

National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment

Background and Approach to Initiating Capacity Building for Implementation of the Rio Conventions

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BAC	Biodiversity Advisory Council
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCWG	Climate Change Working Group
CEPEP	Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme
CNIRD	Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development
CoP	Conference of Parties
COPE	Council of Presidents of Environmental NGOs
CPACC	Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change Project
EMA	Environmental Management Authority
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Green House Gas
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
LMOs	Living Modified Organisms
MALMR	Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Marine Resources
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MPUE	Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment
NAPCC	National Action Plan for Climate Change
NAPCD	National Action Plan to Combat Desertification
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCCD	National Committee to Combat Desertification
NCSA	National Capacity needs Self Assessment
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordinator
PPDE	Policy and Planning Division (Environment)
RIOD	International NGOs Network on Desertification and Drought
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TC	Technical Consultants
TCPD	Town & Country Planning Division
THA	The Tobago House of Assembly
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biodiversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UWI	University of the West Indies

Section I Background, Context and Related Work

Environmental and Socio-Economic Context

1. The twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has a combined surface area of about 5130 km². These islands are part of the same bio-geographic region as tropical coastal South American because of their proximity to the South American mainland, (Trinidad is separated from Venezuela by about 12km of sea). However, especially in Tobago, some of the flora are identical with those found in the Antillean islands further to the north. The major terrestrial ecosystems are comprised of Evergreen Seasonal Forests, Semi-Evergreen Seasonal Forests, Deciduous Seasonal Forests, Dry Evergreen Forests, Seasonal Montane Forests, Montane Forests, Swamp Forests, Secondary Forests, Marshlands (mangroves and herbaceous swamp) and Savannas. The 2002 Annual Report of the Forestry Division reported that about 48.4% of the combined area of Trinidad and Tobago was covered by forests. The marine ecosystems are comprised of coral reefs, sea grass beds, sandy bottoms, mud bottoms, littoral mud flats, sandy beaches, rocky shores, and fresh water and estuarine systems.
2. There is no comprehensive listing of the number of species of plants and animals in Trinidad and Tobago, however a rough estimate obtained during the preparation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), indicated that there were about 2160 species of vascular plants, 450 species of birds, 95 of mammals, 85 of reptiles, 55 of snakes, 30 of amphibians, 45 of freshwater fishes, 354 of marine fishes, 600 of butterflies and 200-300 nematodes. Rare, endangered or extirpated species have been noted by workers in the field, but there are no data or population studies to support these claims.
3. The key terrestrial protected areas (Wildlife Sanctuaries and Forest Reserves) in the country were designated under the Forests Act as prohibited areas, and include the Aripo Savannas, Caroni Swamp, parts of the Northern Range, Bush Bush, Trinity Hills, Matura Beach, Fishing Pond, Nariva Swamp, Grand Riviere Beach, and 23 Forest Reserves and wildlife sanctuaries. The Buccoo Marine Park is the only marine park in the country and was designated under the Marine Ares (Preservation and Enhancement) Act.
4. In terms of climate change, the country is a small island developing state and is vulnerable to the range of potential impacts that have been predicted by experts. Future climate scenarios, contained in the Initial National Communication under the UNFCCC, focus on four main areas: temperature, rainfall, sea-level rise and extreme events. The projections provided by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change and other general climate models set the following scenario to the year 2100 for Trinidad and Tobago: a temperature rise of between 1° C and 3.5° C; sea-level rise of 15 to 95cm and a rainfall deficit of about 15%. Therefore the areas more vulnerable to climate change impacts will be coastal development, agriculture, and coastal ecosystems. Water planning/management and economic development linked to these areas will also be seriously affected.
5. Land degradation in Trinidad and Tobago is considered a major problem in several areas of the country. The First National Report to the UNCCD identified the causes of land degradation as due to squatter settlements, shifting agriculture, quarrying, deforestation, road construction, coastal erosion and pollution from industry and by solid wastes. A National Action Programme to address land degradation has not yet been developed, however the government has proposed that implementation of the UNCCD within the existing institutional framework for land management will be the best option for sustainability.

6. Key environmental concerns are related to the degradation and conversion of the ecosystems of the twin island republic, and are primarily through exploitation of natural resources caused by the quest for individual wealth and increasing consumption patterns. Unregulated deforestation and forest conversion, destruction/ conversion of wetlands, irresponsible quarrying activities, annual forest fires, fully or over-exploited coastal fishery, destructive near shore trawling, industrial/commercial pollution, and improper waste disposal are among the major environmental issues that require serious attention. Population growth and the increasing demand for housing, including unauthorised and regulated up-market settlements, are also considered key drivers of environmental degradation. All of these impacts further contribute to increased water demand, degradation of watersheds, accelerated soil erosion and increased seasonal flooding.

7. During 2003 the economy of Trinidad and Tobago continued to demonstrate strong growth that was based largely on developments in the energy sector (petroleum and liquefied natural gas), where real value added increased by 12.6%. The non-energy sector (distribution, transportation & communication, construction and manufacturing), was much weaker with an expansion of 0.6% recorded by the end of the third quarter of 2003. Inflation for the 12-month period ending in September 2003 was calculated at 2.98%, a significant decrease in comparison with 4.5% for the preceding period. The unemployment rate was 10.3% at the end of September 2003 and was expected to fall in 2004 due to the proposed expansion in low skilled government employment projects (CEPEP and Reforestation). The Government's expenditure is expected to grow in 2004 by 19% especially on education, housing and health.

8. The key environmental concerns identified above are considered national priorities. Specific actions to provide some redress in the short term have been proposed by the Government through the Social and Economic Policy Framework 2004. The following environmental activities were proposed for priority action:
 - Expedite development of the National Biosafety Framework (for GMOs and LMOs)
 - Establishment of Water Resources Management and Meteorological Authority for integrated water resource management
 - National Reforestation Programme, for socio-economic and ecological benefits, through NGOs Reforestation of degraded forest areas for watershed protection; 1000 acres to be planted in year 1 (33,000 acres over 10 years). New forest plantations for sustainable lumber production
 - Development and implementation of National Action Programme for Land Degradation
 - Development of National Solid Waste Management System
 - Conservation of energy and natural resources
 - Plan for reduction of waste generation. Environmentally sound treatment of municipal, commercial, industrial, agricultural and medical waste using best available technology
 - Protection of human health and environment from hazards of waste disposal
 - Green Fund – table legislation to effect changes to the management of the fund to facilitate operation and administration of Fund, similar to Road Improvement Fund and Unemployment Levy
 - CEPEP (Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme) – to be expanded by 50% - due to the demand for participation from society and the benefits (improvement to the state of the environment, small business development, employment creation).

Environmental Institutions

9. There are several government Ministries, Departments or Divisions within other Ministries, Statutory Authorities (State Enterprises) and Municipal Corporations that have jurisdiction in different aspects of the environment. Below is a listing of the key agencies and an outline of their major environmental responsibilities:
10. **Town & Country Planning Division (TCPD):** Under the Ministry of Planning and Development, the TCPD's mandate includes making provision for the orderly and progressive development of land, and granting permission to develop land. These functions involve the allocation of land for parks and game and bird sanctuaries; preservation of trees and forests; and control of waste disposal. The major focus of the TCPD has been the preparation of the National Physical Development Plan and lower-order regional and local area plans, and the grant of planning permission for development proposals.
11. **Interim National Physical Planning Commission (INPPC):** The INPPC under the Ministry of Planning and Development was established to manage the implementation of physical planning legislative and institutional reform. The INPPC manages selected projects aimed at transforming the physical planning and land development regulatory regimes.
12. **Ministry of Health:** This Ministry has some environmentally related responsibilities, particularly in terms of environmental health where investigation of public health complaints, pollution of water and management of domestic wastes are within this Ministry's jurisdiction.
13. **Ministry of Local Government:** Management of City and Regional Corporations is the prime mandate, however some focus has been on the management of many environmental areas, particularly in reference to solid waste. The Regional Corporations in particular are responsible for the maintenance, control and enhancement of the physical environment, including monitoring water courses, beaches, and water-front areas, swamps, forests, game sanctuaries, savannahs, parks and other open areas.
14. **Ministry of Public Utilities and Environment:** This Ministry includes most of the agencies that are responsible for major aspects of the environment. These agencies are the:-

Policy and Planning Division (Environment) - responsible for reporting on and coordinating the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as inputs to budgeting and planning of the Public Sector Investment Programme.

Environmental Management Authority – operations are governed by the Environmental Management Act 2000 with a focus on developing and implementation of policies and programmes for the effective management and wise use of the environment; streamlining and coordination of environmental management; implementation of the National Environmental Policy; enactment of legislation; and the coordination of implementation of national plans.

Water and Sewage Authority and the Water Resources Agency – Primary focus is on the abstraction, treatment and distribution of pipe borne water; provision of sewerage services; water resources surveying, monitoring, research and development; planning and demand analysis; issues of water allocation; and licensing of private abstractors.

Water Resources Management Unit – set up to oversee the development of the National Water Resources Management Policy and Strategy and to coordinate implementation of National Water Resources Management Strategy, as well as to develop new legislation and institutional arrangements.

Forestry Division – the designation and management of Forest Reserves, Prohibited Areas, National Parks, Nature Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries, management of forest resources and wildlife (for multiple use), timber forest plantation management on State Lands, enforcement of the Forest Act and related legislation, watershed management and soil conservation, forest fire protection, technical assistance and support for private forestry (Incentive Programme) and public awareness.

Institute of Marine Affairs – Primarily to advise the Government on various aspects of the marine environment, and focus on research, inventory and monitoring of coastal ecosystems and water quality, as well as project assessments.

15. **Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Marine Resources (MALMR):** This Ministry also has several agencies that have responsibility for key aspects of environmental management. These agencies include the:-

Agriculture Division – the management of agricultural development, pest and disease control, pesticide regulation and crop research.

Fisheries Division – Management of living marine and aquatic resources, particularly conservation, stock assessment and management, extension and support to fisherfolk and marketers, international fishing agreements, administering aquaculture, inland fisheries and ornamental fish farming, and the protection of turtles in coastal waters, turtle eggs and nesting beaches.

16. **The Tobago House of Assembly (THA):** This island government has responsibility for the management of affairs in the island of Tobago. It has several departments with parallel functions of several Divisions in Central Government, for example the THA Department of Marines Resources and Fisheries.
17. **The University of the West Indies:** Primarily research and teaching, with undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in environmental science, various aspects of ecology, natural resource economics, and environmental engineering. A new undergraduate course on climate change and impact assessment is being developed for the next academic year.
18. **Environmental NGOs:** There are several environmental NGOs in operation in the country, such as the Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust, T&T Field Naturalist Club, Caribbean Forest Conservation Association, The Buccoo Reef Trust and Environment Tobago, and the coordinating body for many environmental NGOs called Council of Presidents of Environmental NGOs (COPE). The main strength of these NGOs has been in the promotion of awareness on environmental issues and educational activities targeted mainly at schools and local communities. Although there is little documentation in the public domain, there are Village Councils, Youth Groups, and service organisations that fund and implement environmental activities from time-to-time.
19. **The Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD)** is a development NGO based in Trinidad that has an environment programme which helps build CBO capacity for advocacy, to develop informed positions on sustainable development especially for interactions

with senior decision makers. CNIRD also promotes civil society involvement in all environmental issues and has a community based natural resources management project focusing on solid waste management, marine debris and conservation of turtles (Matelot and Plymouth).

20. **UNDP Global Environmental Facility/Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP):** The GEF/SGP launched in 1992, is currently administered through the UNDP Country Office and provides grants to NGOs and CBOs in support of community-based initiatives that contribute to conserving global biological diversity, mitigating climate change or protecting international waters. Activities addressing land degradation --primarily desertification and deforestation-- may also be supported when they relate to the three focal areas. The first SGP project in Trinidad and Tobago was started in 1995 during the Pilot Phase and by January 2004, there were 41 projects in the portfolio with a total approved allocation of about US\$569,000.

Institutional Conflicts

21. The resolution of jurisdictional overlaps among governmental departments or Ministries will be discussed through inter-departmental meetings. In some cases there are formalised agreements, such as the Memorandum of Understanding between the Environmental Management Authority and the Tobago House of Assembly at the national level. At the local level there is a Coordinating Committee with THA representation and representatives from the Air and Sea Port Authorities. There is also a Clearing House mechanism with bimonthly meetings that is utilised as a forum for discussing issues at a high level among the relevant Ministry, the EMA and the THA.
22. Deficiencies in institutional capacity to implement the relevant mandates are related to the following issues: regulatory weakness, lack of or inadequate policy, inadequate vision for environmental protection, limited public education programmes, inadequate resources, unclear jurisdiction and inadequate cooperation, lack of punitive sanctions, and delays in the justice systems.

Environmental Legislation and Policies

Legislation:

23. There are over 100 pieces of legislation that offer some degree of environmental protection. However the key pieces of environmental legislation directly related to the MEAs being considered include the Environmental Management Act, Town & Country Planning Act, Forests Act, Conservation of Wildlife Act, Fisheries Act, and the Marine Areas (Preservation and Enhancement Act).
24. The Environmental Management Act (2000): This Act was designed to: promote better understanding of the environment; encourage the integration of environmental concerns into public and private decisions; facilitate coordination among government entities to harmonise activities to protect, enhance and conserve the environment; develop and implement policies, laws and programmes for the conservation and wise use of the environment; ensure economic growth with sound environmental practices; implement international commitments; and enhance the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for environmental management.
25. The Town & Country Planning Act (Chap. 35:01): This Act was intended to plan and control development in the country and has some provisions directly related to ecosystem protection, particularly in the 2nd Schedule, Pt. IV, Sect.5: preservation of forests, wood, trees; 2nd Schedule,

Pt. IV, Clause 8: Prohibition of pollution of rivers; and Class IV(2): provisions for regulating the deposit of waste material.

26. The Forests Act (Chap. 66:01 and amendments in Act #23 of 1999) prescribe activities to regulate use of state forests, especially for cutting, fires, removal of forest products, and entry of protected/prohibited areas. Under this Act a prohibited area is defined as a specified area being part of a Forest Reserve or State lands declared by the Minister by Order to be a prohibited area.
27. The Conservation of Wildlife Act (Chap. 67:01) provides the legal framework for the establishment of Game Sanctuaries in which it is unlawful to hunt, and for the regulation of hunting in other areas. Schedules allow for the regulation of capture of named species of animals and birds. The Act has no other provision for the protection and management of wildlife habitat, or to prevent activities that can lead to habitat loss.
28. The Fisheries Act (Chap. 67:51) provides for the regulation of living marine and aquatic resources, especially setting the size and dimensions of nets, determining the size of harvested stocks, and prohibiting the sale of undersized catch. The Act also provides for jurisdiction over rivers and the territorial sea and allows for the declaration of prohibited marine areas and prescribing permitted activities.
29. The Marine Areas (Preservation and Enhancement) Act (Chap. 37:01) authorises the Minister to designate any portion of the marine area of the country as a restricted area for the preservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area, the protection of flora and fauna, the promotion of the enjoyment by the public of such areas, and the promotion of scientific study and research.
30. Deficiencies in the existing legislation and institutional administration of the relevant Acts include the following: failure to use regulatory power, antiquated and outdated regulations, failure to assent laws, and vagueness or absence of specific standards.

Policies:

31. The *National Environmental Policy*, adopted in 1998, is the major policy that offers guidance on all aspects of environmental management. The goal of this policy is the conservation and wise use of the environment of Trinidad and Tobago to provide adequately for meeting the needs of present and future generations and for enhancing the quality of life. The specific objectives are to:
 - Prevent, reduce or eliminate various forms of pollution to ensure adequate protection of the environment, and consequently the health and well-being of humans;
 - Conserve the biological diversity of the country and the stability and resilience of the ecosystems;
 - Undertake retrospective analysis or evaluations to correct past development decisions that might be inimical to the continued environmental health of the country.
32. The *National Policy on Wetland Conservation* was approved by the Government in 2002 and prescribes 29 objectives for the protection, management and restoration of wetlands in order to sustain and enhance their ecological and socio-economic values, and functions, for current and future generations.
33. The draft *Forest Policy* of Trinidad and Tobago was produced in 1998 in recognition of the increasing contribution of the forestry sector to national development, and the Forestry Division's role as both a provider of goods and services and as a facilitator to its stakeholders. This policy

was intended to promote ecosystem integrity, efficient use of forest resources, integrated decision-making, continuous improvement and innovation, partnership and consultation, and accountability and equity. There were 14 policy objectives each with specific actions that address: land use planning and forest reservation, legislation, forest management, forest production, forest protection, utilisation and forest industry development, national parks and other protected areas, wildlife management, watershed management, forest engineering, forest research, private forestry/ agroforestry/forest assistance, forest publicity and awareness, and forestry training and human resource development.

34. The draft *National Water Resources Management Policy* was produced in 2002 but has not yet been approved by Cabinet. The policy document, which is expected to form the basis for Integrated Water Resources Management in the country, provides an overview of the status of the country's water resources, outlines the goals and objectives of water resources management as well as the principles which guide the policy, and the priorities for the allocation of water. The document also includes guidance on the following aspects:
- Direction for the various water-related issues of land-use planning, water resources assessment, water resources planning, abstraction licensing, designating uses of water bodies, ambient water quality, public water supply, agricultural water management, seasonal variation in water availability, water-related emergencies, flooding, watershed management, water-related ecology, wetlands, coastal zone management, climate change and variability, wastewater, water for national security, pricing and cost recovery, public participation and access to information, water infrastructure, water supply reliability criteria;
 - Outline of instruments for policy implementation;
 - Outline of the process for review and revision of the policy; and
 - Provision of direction for the assignment of responsibilities for implementation of the policy.
35. There is no clearly established or nationally adopted sustainable development strategy. However, the Tobago *Sustainable Development Council* had proposed a strategy in relationship to implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action for Small Island Developing States. At this time it is unclear if or how that strategy is being utilized by state agencies or civil society organisations.

Environmental Programmes and Projects under the Rio Conventions

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

36. The Initial National Communication of Trinidad and Tobago was completed and submitted in 2001. This exercise was coordinated by the *Climate Change Working Group*, comprised of representatives from several government agencies, NGOs and the private sector. The document provided the first inventory of CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O production, as well as an estimation of indirect green house gases (GHGs) NO_x, CO, NMVOCs and SO₂. HFCs, PFCs and SF₆ were not inventoried due to lack of data. Also included in the report were time series data on temperature, rainfall, projections for temperature, sea-level and rainfall for up to 2100.
37. The key issues identified in that report were:
- Grappling with environmental problems while striving to achieve economic goals.
 - GHG emissions are expected to grow; 95% of total emissions was CO₂, of which 66% came from energy production and 34% from other industries.

- While the contribution of the country's GHG emissions is small on the global scale, the impact of climate change on the country will be significant; the priority should be adapting to climate change impacts, notwithstanding the importance of GHG abatement.
- Forests remove about 10% of CO₂ emissions; ameliorating effect would be diminished as forest cover is reduced.
- The relative cheapness of non-renewable sources of energy mitigates any serious attention to renewable sources.
- Vulnerable sectors include terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, especially coral reefs; rural population that is more dependent on the environment; infrastructure; water resources for domestic, industry and agricultural use; coastal areas with high population density; health and tourism.
- Poor land use choices will make the impact of climatic effects worse; the Caroni Basin already under threat from poor land use practices, pollution from small industry and agro-chemicals, and annual flooding.

38. There is no specific legal instrument to regulate activities that contribute to climate change, however, bits of existing legislation do provide for some measure of control in terms of land use and environmental pollution. Policies were being developed by the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) for major solid, liquid and gaseous emissions. The EMA serves as the technical focal point for local UNFCCC activities and are guided by the Climate Change Working Group chaired by the EMA. A 3 year Public Awareness Strategy and Action Plan was prepared by the Working Group and is being implemented through the public awareness programme of EMA. It targets mainly the youth through schools, coastal communities and other stakeholders.

39. Trinidad and Tobago also participated in the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change Project (CPACC), between 1999 and 2001. The country benefited from technical assistance and the provision of training and awareness materials as well as some equipment. Three major outcomes were the setting up of a national repository for climate change data and information, including the Coastal Resources Information System; a pilot study on the economic valuation of resources in selected coastal ecosystems at risk from sea level rise; and three automated sea-level and meteorological monitoring stations linked by satellite that provided ready and free access to the data at any time.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

40. The National Biological Diversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) was developed in 2001 through several rounds of broad-based consultations, and was coordinated by a multi-sectoral *NBSAP Task Force* with administrative support from the EMA. This Task Force however, ceased to function after the NBSAP was accepted by the Government. The NBSAP provided a review of the status and issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of the country's biodiversity. The document also proposed several recommendations for the conservation of biological diversity; sustainable use of its components; and for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

41. The major issues identified in the NBSAP were:

- Over exploitation of many biological resources
- Habitat destruction in key ecosystems
- Habitat conversion and fragmentation
- Cascading effects of environmental stress from different sources

- Loss of livelihoods by some sectors of the populations
 - Inactivity in biodiversity conservation will lead to greater costs in future
 - Lack of implementation of mechanisms that encourage sustainable use
 - Lack of studies to document the financial and social contribution of biodiversity
42. There are several pieces of existing legislation that can be used to regulate practices that contribute to loss of biodiversity, such as the Environmental Management Act, Town & Country Planning Act, Forest Act, Conservation of Wildlife Act, Fisheries Act, and the Marine Areas (Preservation and Enhancement) Act. Consistent enforcement of these Acts and outdated sections of some of them, have been major weaknesses.
43. The First Year programme of implementation for the NBSAP gave priority to the following activities:
- i. Workshops on the NBSAP in all Ministries
 - ii. Identifying specific interventions in sectoral policies
 - iii. Public awareness programme for NGOs, CBOs, private sector
 - iv. Economic evaluation of biodiversity through data collection and analysis
 - v. Implementation of some of the listed actions
 - vi. Identification of funding sources for programme development
 - vii. Planning and establishment of Clearing House Mechanism to make information accessible
 - viii. Identification of priority data and research projects
 - ix. Elaborating commitment from agencies, NGOs, CBOs and identification of areas of action
 - x. Evolve the mechanism for continued collaboration and coordination of NBSAP
 - xi. Continue political sensitisation process
 - xii. Articulate legal mechanisms for implementation of strategies and actions.
44. Some of the education and awareness activities were being implemented through the public awareness programme of the EMA. However, it was unclear if any of the other activities listed above were given any priority attention following adoption of the NBSAP by the Government.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)

45. The First National Report of Trinidad and Tobago to the CCD was submitted in 2002. The major issues identified in the document related to land degradation and included:
- Degradation of watersheds due to urbanisation, squatting, agriculture, quarrying and logging resulting in deforestation, erosion, water quality deterioration, and flooding.
 - Road construction in hilly rural areas contributing to erosion and opening of areas for secondary and sometimes unauthorised developments.
 - Oil spills, seepages and clearing of vegetation for drilling and oil industry infrastructure
 - Disruption of ecosystem functions of the Nariva Swamp for rice production, fishing, hunting (similar reclamation projects for many other wetlands).
 - Soil acidification from fertiliser use; loss of organic content.
 - Coastal erosion due to removal of vegetation for built/tourism development and agriculture.
 - Sand mining in rivers and along beaches.
 - Impact on marine /coastal ecosystems from sewage disposal and solid waste dumps.
 - Pollution from industry especially in the west.
 - Regulatory framework does not discourage/penalise inappropriate site preparation.
 - Threats to Biodiversity linked to changing land use and habitat destruction.

46. The National Report was intended to lead to the establishment of an implementation framework in 2002, including a plan to strengthen the capacity of the national focal point to deliver on the government's obligations under the CCD; to convene a 2nd National Consultation; establish and convene a National Co-ordinating body for the CCD as well as Land Management; and to develop a National Action Programme. None of these activities have as yet been implemented.
47. CNIRD is the RIOD Caribbean Focal Point for land degradation, and Advisor to the Government on the UNCCD. CNIRD in collaboration with the government, CARICOM, the UN and other international agencies hosted a regional workshop on land degradation in the Caribbean (3-6th February, 2004). The workshop was essentially a planning session to develop ideas for National Action Programmes and a Sub-regional Action Programme on land degradation. Additionally, participants were exposed to several aspects of land degradation assessment.

Capacity for Environmental Management

48. Capacity constraints exist at the individual, institutional and systemic levels. These have been identified in varying detail as outputs of several workshops and consultations over the past decade. For example, the National Consultation on Sustainable Development in Trinidad and Tobago was held in February 1997. This consultation was organized by the Caribbean Forest Conservation Association and the Sustainable Economic Development Unit and identified 15 capacity constraints with 11 recommendations to deal with these constraints. The NBSAP and National Communications to the CCD and UNFCCC, all identified a range of capacity needs and actions to address these needs. However, little has been done to improve the situation.
49. All of the key agencies identified in the preceding section do have some staff that undertake limited activities related to the MEAs. However, most agencies appear not to regard activities prescribed in the MEAs as a national priority, especially since these are not mainstream tasks in their day-to-day operations and are often not described in the agencies work-plans. There are many major issues that contribute to the inadequate capacity to discharge obligations under the MEAs and environmental management in general. The following list was considered as the main issues by participants at two national consultations (Tobago – 25th March 2004 and Trinidad – 29th March, 2004) on the preparation of this NCSA proposal (See Annex 5 – Workshop Report):
 - Low budgetary commitment to the environment and conservation in comparison to the competing socio-economic needs associated with the developmental agenda
 - Generally poor collaboration among agencies, especially in discharging the government's obligations under the various multilateral environmental agreements
 - Conflicting policy environment: sectoral policies developed in isolation often results in conflicts among other policies; lack of mechanism to resolve policy conflicts; policy documents often do not articulate implementation mechanisms; lack of awareness or adoption by many senior decision makers of policies drafted by other agencies
 - Insufficient or lack of enforcement of environmental laws
 - General insensitivity to community concerns, or lack of integration of these concerns into planning and implementation of projects
 - Inadequate staffing, resources and facilities with sometimes low motivation to carry out departmental mandates
 - Institutional inability to adapt to changing circumstances and trends
 - NGOs and CBOs ability to participate is often limited by human and financial resources.

Section II Objectives and linkages to ongoing activities

Objectives

50. The primary goal of the NCSA project will be to identify, through a country-driven consultative process, the priorities and needs for capacity building to protect the global environment which can work effectively within the existing political, administrative and cultural systems of the country. The NCSA process will also explore linkages among GEF focal areas and with wider environmental concerns and sustainable development at national level. This capacity building initiative must be able to deliver significant results that would improve this country's record in the discharge of its obligations under selected MEAs.
51. The specific objectives this NCSA will be to:
- i. Review and confirm priority issues for action within the thematic areas of biodiversity, climate change and desertification/land degradation, respectively;
 - ii. Clarify and prioritise related capacity needs within and across the three thematic areas;
 - iii. Catalyse targeted and co-ordinated action and requests for future external funding and assistance; and,
 - iv. Link country action to the broader national environmental management and sustainable development framework.

Links to ongoing activities

Climate Change

52. In terms of planned or ongoing work related to climate change, the Climate Change Working Group had developed a work plan with the following priorities:
- (a) Enabling activities under the initial national communications
 - 1) technology needs assessment for CC;
 - 2) to build capacity for participation in global observing systems;
 - 3) public awareness and education.
 - (b) Stock taking exercise of the preparatory process for the initial national communication and development of a proposal for GEF funding of the second national communications as agreed by the COP8.
53. Both of these priorities are funded from project-based activities. The Working Group was established by Cabinet and does not have a budget, although external sources of funds have been available to implement some activities. There is only one officer at the EMA assigned to Climate Change on a part-time basis (who Chairs the Working Group and serves as the Secretariat). In this context, the NCSA will examine the needs and linkages that can foster effective delivery of the activities identified.

Biodiversity

54. With regards to biodiversity, many of the priorities identified in the NBSAP for implementation in the first year work programme have not yet started. The EMA has the lead for implementation of the NBSAP, however it currently has inadequate staffing and resources to implement the activities identified as priorities. The NCSA coordination process can be useful in the implementation of some NBSAP priorities. The main activities from the NBSAP that could be utilized during the NCSA are:

- 1) Planning and establishment of Clearing House Mechanism to make information accessible
- 2) Identification of priority data and research projects
- 3) Elaborating commitment from agencies, NGOs, CBOs and identification of areas of action
- 4) Developing the mechanism for continued collaboration and coordination of NBSAP

55. The EMA has been responsible for preparation of the schedules for the recent declaration of three Environmentally Sensitive Areas, consistent with Article 8 of the CBD. Sensitisation of the public and state agencies for the management of these areas could also benefit from the NCSA process.

56. The EMA has appointed 13 representatives from governmental agencies, NGOs and the EMA to the *Biodiversity Advisory Council* that was recently established. The objectives of the BAC are to:

- Plan strategically for the implementation of biodiversity related programmes, plans, policies and legislation including NBSAP, Wetlands Policy and National Environmental Policy (NEP);
- Recommend actions to address the management of the biological diversity of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Coordinate and cooperate between the Environmental Management Authority and various stakeholders.

The functions of the BAC are to:

- Provide advice to the Board of the EMA regarding the management of natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas and species,
- Prepare recommendations, decisions or other programmes and measures with a view to:-
 - Protecting or conserving ecosystems and biodiversity or components thereof such as certain species, habitats and sites of ecological importance;
 - Coordination of research to support planning and implementation
- Serve as liaisons between communities, management committees and the EMA
- Recommend and advise on financial mechanisms and other resources to assist in the management of biological diversity;
- Advise on programmes for education and public awareness;
- Undergo various capacity building exercises so as to make proficient decisions concerning the management of biological diversity.

Desertification/Land Degradation

57. The National Awareness Seminar on the CCD is planned for this year and will be coordinated by the Policy and Planning Division (Environment) of the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment, in collaboration with CNIRD. This is expected to lead to the development of a National Action Plan for implementing appropriate aspects of the CCD. The effectiveness of these activities could be improved through the NCSA process, particularly in terms of the institutionalizing of a broad-based participatory mechanism to define priority issues and appropriate action and use of the strengthened coordinating mechanism.

Section III Project Activities

58. The NCSA proposal was developed with PDF-A funds from the GEF through UNEP. The process included:
- Hiring a national consultant to prepare the project proposal;
 - Identifying and consulting with government institutions and other relevant stakeholders to enhance their participation in the process;
 - Reviewing existing action plans, strategies and reports;
 - Identifying related ongoing activities;
 - Development of a draft project proposal;
 - Holding a stakeholder consultation in both Trinidad and Tobago to review and provide feedback to the Draft Project Proposal and develop the NCSA implementation mechanism;
 - Incorporating the outputs of the workshop into the Final Project Proposal
59. The project activities were reviewed and agreed upon by participants at the national consultations as being appropriate and achievable. The activities are expected to be implemented over a 13-month period and should ideally cover the time over which the country is expected to participate in each of the Conference of Parties (COP) for the three thematic areas. The level and quality of participation in these COPs will provide a useful test of the impact of this NCSA. The NCSA process will follow the guidance given in the 'Guide for Self-Assessment of Country Capacity Needs for Global Environmental Management', UNITAR 2000. The following major phases were proposed:
- Establishment of institutional arrangements to manage the process;
 - Development of the combined stocktaking assessment for the three thematic areas
 - Identification of priorities within the thematic profiles
 - Identification of capacity constraints, cross-cutting issues, synergies and opportunities for addressing capacity constraints
 - Development of a capacity development action plan;
 - Development and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation process.
60. The NCSA process is expected to be managed by the Project Team (National Project Coordinator and two Technical Consultants) under the guidance of the Technical Advisory Committee, which reports to the Cabinet of Ministers. The Project Team will come under the jurisdiction of the Permanent Secretary, in the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment. Financial management will be facilitated through existing mechanisms set up in this Ministry for such projects.
