and form repositories for research data. Become aware of the types of research activity taking place in your island. Do not dismiss information from non-traditional sources: work done by NGOs and communities may be the source of both qualitative and quantitative data.

The internet is also a useful repository of information. Become familiar with websites from which updates on your data are available, and keep current with new developments related to your field with information from reputable sources. The following are a few key websites that supply regular updates on research, and is presented in a user-friendly format. These are particularly relevant to the Caribbean UKOTs:

- *SciDev.net - the Science and Development Network (*www.scidev.net*):* This website provides information on science, technology and development from around the world. The information carried there is derived directly from the contributions of researchers, civil society, policy makers and media sources. There is a Caribbean section on the site for information specific to the region. The network provides useful features such as information dossiers on specific topics, practical guides, policy briefs, notices of events and allows users to sign up for general e-mail alerts or alerts on specific topics of interest.

- *Defra - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (www.defra.gov.uk):* Defra is the UK government department responsible for policy and regulations on the environment, food and rural affairs. There is an environment section on this website from which can be accessed a paper entitled The Environment in the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories: UK Government and Civil Society Support. This article outlines areas of environmental concern in UK overseas territories and how the UK Government is assisting its agencies and civil society in these territories to manage these issues.

- *IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature (www.iucn.org):* IUCN is a global conservation network whose membership is made up over 200 governments and 1400 non-governmental members worldwide. The website has a section entitled 'resources' that provides databases such as the IUCN Red List of threatened species, a directory of ecosystem services experts (linked from the World Resources Institute website: www.wri.org) and tools for conservation education and awareness raising. The Caribbean Initiative of the IUCN[4] is specific to the region and addresses conservation of biodiversity management issues through the collaborative work of its Caribbean members.

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4 IUCN Caribbean - http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/meso/caribe/

In developing your communication, there is basic information that you will need most of the time and other types of information that you will need occasionally, or that you will gather in the course of your work. Keep the basic data in a format which can be easily updated (e.g. Excel table or Access database) and prepare simple information briefs to provide background. Having your information readily accessible and summarised in a readable format facilitates the production of material for ready dissemination. Remember also that you need to cite all sources you use and show validation of the facts you present.

The following is a checklist of the types of standard data that you should keep to build your portfolio of facts for advocacy work:

- ☐ size of island and size of human population;

- ☐ main economic sectors and activities;

- ☐ economic activities linked to biodiversity;

- ☐ international obligations regarding biodiversity;

- ☐ numbers of endemic species and locally endangered species;

- ☐ historic economic losses due to natural disasters;

- ☐ historic conflicts regarding environmental management;

- ☐ current impacts in terms of key vulnerabilities of local biodiversity and ecosystems;

- ☐ current conflicts with environmental management;

- ☐ current work "on the ground" in biodiversity conservation;

- ☐ success stories;

- ☐ state agencies directly involved in environmental management;

- ☐ existing legislation related to environmental management;

- ☐ identified gaps in legislation relevant to environmental management; and

- ☐ current civil society activities relevant to environmental management.
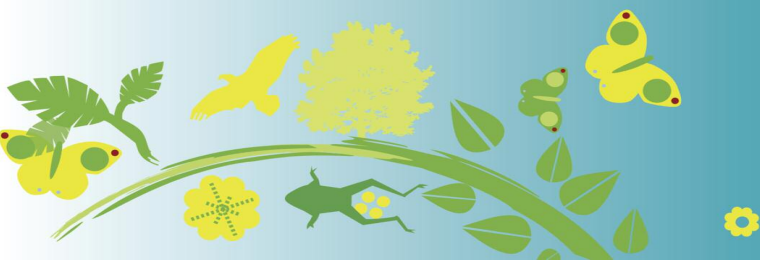
The value of biodiversity

Why conserve biodiversity?

When you are working in a CSO that is active in biodiversity conservation, it is sometimes difficult to understand why others may not see the point of your work. It is incorrect to assume that the value of biodiversity is universally understood. Your communication on the value of biodiversity is therefore a first step in building knowledge and awareness, as well as in advocating for change and biodiversity conservation.

The Caribbean region is considered to be a "biodiversity hotspot" (Conservation International website). This means that the region has high species richness, which is under threat. The biodiversity of Caribbean islands is rich both on land and sea, owing to the historical connection of the islands with the South American continent and subsequent geographical fragmentation. The Caribbean also has a high number of endemic species[5], with at least 7,000 endemic vascular plants and over 700 endemic vertebrates found within these islands.

> **Conservation International:**
> Hotspot defined - To qualify as a hotspot, a region must meet two strict criteria: it must contain at least 1,500 species of vascular plants (> 0.5 percent of the world's total) as endemics, and it has to have lost at least 70 percent of its original habitat.

The ecology of the islands is varied, shaped by physical factors, the presence or lack of water on land, and the types of plants and animals found there. Caribbean islands lie within an area of high hurricane activity and the diversity of species has been influenced by this activity over several decades. Additionally, the islands are home to culturally, politically and socially diverse human residents whose activities impact greatly on their ecology.

The health of island economies is generally affected when the available human and institutional resources and skills are low. When this happens, these islands become dependent on external investment and the value of their natural resources. Few islands in the Caribbean possess rich mineral resources (Trinidad and Tobago is a notable exception, being rich in petroleum and natural gas). Some islands do not even have the luxury of a large supply of a basic resource like freshwater (Barbados is described as a water-scarce country). Tourism is often the biggest economic sector for these countries, and though it brings in much needed revenue, the sector often also impacts heavily on island biodiversity.

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5 Endemic describes a species that is native to or is found within a specific region.

Thus, there are many sources of impact on biodiversity in the Caribbean and in order to protect the region's natural character and the livelihoods that depend upon it, the work you do in conservation is necessary.

What is special about the biodiversity of islands?

The buy-in for biodiversity conservation cannot rely only on 'loving animals or loving plants'. People need to understand and agree that there is a real need to protect and sustain critical natural resources, as these contribute to the quality of life and livelihoods that we all wish to enjoy.

Biodiversity supports the natural processes that support life including the natural cycling of water, the production of oxygen by green plants, the absorption of carbon dioxide, provision of food and spices, and the supply of useful materials such as natural medicines.

Biodiversity also supports several livelihood activities such as agriculture, horticulture, research, tourism, fisheries and cottage industries.

Biodiversity provides a buffer to the impacts of natural disasters for example, coastal windbreaks help protect us from storm surges, forest cover protects us from erosion and landslides and mangrove forests build the coastline and reduce coastal erosion.

The ways in which biodiversity is vulnerable need to be identified and understood, so that conservation can take place in an effective way and so that more people agree that biodiversity matters.

Islands, while being areas of unique biodiversity, also possess very fragile ecosystems. They are very vulnerable to natural extreme events, such as hurricanes, and to social impacts such as land development. These factors can have a tremendous impact on biodiversity and can include the following:

- unique species can face fragmented habitats or even extinction;

- local species can be out-competed by invasive species;

- altered ecosystems can cause less desirable species to increase in population; and

- the natural balance of species can be upset within habitats.

Issues affecting Caribbean UKOTs

Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos, the six Caribbean UKOTs collectively cover a total area of just 1168 km^2. They are heavily dependent upon tourism as a source of revenue and thus, preserving the character of their natural landscape, particularly their coastal regions is of critical importance. This however, is an uphill task, as the islands face several challenges, both natural and man-made.

One of the key problems faced in biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean UKOTs is habitat loss caused by a combination of factors. These include human destruction of environment and natural destruction due to hurricanes. The latter events also contribute to opportunistic introductions of invasive species that have in turn impacted upon native species such as the Bermuda petrel and the Montserrat oriole.

The islands are also faced with the problem of low human capacity for biodiversity conservation as the total population of these islands is approximately 176,000 persons and there is steady human migration out of the islands.

The natural environment of Caribbean UKOTs faces several threats - conservation work helps to address them

Climate change has contributed even more impacts and made the impacts of other factors even worse, due to changes in temperature on land and sea and local weather patterns. Biodiversity vulnerability has increased due to these changes, owing to increased extreme weather conditions and the combination of other environmental problems created by man.

Conserving culture: The rescue of mountain chicken

The local delicacy 'mountain chicken' is well known in Dominica. Unfortunately, the population of this amphibian species (Leptodactyllus fallax) has been declining since 2002. Researchers have pinpointed the spread of a fungal disease, which infects the skin of the frog, as the cause of this decline. It is believed that fungus growth increases with increasing temperature that is brought on by climate change.

In Montserrat, another island in which the rare amphibian is found, healthy populations of the frogs were removed to other parts of the world and attempts are underway to rear the animals in captivity (Aldred, et al 2009) The plan is to reintroduce successfully bred animals back to areas of Montserrat that are free of the fungus. A stock population of healthy frogs will be kept at the breeding sites in the event of future outbreaks of the fungus. Conservation action therefore has provided a practical means of preserving biodiversity of cultural importance to these Caribbean islands.

Montserrat's 'mountain chicken' - a species of frog under threat
(Photo credit: Stephen Mendes)

When no attempt is made to protect vulnerable biodiversity, we lose the resources that support natural processes and economic activity. Since our island populations are generally dependent on these resources, human life is also affected. This connection should be emphasised when decisions are made to provide the infrastructural needs of the population. Your advocacy for biodiversity conservation is critical in addressing the balancing act between development and sustainability.

Ecosystem approach to conservation of biodiversity

While the efforts to conserve the 'mountain chicken' are to be applauded, success with ex situ conservation[6] is not always guaranteed. Biodiversity flourishes best in its natural habitat and within the specific ecosystem in which it performs its particular role, among other species.

Some species when bred 'successfully' in ex situ captive breeding programmes may not thrive when released to the wild. Sometimes this happens because the species is unable to follow the normal behaviour of its wild ancestors, including patterns of migration and feeding patterns that would enable its survival (Moyle et al, 2004). For example, the vibrant colour of the Scarlet Ibis (Eudocimus ruber) reduces when the bird is kept in captivity, particularly when it does not receive its normal food source from the wild. There is a preference for in situ conservation, as far as possible, in which not just the species, but its habitat and ecosystem are also conserved.

Using protected areas for biodiversity conservation

The Bermuda petrel (Pterodroma cahow), one of the world's rarest seabirds, has benefited from conservation work carried out at Nonsuch Island (Birdlife International, 2008). In 1951, 18 nesting pairs of the birds were discovered after they were previously thought to be extinct. Using artificial nesting sites to cope with the impact of high waves and other birds competing for nest sites, success in increasing the population was hindered by hurricane impacts. Recently, however, successful nesting and relocation of chicks to less vulnerable sites on the islands has given hope to an eventual increase in the population of this endangered species. Even when on site conservation is attempted therefore, these efforts must be closely monitored to enhance the changes of success.

The strength of scientific knowledge in conservation work is not always translated to the decision makers in government. Sometimes the reason is lack of understanding of the science. Other times, the reason is a lack of strong evidence in support of the need for conservation. The demands of planning for an island economy are often pro-development, and often do not give consideration of environmental limits or social

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6 ex situ conservation: conservation carried out outside of the natural ecosystem of the species

equity. Your communication to decision makers must therefore be strong and unambiguous, understood by the target audience and supported by strong evidence that shows the benefits of conservation and also, the impact of not taking conservation action.

The challenge of encroachment

At the Greame Hall Sanctuary, located within Barbados' only Ramsar-designated wetland, encroaching development has generated major impacts. The Sanctuary is found in the island's busy, expanding South coast; and neighbouring development activity has caused severe damage to the mangrove system from commercial and domestic pollution, sewerage intrusion and improper drainage. This has led to invasion of freshwater plants and reduction in mangrove fauna including crabs and migratory bird species.

The issue shows it is insufficient to simply designate a conservation site; despite the good efforts of the managers of the Sanctuary, other people and agencies must also understand their role in supporting the conservation action through appropriate action in areas around that site.

Planning your communication

Putting it all together: developing a communication plan

Sometimes communication is considered as an afterthought, as something that you should perhaps consider doing to report on what you've done, why it was relevant and why you took the route you did. However, setting out to strategically develop a communication plan gives you a blueprint for your work in biodiversity conservation and helps you think ahead to how you will achieve and how you will communicate the desired impacts of your work.

A communication plan helps you to be clear about:

- what change you want to bring about using communication (objectives);
- which individuals or groups you want to influence (target audiences);
- what you want to say (key messages);
- who or what are the most effective messengers or champions;
- what are most effective products and activities for each target audience (pathways and channels);
- how you will accomplish your objectives (activities and timetable);
- what outcomes you desire and anticipate; and
- how you will measure the results of your project (evaluation).

The following are the seven steps you should follow in developing a communication plan.

Summary of steps: Development of a communication plan

Step 1: *Identify the **objective** of your communication*

Your objective links ahead to **desired outcomes** and the **change you would like to see effected**. Consider your objective, identifying whether it is:

i. to raise awareness,

ii. to share knowledge,

iii. to effect a change in behaviour. or

iv. to advocate for 'action' (can further define the action).

Step 2: *Identify your **audience(s)***

Be very clear to whom your communication will be directed. For example is your audience a key stakeholder, decision maker, resource user, or media representative? Ask yourself the following questions:

i. What are the interests, beliefs and agenda of this audience?

ii. Do I know the background of the audience so that I can fine tune the approach I take?

Step 3: *Develop your **message(s)***

Consider carefully your objective and what you hope to achieve by the delivery of your message.

i. Frame your message in a way that engages the target audience — connect with where the audience is now and guide your message to where you want it to go.

ii. Ensure you observe "the 5Cs" of communication: be **clear, concise, correct/credible, comprehensive** and **consistent** in your message.

Step 4: *Decide on the **product** and **channel** or **pathway** for delivery of message(s) to each target audience*

Selection of the mechanism for delivery of your message (product, pathway) will be linked to the audience's interests and preferences so you need to determine:

i. What media, forums etc. your target audience accesses

ii. Who influences the audience (i.e. who might be an intermediary messenger or champion)

The pathway you select must also take into account the need to evaluate the achievement of desired outcomes by assessing reaction/response. Your selection is also dependent upon your available resources, practicality, opportunities, networks and your budget.

Step 5: *Decide on **timeframe** to effect*

Clarify the sequence of activities required for your communication, what activities need to be done in tandem, etc.

Step 6: *Decide on **means of evaluation***

You want to ensure that your communication has been received and that it has had a positive outcome, therefore you need to identify indicators that can be used to measure effectiveness.

    i.   Identify some checkpoints at which you can monitor progress.

    ii.   Factor in opportunities to troubleshoot and improve your communication plan.

Step 7: *Implement* and *Evaluate*

Carry out your communication plan and assess its progress and **outcomes**. Use the lessons you learn to improve the plan and to develop better plans for future communication planning. Your ability to develop a good plan should improve with experience!

Knowing what you want to communicate and being effective

Once you are clear on the objective of your communication (as broadly categorised in *Section 1: Communication for public awareness and education or advocacy*), you must be clear in what you communicate. What you want to say defines your message. The message 'sells' your objective and therefore it needs to be crisp and clear, conveying the hard facts that are of relevance to your objective and that can convince your audience and motivate the change you desire.

Messaging is a critical aspect in the development of your communication plan and you will need to reflect carefully when crafting your message. Your message should be a concise and unambiguous statement which is transmitted in one or several ways to your target audience to fulfil your objective.

You can eliminate ambiguity and achieve 'sell', by observing the 5Cs of communication in developing your message: be *clear, concise, correct/credible, comprehensive* and *consistent*. The following tips will provide elaboration of the 5Cs.

Tips for talking about biodiversity conservation: messaging

In all forms of communication, there are five important elements to consider when developing your message:

1. The message must be clear.

The language used must be simple, consider the age range, literacy level and interest of your audience when you are developing your message. How do you make the message clear? Consider communicating your message visually, in writing or verbally to give clarity. The message should not be ambiguous, but easily understood.

2. The message must be concise.

Do not get your audience lost in a fog of information. If you use too many words or your information proceeds on a long and winding path, you lose your audience's interest and its understanding of your message. Keeping the message brief helps with uptake.

3. The message must be correct and credible.

You should validate your information and obtain it only from credible sources. Wikipedia is a quick reference but you must remember that the upload comes from a variety of sources. Websites mentioned in Section 1: Getting the facts right and keeping them current are more reputable sources of information. Misconceptions should be dealt with directly. Understand the issues before you pass them on to others.

4. The message must be comprehensive and make a connection.

Use plain language and eliminate technical words that may not be widely understood. Consider your audience: scientists may use scientific jargon among other scientists, but communication with the layman requires adjustment. If technical terms are introduced, explain them with the support of examples that are familiar to your audience as far as possible.

5. The message must be consistent.

Particularly when you use a host of communication products are used, ensure that your message stays the same to reduce confusion and to assist in emphasis. Particular products can be used for specific audiences, but also, a variety of products may be understood by each audience. It is imperative that there is consistency among the products so that misinterpretation is lessened.

Ensure that you observe these 5Cs in developing your messages when relating to any audience and when using any communication product and pathway. If you pay correct attention to messaging, you will improve the opportunity for achieving the intended uptake by the audience.

Example of consistency in messaging

In 2011, a public education campaign was undertaken in St. Vincent and the Grenadines with the objective being to promote and encourage involvement in participatory forest management (CANARI, 2011a).

The campaign utilised several products and pathways, including the production of information posters, a series of newspaper articles, a community caravan and the development of a radio programme that included a radio drama segment. The following key messages were used in these communication media:

1. Forests contribute 1% to the Gross Domestic Product.

2. Forest management requires everyone's efforts.

3. Improving livelihoods should be done in a sustainable way and be independent of external forces.

4. The Integrated Forest Management Development Programme will contribute to people using their natural resources sustainably.

In the newspaper article series, each message was conveyed in a separate article, providing data and examples to illustrate the particular message. The poster series also conveyed each message using photographs and examples of forest-based livelihood activities that were recognizable, sustainable and in harmony with the environment.

The radio drama was developed by first creating a values grid that showed positive and negative attitudes towards forest management and the desired actions to assist in participatory management; this information was then built into the various characters of the drama, who also depicted key stakeholders that are forest users.

A range of forest stakeholders took part in the community caravan. They mounted displays and spoke to visitors from the public about their projects which promoted participatory forest management and exchanged information and ideas among themselves on how their work can be strengthened and improved through collaboration. The key messages were therefore central to the structure of the communication but were also consistent in their execution in a range of communication tools.

Using newspaper inserts brings attention to your activities and promotes your messages

Understanding your audience

Previously, it was mentioned that the value of biodiversity is not universally understood. The challenge for you, therefore, is to communicate with an audience in such a way that people can recognise and appreciate why biodiversity conservation is important and necessary.

The so-called 'general public' is a diverse audience. As far as possible, you will need to identify the sector or sectors of this diverse audience with which you wish to communicate and utilise the best means of communicating with each unique type.

Audience types

Think about the audience with which you want to communicate. Start with the people where they are and make a case with them in mind. Ask three key questions:

- What do they already know?
- What do they want to know?
- What do you want them to know?

Audience motivations, interests and beliefs

The following are three examples of different audience types in different settings. For each, there are possible assumptions that can be made about the audience in terms of their motivations, interests and beliefs. Read through these examples and reflect on some other types of audiences with which you relate in your activities in biodiversity conservation. Consider the ways in which you should communicate with them to share knowledge, deliver the information that they need to know and how you can influence their future behaviour and attitude towards biodiversity conservation.

Example 1:

If you have an objective of reducing littering in outdoor spaces and a message about the impact of littering on wildlife and have targeted an audience made up of family groups that picnic in an outdoor location, what can you assume about these families? Perhaps, the following: they like to be outdoors, they enjoy activities that can involve all family members and they value open spaces for relaxation. They believe that this is a place they can safely visit as a group, where they can sit and eat. They would want to know that the location remains accessible and just the way it is, for their enjoyment.

In view of your objective you would like these persons

Enjoying the outdoors can be an educational as well as relaxing experience

to become aware of the need to protect the environment and to engage them in this action. This group can therefore be approached with information that will assist them in continuing to enjoy this outdoor experience. The opportunity exists to encourage them to identify the value that the location has to their enjoyment and to encourage their participation in activities to ensure they can continue to enjoy it. This audience can build their awareness and knowledge of the value of the environment by interacting with the environment.

Example 2:

If you have an objective of motivating persons in the tourism sector to become involved in conservation of biodiversity and your message is highlighting the economic value of biodiversity to the tourism product and you have targeted an audience made up of hotel operators attending a tourism conference, you can assume the following: this audience knows what the island has to offer to the tourist in terms of sights and sounds and what visitor arrival figures should be for the time of year. They are interested in knowing that their product is not under threat, that what they have advertised in marketing their hotel and amenities will be available to the tourists when they arrive.

If your objective is to encourage this group to assist in conservation, find out what are the experiences they want to ensure their guests have. Information can be supplied to their packages to highlight and provide updates on rare and unique species on the island. You can encourage this group to learn about and guide tourists to exercise conservation themselves by not removing species from the wild on their tours, by educating them on the impact this would have on the tourism product. This audience can gain information while also playing a role in protecting the tourism product (their livelihood) by promoting the conservation of biodiversity.

Example 3:

If your objective is to amend policy related to biodiversity conservation in planning activities of Government, and your message revolves around the specific regulations inherent in one agency and your target audience is made up of policy makers attending a workshop on planning, the following can be assumed about these persons: they rely upon statistical information and reports that show expenditures and revenue figures, they need to develop plans for the fiscal year and need to make decisions to prioritise activities, they want to know how they can get returns in the short and long term on their investments without generating deficits.

Your audience would need hard facts and figures and documented proof of success stories and results. If you develop 'What if' scenarios, you need to have sound documentation to back up projections. Obtain validation from reputable sources so as to provide alternatives to influence your audience's decisions. Your communication with this critical audience has to be focussed to have desired results.

Presentations to policy makers use the forum and the language of your audience

In these three examples, ensuring that your message makes a connection is very important. When you understand the audience, your messaging can be sharply focussed and specifically directed; it must be couched in the language and setting of the audience.

Connecting with your audience: the powers of attraction, holding and learning

Making a connection with an audience is critical in attracting and keeping its attention. This applies also to your method of communication. In the section above, three different audience types were identified. Each had a different interest, each had different baseline knowledge, each had a different type of motivation, and each had different information needs. When you meet the audience where it is, you need to use suitable approaches that are specifically directed to the audience's unique disposition. The choice of communication product and pathway used is therefore governed by the type of audience that you are targeting. Here is an explanation of how the powers of attraction, holding and learning apply to your audience.

Applying the three powers

- The attraction power is what makes your audience pay attention. You need to ensure therefore, that your communication makes the audience take notice. You can do this visually, in your choice of words, or by your means of delivery. Successful attraction begins the process of relaying your message. When you take the time to understand your audience, you have a good idea of what will attract it.

- You want to hold your audience's attention, so that it can receive and understand your message. What you are delivering and how you are delivering it keeps the audience engaged. You therefore have to ensure that your message is comprehensive and that it is clear; it engages the audience and the audience is able to understand what is being relayed. Your message must be relevant to your audience's needs and interests.

- You successfully exercise the learning power when your audience gains from the communication. The gains can be new knowledge, or a new perspective; successful learning produces changes in behaviour, attitude or ability to engage further with the issue. Your intention is that the audience is empowered by the communication.

Communication channels and pathways

You can use a variety of channels (tools), activities and materials to get your information out to various audiences. What you use will depend on the resources available to you, including your budget, manpower, opportunities and networks.

Your choice of channel will also be determined by the type of result you wish to obtain from your communication. Remember, your communication has an objective – to educate, build awareness or to advocate – which should result in a change (improvement, enhancement, positive action). Choosing the appropriate channel is influenced by the type of outcome you wish to achieve.

The following table gives examples of various channels that can be used for communication.

Table 1: Examples of channels used for communication		
Channels	**Activities**	**Materials**
Mass media such as articles in the Press and popular magazines	Meetings e.g. with policy makers, community groups, key stakeholders	Brochures
		Information briefs
Guerrilla marketing[7]	Presentations at various fora e.g. seminars, conferences, meetings	Flyers
Internet including social media networks like Facebook, YouTube, blogs, e-mail		Billboards
	Exhibitions in communities, at malls, at your own location, for special days related to biodiversity (e.g. International Day for Biological Diversity, Earth Day, World Environment Day, World Food Day)	Exhibits
		Video documentaries
Places of religious worship		Case studies
Transportation hubs		
		Public service announcements
Face-to-face communication	Workshops	
		Songs
Libraries	Media opportunities e.g. interviews by reporters for the Press, appearances on television talk shows, radio call-in programmes	Websites
Commercial sites: banks, hotels, fishing depots, agricultural shops, sport shops		Letters to the editor
		Skits and illustrations
Educational institutions - schools and universities		

7 Guerrilla marketing: The use of unconventional means to promote a product or idea by creating a unique, thought-provoking and engaging concept to generate buzz among your audience.

Communication can grouped into two broad categories of active and passive communication. In the very basic sense, when you carry out active communication you deliver your message directly to another person and a response is received directly from that person. In passive communication, you are sending the message out and you are hoping that it is being received, which may or may not be the case. What is central to this basic description of active and passive communication is that the method of delivery used for communication plays an important role.

Nothing beats face-to-face communication. When you communicate directly with another person, face-to-face, you use special gestures and facial expressions along with words, to transmit messages in a way that written words alone cannot.

You should therefore consider using communication channels that offer face-to-face communication wherever possible. These help you to transfer information, and to create the opportunity for questions and immediate answers.

Face to face communication lets you express your passion for a cause, and is quite useful when encouraging 'buy-in' among members of the public.

In the less ideal setting, where face-to-face communication is not possible, you will need to modify passive communication options to achieve results.

Face-to-face communication is the most ideal form of communication

Advocacy campaigns generally include actions aimed at engaging with and influencing policy and decision makers directly and indirectly. Advocacy is often more effective when it emphasises dialogue rather than confrontational methods like blocking roads, persuasion rather than aggressive demands, and alliance building rather than division.

One element of the success of many advocacy campaigns has been bringing issues to public attention, creating a public outcry, and getting members of the wider society to add their voices to efforts to influence policy makers to accept new ways of doing things. Your advocacy campaign may therefore have an education/awareness component in order to get support from the general public.

Your target audiences will depend on the focus of your campaign but are likely to include:

- Ministries, Government agencies and Local Government authorities
- Political representatives
- Private sector
- Mass media
- Schools: teachers and students

When you use a combination of channels, tools and materials your communication is usually more effective than using just one; always keep the target audience in mind to choose the most appropriate products and pathways. Remember what the audience's disposition is, what its interest is and what you need to communicate to the audience to make these choices.

How to match the tool with the target

In Section 3, you learnt about different audiences and how to connect with them. You learnt that you need to get to understand your audience and its beliefs and attitudes, and learn what would interest the audience and attract its attention.

The first step in selecting the type of communication channel you would use is identifying how to reach and engage your audience; this step recognises **where the audience** is at the start of your communication and gets its attention.

The second step in choosing your communication channel is identifying the type of result or outcome you would like to achieve from the communication and it identifies **where you would like the audience to be** as a result of your communication.

Your communication channel choices therefore make use of products (tools) and pathways (mechanisms) to both capture the attention of your audience and engage it while delivering information and hopefully convincing it to adopt a particular attitude or take a particular action.

Description of some products and the audiences suited to their use

News releases

News releases are useful means of getting your message out to a wide general audience. The release provides a mechanism for reporting on your activities and actions in the print and electronic press.

Releases are generally published with few edits, unless your release is lengthy. News editors tend to reduce length beginning from the bottom of a release, so ensure that your opening paragraph covers 'the 5Ws and an H', namely: who, what, where, when, why and how, in an attention gathering, yet concise manner. Ensure that you supply contact information for your organisation to provide additional information and to receive feedback from the reader. See the following tips for drafting a news release.

Writing a News/Media Release: General Tips

When writing a news release, keep in mind the general checklist for communication:

☐ Identify your audience (the 'general' public).

☐ Identify your objective (to make an announcement, inform, report etc.).

☐ Identify your message.

☐ Choose your vehicle (in this case, you've chosen the news release).

☐ Provide a feedback mechanism (in this case: contact number/website/e-mail address).

This form of communication helps you (or forces you!) to condense your information and present the essential facts. It also helps to disseminate information to a wide audience and a wide number of media houses.

A news release 'gets to the point'. In this regard, it is characterised by short sentences and short paragraphs (please ensure both are as short as possible!).

The first paragraph should always be seen as the most important part of the release and should therefore contain the strongest points. It is also the "attention-grabber" and serves as the lead or introduction. This paragraph should therefore immediately signal the **5Ws and the H: who, what, where, when, why and how**.

Subsequent paragraphs should contain content of lesser importance (Why? This is because if an Editor wishes to cut, the cutting will begin at the bottom and work its way upward.) As far as possible, each paragraph should be fairly self-contained, so that if any are sacrificed, the release will still make sense (be able to tell the story).

Simple points to help build the release:

☐ A headline is optional, but if using one, keep this at six words or less.

☐ Keep information simple/to-the-point (remember you are writing for a diverse audience).

☐ Write in the third person.

☐ Do not use clichés.

☐ Leave lots of space between paragraphs and have lines double-spaced (this helps the editor).

☐ Caption any photographs that are provided (on the back of the photo if sent hard-copy).

☐ Ensure contact information (at least two means of contact) is provided.

☐ Date the release and put on a letterhead (so it is recognised as an official communication of the company).

☐ Indicate whether "For Immediate Release" or "Release at Will" or "Not for Release until..." (but usually editors do not like the time embargo).

Participatory video (PV)

Participatory video is a facilitated method of communication which helps stakeholders develop and tell their story using the medium of video. This is a powerful tool, in which you can develop your storyboard, film, edit and produce a video clip which presents your views and your experiences, your needs and ideas in your own voice. You can use PV as a strong advocacy tool to communicate with policy and key decision makers and also to alert wider audiences to key or localised issues.

Fish for gas: The challenge for Blanchisseuse fishermen

"Fish for Gas" is the name of a videoclip that was developed by a group of fishermen from the fishing community of Blanchisseuse, on the north coast of Trinidad (CANARI, 2011b). The videoclip projected the challenges faced by the fishermen who lacked access to cold storage facilities and a supply of gas at their location. As a result, they are reliant upon 'entrepreneurs' who bring ice and gas to the community on the back of trucks. These commodities come at variable prices, usually higher than the regulated price at the more traditional point of supply.

Powerful communication tools developed by the community facilitate uptake of information and action

Fishermen were guided in the development of this participatory video: identifying the issues they wished to air, selecting the images they wanted to project and the story they wanted to tell. They shot the video using smart phones and directed the editing process to produce a nine-minute film. The film was uploaded to YouTube and also shown to key stakeholders to highlight their issues.

Apart from several 'hits' on the YouTube channel, the fishers also gained feedback from the Fisheries Division, the National Petroleum Marketing Company and others on ways to address these issues, and from members of the public who donated equipment for their use.

Policy briefs

A policy brief is a very valuable document, which reports on the status of a very public issue and is used in an advocacy campaign. It gathers the facts on the issue, presents an argument which advocates for change, while providing a reasonable approach to dealing with the issue with strategic recommendations.[8] A policy brief forms the basis for dialogue and you can use this tool for initiating discussion with key decision makers.

Case studies

A case study provides documentation and analysis of a particular activity or project which reveals interesting information relevant to future work or action. In a case study you can present a real situation/problem, the process you followed in addressing the

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8 See CANARI Policy briefs at: http://www.canari.org/pubcat16.asp

situation/problem and lessons learned from the process, packaged into one document. It has the potential of convincing a reader as it details your proof of the value of the activity and how it can be applied to similar scenarios. You should incorporate facts, figures, photographs and quotations into a case study to supply supporting evidence of the process and its benefits. These elements will also improve the readability and interest in the document. You can use case studies for horizontal and vertical sharing of information with peers and policy makers.

YouTube

YouTube provides a platform for quick uploading of video material either in well-edited or raw format. Your online account is free, so that if your organisation has a limited budget, you can make use of this facility, uploading basic information on your activity which can be built over time. YouTube allows you to give snapshots of current projects or impacts which you would like to be disseminated quickly. YouTube will allow you to upload video material of up to 15 minutes duration and it reaches a wide audience; it is particularly popular among the 35-55 year age group and so this tool can be used to reach any type of audience.

Radio drama and radio magazines

Using the creative storytelling style of the soap opera setting, radio drama is an effective means of presenting issues to general audiences and eliciting social change. The product is developed through first drawing up a values grid which presents stereotype negative and positive attitudes to issues in society. From this grid, matching character profiles are then created to guide the movement of transitional characters to the positive end of the spectrum.

Radio magazines promote your messages and can solicit the views of others

Radio has a wide reach in the Caribbean, even to areas where other media (television, newspaper) are unavailable. This tool is already in use in some Caribbean countries, championed by the firm PCI Media Impact.[9]

9   PCI Media Impact website: (http://mediaimpact.org/)

Description of some pathways

Community interactive exhibitions

Taking information out to audiences where they are is a useful activity. This can be done in the form of a 'community caravan'. The caravan may be large or small, and involves one organisation or several going as a team to set up a temporary exhibit, workshop, or other form of interactive activity in a community to promote the work of the organisation(s). You will need to invest several resources to use this tool–human, material and financial–but it is an effective means of reaching underserved areas and

Managing a 'community caravan'?

Community caravans and exhibition exercises can be considered as mini 'events' and require a large amount of event management skills. Consider who the stakeholders are, invite them to a meeting to plan the event. Define the scope of the undertaking, clarifying the objective of the activity, the boundaries of the community you wish to target and key partners within the community that can contribute to the success of the undertaking. Identify the tasks involved, who will perform them and the risks that have to be addressed.

Consider the promotion, the reporting and the evaluation aspects when planning the event. Also consider using multiple activities (exhibit, song, multimedia) that cater to various reading and learning levels and a range of interests. Combining this activity with other communication tools assists the event's promotion and impact.

Face to face exchanges within communities promote your work and encourage participation of others

Oral testimonies

This method of documentation uses a series of interviews to capture local knowledge about an issue. You can gather first-hand accounts of experiences which can then contribute to debates on an issue and these are therefore useful tools in advocacy. Changes in the environment over time such as change in coastal character, disappearance of species from an ecosystem, or the appearance of invasive species can be documented as first-hand accounts from hunters, fishers or elders in a community. Panos Caribbean, based in Haiti and Jamaica has used this tool for giving marginalised groups in society an opportunity for participation in discussion of issues of key relevance to their existence (Mclymont-Lafayette, 2007).

Social media

Social media have become a popular pathway for communication, particularly among members of the younger generation. There are several social networks, such as MySpace, Care2, Google +, WiserEarth and Facebook that allow users to share and exchange information over the internet, including posting photographs and sharing files.

Facebook is universally popular and has over 800 million users. This site provides a platform for posting of opinions on issues with automatic notification through user alerts; it also allows for measuring the reach of your message through its tally of views and 'likes'.

Feedback through Facebook

CANARI utilised its Facebook page in initiating discussion on the development of a civil society agenda for climate change in Saint Lucia (CANARI, 2012).

Before, during and after the workshop that was held to develop this agenda, civil society representatives were able to obtain updates on the activity and post their views on the exercise.

When the draft agenda was presented to government agencies and regional organisations at the end of the workshop, feedback also came in the form of the posting of tool for rainwater harvesting by one attendee, that can be used in the climate change adaptation effort.

Using Facebook allows communication with a wider network of stakeholders

Discussion forum

A discussion forum is an online 'message board' on which visitors can post their views on a particular topic. This is similar to a blog (web log), but it is usually moderated, may be open for a specific period of time, and after it is closed the content is archived and accessible to readers.

Managing an online forum

If you set up an online forum to discuss a particular topic, you will need to advertise it so that potential users can register to join the forum. You will need to appoint a moderator to manage the forum and also to ensure that spam and offensive postings are removed, as well as to provide feedback and a summary of the discussions. A discussion forum is useful to organisations that have a website and can be used to generate discourse with the public and other organisations on a particular topic.

Interviews

Sometimes your group may be invited to or may offer to talk about your work on radio, television or call-in interviews. These are very useful opportunities to project the importance of your conservation work, but your preparation for this type of activity is critical. Here are some important tips for communicating with journalists and the media when being interviewed.

Dealing with journalists and the media

When taking part in an interview, it is important to understand the context of the journalist, just as you try to understand your audience. A journalist is often operating under big time pressures and restricted space/time in the media outlet (e.g. length of the news column, the time the 'news' has to get to the editor and the timeframe in which the report has to go on air/in Press). The journalists is not your spokesperson, but he or she usually knows what is relevant or of interest to the audience.

The job of the journalist or reporter is to: consult sources, weigh evidence, use the most relevant information and use his or her own style. Remember in doing so, this person's job is not to carry all the information that is supplied or to please the interviewee. It is therefore important to note that the information you share must be credible and accurate; it would be best to prepare for your questions, to be accessible at the scheduled time of your interview, as well as be accessible for further clarification.

You should ensure that in your effort to present your information that you do not speculate, stretch the truth, exaggerate, or just say whatever comes to mind. You do not want your credibility to be called in to question and you do want your important points to be delivered and understood by the public.

Before an interview: consider the audience, media outlet and find out the story context; provide if possible a written summary of the information, the main points or statistics. This will be helpful to the interviewer and by having this information in writing; there is less chance of the wrong information being relayed.

During the interview: find out how much the reporter knows, be clear on the message, keep your responses brief, mention the subject by name several times during the interview, don't over-estimate the reporter's knowledge of the subject and mention similar studies and work being done. Identify anything you say as fact or opinion and avoid hypothetical discussions. Be friendly, but not complacent. Make your final comment clear and precise as this may be the last thing the viewer recalls.

After the interview: provide contact information so that there is an opportunity for the journalist/interviewer to seek clarification or provide viewers/readers with an opportunity for follow-up contact.

In the table below, a range of different options are given for suitable approaches for communicating with specific audiences. You will notice that the particular product or pathway depends upon the type of audience (and its needs) and the objective of your communication.

Table 2: Matching communication products and pathways to specific audiences and communication objectives

Audience Type	Objective	Products	Pathways
Policy makers	To influence changes in policy and legislation	Policy and information briefs Participatory video Case studies/research findings	Meetings Presentations Media presence
Resource users	To inform and build awareness of the need to sustainably utilise the resource To offer alternative viable options To involve in sustainable management of the resource To receive information on experiences related to the loss of biodiversity	Newspaper articles Letters to the editor Media appearances Public service announcements Exhibits Video documentaries Skits, songs and illustrations Website News releases	Media Exhibitions Internet: websites, social media network Entertainment venues
Local community (e.g. near vulnerable ecosystem)	To inform and build awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity To encourage participation in biodiversity conservation	Information flyers Bullhorn announcements Posters in public meeting places (e.g. shops, transport hubs)	Door-to-door Campaigns Public exhibitions Local projects
School community and wider public	To inform and build awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity To encourage participation in biodiversity conservation	News releases Newspaper activity pages Comic books, activity books Educational resources - DVDs, books, posters Discussion forum Exhibits, hands-on activities Cultural champion for biodiversity conservation	School activities - presentations, exhibitions, career day Competitions - essay, art, quizzes Public exhibitions

Table 2 continued: Matching communication products and pathways to specific audiences and communication objectives

Audience Type	Objective	Products	Pathways
Tourism sector	To inform and build awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity To get buy-in for adoption of new policies that are pro-conservation	Information briefs Participatory video Oral Testimonies Video resources	Meetings Consultations Presentations Projects
Agricultural sector - fishing - farming - horticulture	To inform and build awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity To get buy-in for adoption of new policies that are pro-conservation	Information briefs/flyers News releases Participatory video Oral Testimonies Video resources	Meetings Consultations Community outreach/visits
Planning and Development sector: Ministry. agencies, private land developers	To inform and build awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity To get buy-in for adoption of new policies that are pro-conservation	Information briefs Participatory video Oral Testimonies Video resources Case studies/research findings	Meetings Consultations Community outreach/visits e-mail
Other NGOs	To inform and build awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity To get support for adoption of new policies that are pro-conservation in various sectors To build partnership/ networks to collaborate on projects in biodiversity conservation	Information briefs Participatory video Video resources Joint projects Discussion forum Case studies/research findings News releases	Meetings Projects Internet (blogs) e-mail
Researchers	To receive updated information on the status and threats posed to biodiversity To solicit assistance and build capacity in undertaking activities in biodiversity conservation To build partnerships and establish networks	Participatory video Discussion forum Projects Development of educational resources Joint research gathering exercises Case studies/research findings	Meetings Seminars Projects Interviews

Table 2 continued: Matching communication products and pathways to specific audiences and communication objectives

Audience Type	Objective	Products	Pathways
Media	To provide information for public dissemination To obtain support for publicising issues on biodiversity vulnerability To report on work done in biodiversity conservation	Popular version case studies Newspaper articles Video documentaries News releases	Meetings Coverage at events Interviews Blogs e-mail

Use of champions and networks

Having a good message is not enough; it is important to use the right messenger. A popular musician or sports person is likely to get the message across more effectively to young people than a scientist or politician. On the other hand, a decision-maker or politician may be more receptive if your message is conveyed by a technical expert. Leaders of faith-based organisations will be trusted by their respective congregations and can link messages to the values they espouse.

The value of partnerships

You can strengthen your action on biodiversity conservation through developing partnerships and relationships for knowledge and information sharing.

Build a network on biodiversity conservation. You can link with relevant organisations such as the government departments of environment, marine affairs, agriculture, disaster management office and the water authority; your local zoological and botanical gardens, national herbaria or arboretum, your local university's department on life sciences; other NGOs and community organisations. These links will help you gather and share information on biodiversity conservation and policy.

Learn more about your country's efforts in implementing the CBD. Get a copy of your country's most recent National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and become familiar with the local focal point. You can work with the focal point to organise briefing sessions for community groups and other CSOs and the media before and after they attend international meetings.

Collect information and data about biodiversity conservation and responses in your country and community. Hard evidence is useful for designing programmes, making policy decisions, and negotiating positions (including your own for advocacy). You can share the information with others but make sure you understand what you are talking about first, so that you can share it using straightforward, simple language. Note the tips mentioned in **Section 1** on collecting data for your advocacy work and keeping the data current.

Living ambassadors and flagship species

Living species present a visual advantage in communicating conservation to the public, and you can promote your conservation activities through the use of living 'ambassadors'.

When you use these images of species, you keep them in the public view and you stimulate curiosity and learning about the species. This is particularly useful when your communication objective is public education.

Some species bring attention to particular issues as flagship, priority and keystone species. These terms are explained by the World Wide Fund for Nature (World Wide Fund for nature website).

If your work prioritises a particular species, you can promote it by incorporation of a graphic of the plant or animal in your logos,[10] letterheads and maybe on your official T-shirts.

10 Turtle Village Trust, Trinidad and Tobago - http://www.turtlevillagetrust.org/

Flagship, priority and keystone species

What is a flagship species?

- A flagship species is a species selected to act as an ambassador, icon or symbol for a defined habitat, issue, campaign or environmental cause.

- By focusing on, and achieving conservation of that species, the status of many other species that share its habitat – or are vulnerable to the same threats – may also be improved.

- Flagship species are usually relatively large, and considered to be 'charismatic' in western cultures.

- Flagship species may or may not be keystone species and may or may not be good indicators of biological process.

What is a priority species?

- The terms "flagship" and "keystone" have generally consistent definitions across the conservation community, however "priority species" is a WWF term, and is solely for the purposes of planning and simple communication.

- For WWF, a "priority species" may be either a flagship or a keystone species and is chosen to represent an eco-region or priority place or human footprint issue.

- A "priority species" is reflective of a key threat across that priority place - such that conservation of the species will contribute significantly to a broader threat mitigation outcome. It is often crucial to the economic and/or spiritual well-being of peoples within that eco-region.

What is a keystone species?

- A keystone species is a species that plays an essential role in the structure, functioning or productivity of a habitat or ecosystem at a defined level (habitat, soil, seed dispersal, etc).

- Disappearance of such species may lead to significant ecosystem change or dysfunction which may have knock on effects on a broader scale. Examples include the elephant's role in maintaining habitat structure, and bats and insects in pollination.

- By focusing on keystone species, conservation actions for that species may help to preserve the structure and function of a wide range of habitats that are linked with that species during its life cycle and the wider priority place.

Use of hands-on activities

Hands-on activities are useful tools that you can use to help explain the vulnerabilities of biodiversity to certain impacts. You can be creative in the level of interactivity you bring to the exercises, using role play or by building an exhibit or diorama. When you work out your activity it is usually good to test it with a small group before adding it to your communication toolkit. While hands-on activities present a fun element, you should always ensure that the group leaves with the correct information and that there are no misconceptions by asking questions. These activities are useful when working with diverse audiences or in informal settings.

The Life of the Leatherbacks

At the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) National Science Centre in Trinidad, a role play activity was designed to assist student visitors in understanding the value of conserving the leatherback turtle population which uses the sandy beaches of the east coast for annual nesting activity. The students first sit down and an explainer gives facts about the turtle nesting sites and the challenges to successful nesting and poaching on adults and hatchlings. They learn that Portuguese Man-of-War jellyfish are the preferred food of the turtles, and complications arise when plastic is disposed of in the sea. A map of Trinidad, plastic bags and photographs of the turtle and jellyfish are some visual aids used.

After these explanations, students are given specific character roles. One student is chosen as a 'turtle' and the rest of students are subdivided into 'jellyfish' and 'seaweed'. The activity space is marked out to indicate the beach and sea and 'jellyfish' and 'seaweed' are mixed randomly within the sea space, with all characters facing the shoreline. The 'turtle' makes strokes with its flippers going from the sea to the shore, while 'jellyfish' bob and 'seaweed' drift.

While the turtle makes its journey, it may bump into seaweed which remain drifting. If it bumps into jellyfish, the jellyfish say, "Yum! Yum!" and the person instructing the group asks the jellyfish to leave the space and records the jellyfish as being eaten. The turtle makes its way to shore, nests and then returns to the sea, with all feedings being recorded. The exercise can be repeated, making note of the starting number of jellyfish each time and the number eaten.

The Life of the Leatherbacks continued

The game changes, when two random jellyfish are changed to plastic bags. The exercise is repeated but this time, if the turtle bumps into a plastic bag, the 'plastic bag' says, "You're choking!" and the turtle is asked to leave the activity area and is recorded as having died. By the end of the exercise, students discuss the results and explain how pollution impacts negatively on turtle populations (present and potential) and consequently, the population of jellyfish at our beaches. The interactive nature of the exercise assists the students in retaining knowledge of the issues and encourages discussion and relay of information to others.

Use of culture

Culture is a very powerful tool for communicating social messages, especially in the Caribbean where we have many vibrant forms of popular and traditional culture. Popular culture reflects the lifestyle and tastes of the majority of people (often those under 35). In the Caribbean, popular culture is expressed through music (Reggae, Soca, Zouk and Kompa), and the arts (dancing, poetry, painting and ring games). Because so many people relate naturally to messages transmitted using popular culture it can be an ideal way to start spreading information about conserving biodiversity in catchy, easily-understood language.

How to involve cultural messengers

The term that is sometimes used to refer to the use of the arts and culture to educate is edutainment (educational entertainment). The steps for developing a communication plan in Section 3 will help you with your edutainment activities. You will also need to:

- Do an assessment of popular entertainment in your community. Do community members come out more for plays, or live performances, beauty pageants, football or cricket matches? Do a quick survey to find out the three most popular types of entertainment.

- Identify and approach your messengers or climate champions, bearing in mind the most popular forms of entertainment in your community. It could be that you start with the footballers, the deejays and singers, whether established or rising stars. Sometimes up-and-coming performers are willing to work on projects that will give them added exposure. Remember that whatever cultural form you use, your message needs to be tailored to the specific target audiences in your community. Popular theatre can help communities identify issues of concern related to a particular situation and analyse how they can bring about a change.

Practical application tips:

Using popular theatre

Popular theatre is a useful medium for transmitting message to wide audiences. These messages can assist in changes in behaviour and attitudes, by portrayal of characters in true-to-life situations in dramatic skits. Here in the Caribbean, groups such as the University of the West Indies Arts in Action team[11] have developed effective stories to promote positive actions on issues such as the environment and HIV/AIDS among others.

Developing the skit and working with talent

If you decide to use a skit to get your message out, bear in mind the following:

- The storyline should have strong characters in a clearly defined context.

- Conflict usually holds a skit together. On the surface, a skit's storyline is normally about trying to reach a goal and whether a character or characters will do it. The creation of doubt on the character's ultimate success increases audience interest as they want to see the conflict resolved.

- If possible, have a theatre-in-education professional conduct training with your group and potential actors. This will build skills and boost their confidence to share your messages through drama.

Using song

Music and songs can attract a wide range of people; working with popular artistes to deliver these songs brings more attention to your message. In Jamaica, Panos Caribbean successfully promoted attention on climate change through the use of several local artistes in the production and delivery of messages through song, under the banner of "Voices for Climate Change" (Panos Caribbean website).

Choosing and using lyrics for messaging

If you decide to write a song with a message on biodiversity conservation, then think about:

- Keeping the lyrics simple but engaging; they should encourage the listener to find out more about the issues regarding the particular species being highlighted. Trying to pack too much information into the song may lose people.

- Using a 'catchy' chorus that is easily remembered.

- Hooking it to an already familiar song. For example, the lyrics could be set to the tune of a popular folk song known in the community. Remember, however, if you are using somebody's arrangement of the tune or a currently popular song or "rhythm", there could be copyright issues involved.

11 Arts in Action, UWI St. Augustine - http://www.artsinaction.org/

Desktop publishing and newsletters

A simple yet effective strategy for maintaining contact with your members, partners and other target audiences is to publish and distribute a project newsletter several times a year. Unlike the mass media, where you are subjected to someone else's decision about what gets published, you can control what information is included.
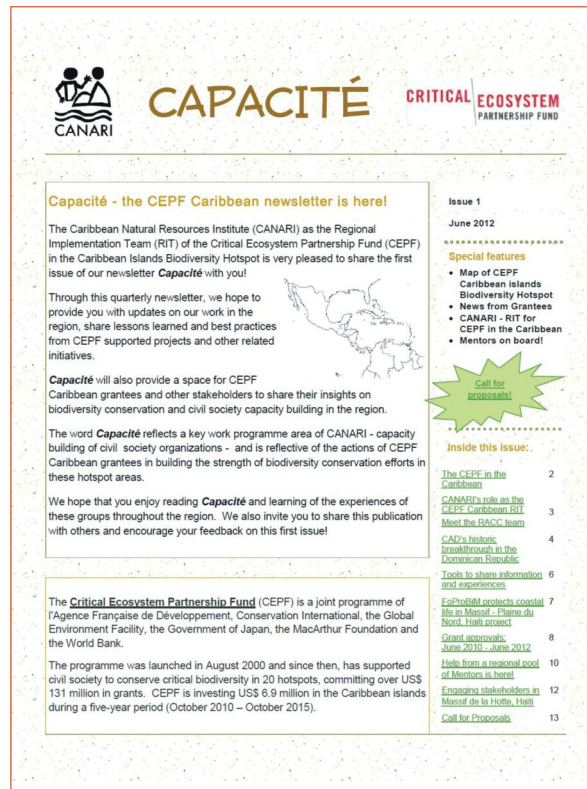
With just a basic understanding of word processing, you can create professional-looking newsletters and other publications with minimal training or effort.

This can be done by using the widely available Microsoft Publisher software that usually comes bundled as part of MS-Office Suite, though it can also be purchased as a stand-alone product. If you select one of the newsletter templates in Microsoft Publisher you can then add your own stories, articles and digital

Front cover of CEPF Caribbean newsletter produced by CANARI

photographs or cut and paste text and photographs from other sources and within an hour or so, you have a very professional looking newsletter. Having at least one good photograph to accompany and illustrate your story is highly recommended.

Additional templates can also be found online at a number of websites, including Microsoft's, that are free to download and use. To see some examples, go to http://www.microsoft.com and do a search of the website using the key words "FrontPage templates" and you will find many free designs. You should also note that Microsoft will often provide NGOs with charitable (tax exempt) status with free software.

Newsletters can also stimulate participation and engagement. Involve your members, especially students, in writing articles and taking the photographs themselves. Desktop publishing gives students hands-on experience and improves their writing, spelling, grammar, comprehension and interviewing skills, all of which help to boost their confidence and self-esteem. This is particularly true if their articles and photographs are reprinted in other publications.

Your newsletter will also provide you with articles and photographs that you can send to other publications, such as your local newspapers or even regional organisations and

environmental groups for inclusion in their publications. Take a reciprocal approach and offer to print a story on their project in your newsletter if they print one of your articles in theirs. This helps build up a useful network of contacts with like-minded people and groups that can be an invaluable source of support and even funding.

Your newsletter can be distributed electronically via e-mail or the internet as well in printed copy form. Charging a nominal fee or asking for a voluntary donation for your newsletter can help cover printing costs. If there are a lot of photographs or graphics, the files may be too large to be suitable for emailing or posting to websites. The best option then is to convert the newsletter into a standard Adobe PDF format first before emailing or posting to a website. This can be easily accomplished by using a free PDF converter utility, numerous examples of which can be found by doing an online search or 'Googling' the words "PDF creator, converter". Doing this usually reduces the file size by approximately 80% with little visible loss of photographic quality.
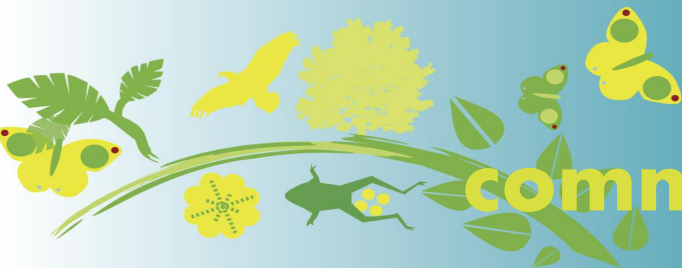
Evaluating your communication strategy

Knowing if you have met your objective in your communication is very important. You can gauge this from collecting feedback from your target audience(s). It is therefore necessary to set particular targets and strategically devise your communication campaign, identifying indicators of successful achievement of your communication objective. Measurement of outputs is simply done by noting the achievement of set tasks, however measurement of outcomes relates to the changes recognised as a result of performing these tasks, or in short, the effect of these outputs.

Whether your campaign is intended to achieve individual behaviour change through public education and awareness or policy change through advocacy, it is important to evaluate its success in order to learn from the experience and apply the lessons learnt to your future communications activities.

Developing simple indicators

Once you know where you are starting and where you want to get to, the steps in the process can be used as simple indicators. You can have three types of indicators, which help to measure the overall impact of your communications strategy.

1. Activity indicators, which can include:

- number of people targeted by a particular outreach activity (distribution of newspaper article; persons invited to a workshop or any other public outreach event);
- number of topics covered by a particular outreach activity;
- number of outreach events held; and
- budget spent on outreach activities.

2. Short-term result indicators, which can include:

- number of people who have heard about a particular issue;
- number of copies of outreach material distributed;
- number of actual participants in an activity (as opposed to the number of those invited);
- number of articles or news items published or aired in a month or week;
- how far (geographically) the outreach has been extended; and
- number of persons targeted by a particular activity who actually recall the information, understood the message, or appreciated the campaign.

3. Medium to long-term result indicators, which can include:

- number of persons who have made lifestyle or other changes as a result of your campaign (doing their part to contribute to biodiversity conservation, deciding to further studies or work in a field related to biodiversity conservation);

- number of persons who have become 'champions' or change agents' as a result of your campaign; and

- policy changes: new or changed policy to support the ideas put forward in your campaign.

Earlier, two types of broad objectives were defined for communication: building knowledge and awareness, and advocacy; below you will find some examples of desired outcomes and indicators for achievement of these objectives:

Table 3: Determining desired outcomes and indicators based on objectives

Objectives	Desired Outcomes	Indicators
Building knowledge and awareness	Knowledge is built	Persons speak in a knowledgeable manner about the issue Persons are expressing a point of view about the issue Persons are quoting facts about the issue
	Awareness is built	Persons are able to speak about the issue with a greater degree of certainty Persons are motivated to take part in actions to address the issue Persons act in a manner which shows concern about the issue
Advocacy	The information supplied and recommendations provided are considered	Information supplied is cited (e.g. by policy makers, media) Engagement of stakeholders occurs/is increased Recommendations are discussed Recommendations are given consideration Policy is developed/amended

Qualitative versus quantitative evaluation

While result indicators of outputs are often *quantitative*, far more important is a *qualitative* measure of opinions, attitudes and behaviour change among your target audiences as outcomes of your communication. The aim of evaluation may not always be to prove communication efforts definitely caused change, but to assess perceptions and quality of the communication activities. You therefore would need to carry out qualitative evaluation of your communication.

Qualitative evaluation methods include:

- **Open-ended questions:** in a survey or interview for instance, you could develop a simple feedback form to have visitors fill out after attending an exhibition, asking them whether they enjoyed their visit, what aspects were of greatest interest and whether they learned anything new at the exhibition and if so, what was it that they learned.

- **Focus group discussions:** you may target similar interest groups for example representatives of research institutions and table a discussion on the approach your group took to conserving a particular species of wildlife and ask questions about the impact of your type of work, its relevance in the region, and opportunities for sharing information.

- **Written documents:** like official publications, reports and studies; you could monitor the uptake of your work in conservation by looking at how it is used by others or how it enters the agenda of other organisations after you have highlighted relevant issues. You can note increased awareness or knowledge of the issue or changes (e.g. improvements) in how the issues are addressed.

- **Direct observation:** through field work or research on activities, behaviours, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, organisational or community processes, or any other aspect of observable human experience.

Quantitative evaluation measures physical results of activities, such as:

- how many persons are targeted;

- how many workshops are held;

- how many persons are aware of climate change impacts on their livelihoods; and

- the quantity of communications material produced (number of posters, booklets, etc.).

Documenting your process

It is important to document your activities to support your evaluation, but you should document successes and shortcomings to learn how the communications campaign can be improved. Documenting your process will help you pinpoint the major achievements and challenges. For achievements, it may be useful to indicate why you were successful, and similarly, you may wish to document how challenges were overcome or what could be done differently.

1. For your particular issue, consider the broad objectives of your communication, what your desired outcome(s) is (are) and how you would measure the success of your communication (indicator/s).

   The indicators listed can be further qualified, when considering the particular product or pathway that is used in your communication. Keep in mind that some methods of communication are passive and some are active; passive forms of communication may require amendment in order to provide feedback opportunities.

2. Consider the following low-cost communication products and pathways, and identify how you would measure the positive outcome of your communication and the indicators you would use.

   e.g. Message: Destruction of biodiversity impacts on our life and livelihoods

Audience	Communication Product / Pathway	Measure of Success	Indicator
Policy maker	Information brief		
Land developer	Letter to Chief Executive Officer		
Internet users	YouTube video		
Local resource users	Community visit		
Primary school students	Art competition		
Newspaper reading public	Press article		
Media houses	Appearance on morning talk show		
Other civil society groups	Invitation to monthly meeting/lecture of your group		

Your efforts in communication are as important as your work in biodiversity conservation. Getting the word out about the importance of your work, stimulating dialogue and transitioning others to positive personal action and improved policy helps to sustain life and livelihoods. Share your experiences with others including what you learned about the process – what went well and what can be improved – to encourage greater action in this area

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The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional, technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for over 20 years.

Our mission is to promote and facilitate equitable participation and effective collaboration in the management of natural resources critical to development in the Caribbean islands, so that people will have a better quality of life and natural resources will be conserved, through action learning and research, capacity building and fostering partnerships.

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