

Institutional Evaluation of Caribbean MPAs

May 2001

A NEW project has begun...

Brief # 1

WHAT?

The full title is: Institutional Evaluation of Caribbean MPAs and opportunities for pro-poor management. It is funded by DFID (UK Department for International Development) under their Natural Resources Systems Programme. The project (R7976) is implemented through a partnership between MRAG Ltd, a UK-based aquatic resource management company, and the Natural Resource Management Programme of the University of The West Indies (Barbados), who research and assess coastal resources in the region. This partnership benefits from the collaboration of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI).

WHY?

As you will know, many MPAs have been established in the last 20 years in the Caribbean as a tool for the management of coastal resources. MPAs have succeeded to varying degrees with respect to their primary aims (usually ecological such as improved conservation of coral reefs and their associated fisheries) and with respect to their acceptance and implementation (e.g. level of enforcement and compliance with MPA rules, level of conflict among communities and/or with park management). Little attention has been paid to the impact of MPAs on poorer sectors of the community relying on the resource base –

impacts which themselves may help explain some of the problems with implementation and compliance. The purpose of this project is to identify the current institutional constraints to, and development options for, successfully implementing MPAs and integrating them into coastal zone management in a way that leads to a sustained improvement in the livelihoods of coastal communities in the Caribbean. Reflecting DFID's strong focus on poverty eradication, this research is expected to lead to improved methods for implementation and management of pro-poor MPAs.

WHEN?

- The project began in April-01 and will continue for 18 months until September-02.
- The characterisation of MPAs (July-01)
- Review of existing data, literature and field-work (Feb-02)
- Regional dissemination workshop (August-02)
- Publication of Guidelines (Sept-02)

HOW will the project work?

We have begun with a review of MPAs. Information on their biophysical, user-community and institutional characteristics will be collated alongside any information available on "outcomes" or results of management. As well as providing a comprehensive review of MPAs drawing in features not usually recorded in regional databases, this **characterisation** will be used to select case study sites for more detailed analysis. Two categories of MPAs will be selected for the first level of analysis: those that are operational, i.e.

have been successfully implemented and/or integrated into CZM plans and those that have been unable to achieve this. To identify what characteristics are associated with successful implementation and CZM integration, the project will **compare the institutional design** of MPAs in both categories as well as the **legal and policy framework** in which they operate. Given that a successful implementation/integration process, as defined, doesn't necessarily imply successful outcomes, a second

level of analysis on the "successful" MPAs will address the impact of management on the **livelihoods of poorer groups**. Participatory appraisals will be used to analyse livelihoods - the community perspective of what is "success" will inform research into outcomes. An assessment of the ecological impacts of MPAs will complement this work. The information from these analyses and consultations will inform one of the key outputs of the project – **guidelines** promoting pro-poor management of MPAs.

WHERE are the project sites?

The initial characterisation review covers existing MPAs in SIDS and larger island states (Belize as an English speaking coastal mainland site will also be included).

From this, we will select the sites for the comparative analysis (successfully vs. unsuccessfully managed) and the more detailed study of the local livelihood to management links at "successful" sites.

This selection is due to be complete by June/July-01.

Watch this space!

YOUR role...

We have identified you and/or your institution as having an interest in the management of MPAs. Given the geography of the Caribbean, this project will rely heavily on email to share ideas, results and allow feedback on progress and direction of the research. To avoid the usual pitfalls of email communication (i.e. too much is sent to everyone), we aim to develop a series of project briefs, of which this is the first.

Given the information above we may have a closer relation-

ship with you, for example you may feel "your" MPA is appropriate for this study... Or you may simply remain on our circulation list and observe and comment on the work. We do encourage active participation, so should you find something of interest and wish to know more OR want to comment on our direction, methodology etc. please contact one of us at the email address below.

We recognise the huge demands on your time, but hope that these small "windows"

into the research will serve to inform, share results and stimulate feedback from you.

Even if you have no input at this stage, please keep this brief as it gives you our contact details and an overview of what we are hoping to achieve. If you know of people or institutions who might be interested in this work please forward this brief. We are more than happy to add to our circulation list so send us your contact details if you want to add your name.

WHO is involved?

The project is implemented through a partnership between MRAG Ltd. and NRM-UWI, with the collaboration of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)



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