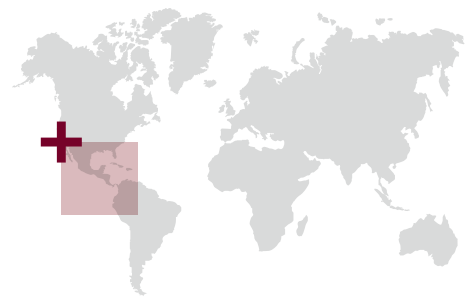


Advancing Caribbean Climate Adaptation through Natural Solutions



AT A GLANCE

Name

Resilient Islands by Design: Integrating Ecosystem- and Community-based Approaches to Enhance Climate Change Adaptation in the Caribbean

Duration

July 2017 – July 2021

Focus area

Dominican Republic (DR), Grenada (GD), Jamaica (JM)

Target group

National and regional entities and Ministry organizations.

Funds available

The project is funded with 5 million Euros by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). Cofinance is approximately 800,000 Euros.

The project is jointly implemented by...

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as lead and the International Federation of the Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) as implementing partner.

Overall aim of the project is...

Governments and communities in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Grenada incorporate integrated community- and ecosystem-based adaptation in their local, national and regional scale decisions to prioritize and invest in approaches to reduce community vulnerability and boost adaptive capacities.

On behalf of:



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety

of the Federal Republic of Germany

The Nature
Conservancy 



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

BACKGROUND

The impacts of climate change are increasingly severe and the need for action is more urgent than ever. Caribbean islands are among the world's most vulnerable, with storm frequency and intensity, flooding, wind damage and sea level rise all predicted to worsen, increasing threats to hospitals, power plants, freshwater sources, roads, houses and schools. Island communities must work together to prepare for disasters caused by natural phenomenon and minimize the impacts they will endure. Evidence shows that key ecosystems, like coral reefs and mangroves, can help reduce these risks while enhancing sustainable economic development.

Resilient Islands is a four-year initiative to prepare Caribbean islands to cope with the impacts of climate change by promoting the use of coastal habitats to reduce risks, and by helping governments, partners and communities implement sustainable development plans that prioritize nature. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) will work with communities and agencies to design innovative tools, train leaders, and implement demonstration projects within vulnerable coastal communities in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Jamaica.

APPROACH

The Resilient Island project follows an approach that promotes adaptation and risk reduction goals. The capacity of stakeholders to demonstrate and mainstream ecosystem-based approaches relies on the adoption and buy-in of communities and governments tasked with planning and managing the impact of climate change on these communities. Together, the partners will:

- a) Build awareness by developing ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) ambassadors and hosting training and awareness activities. Leaders will be trained in each country to advance nature-based solutions within their communities or organizations.
- b) Create an adaptation toolkit that will synthesize data and promote better decision-making around disaster risk management and climate adaptation. Thousands of people will benefit from locally tailored, nature-based solutions identified with guidance from the toolkit.
- c) Develop new and existing legislation to emphasize climate adaptation. Increased cooperation across government agencies will advance adaptation implementation strategies that preserve natural resources and protect communities.

- d) Implement demonstration projects in 1–3 vulnerable communities in each country. These sites will become regional models that demonstrate the importance of natural resources and their ability to enhance food security, economic development and physical protection against flooding and other climate-related risks.

- e) Promote a Resilient Coalition to connect stakeholders with knowledge platforms and financial opportunities to scale-up demonstration projects and integrate EbA into national and regional policy.

Our collective ability to reduce risk from climate hazards to communities across the region will increase by influencing a shift in community behaviour, national policies and public investments strategies to include protection of natural 'green infrastructure' as an integral element of their long-term economic and social development plans.

CHALLENGES

The main challenges refer to the integration of EbA approaches into adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and programs, which are caused by:

- inadequate information for policymakers to understand and assess their costs and benefits;
- insufficiency in the number of case studies demonstrating their benefits;
- the absence of ecosystem considerations in vulnerability assessments;

- limited financial and human resources in environmental ministries; and
- the need for strong political understanding and will in national governments to direct funds to these priorities.

Across the region, insufficient baseline data on climate risk makes resilience planning much more difficult. The lack of data, combined with persistent financing gaps, contribute to unsustainable natural resource management, which exacerbates a number of interrelated climate risks and exposes communities to greater flooding and erosion, and drives depletion of vital assets (like fish stocks).



OPPORTUNITIES

Climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) are a high priority for all governments in the region. The Dominican Republic's National Policy on Climate Change (Decree 269–15) prioritizes the development of climate change adaptation actions compatible with environmental protection, preservation of ecosystems, conservation and recovery of natural resources, and protection of communities to climate risks under the joint action of the central government, local governments and civil society organizations. In Jamaica, the National Development Plan for Jamaica: Vision 2030 (2009) includes a National Outcome of „Hazard Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change“. Finally, Grenada's Strategic Plan (2015–2018) emphasizes the importance of strengthening land, marine, and forestry habitats and increasing climate resilience through integrated disaster management approaches.

Extreme weather events and the impacts of the Atlantic hurricane seasons (2017 - 2018) in the Caribbean and scientific observations that extreme weather events will lead to stronger and more frequent storms in the future, are producing a programmatic readjustment in the implementation of the Resilient Islands program, which deserves special consideration because every project is subject to a triple restriction: scope (products), time (schedule) and cost (budget).

The success of Resilient Islands and any project in the Caribbean under the current conditions may depend not only on the skills and knowledge of management to consider these restrictions but also on the appraisal and management of the risks and impacts shaped by climate change.

By working on the development of elements of the adaptation toolkit to identify and select vulnerable coastal communities in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, our staff is considering a careful review of the locally tailored tools and approaches in each country that are designed according to their local experiences and realities. An adjusted version of the Strategic Targeting Methodology (STM) to select the most vulnerable coastal communities, for instance, will only be utilized in the Dominican Republic. In the case of Jamaica, the prioritization and selection of communities will be carried out using a hybrid version of the Vulnerability Ranking Methodology tool own by the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management office (ODPEM). Both tools are adjusted by including ecosystems-based approaches and principles in the assessment, analysis and selection of vulnerable communities for nature-based Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation interventions.



OUTCOMES

The outcome of the Resilient Island project is: governments and communities in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Grenada incorporate integrated community- and ecosystem-based adaptation in their local, national and regional scale decisions to prioritize and invest in approaches to reduce community vulnerability and boost adaptive capacities.

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I <http://coastalresilience.org/project/resilient-islands/>

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