



**GIVRAPD**

Global Islands' Vulnerability  
Research Adaptation Policy  
and Development

# POLICY BRIEF

## MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE TO ADAPTATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

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### CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY IN THE CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean region faces many challenges associated with projected changes in climate with implications for rising sea levels, flooding, coral bleaching, fish migration patterns, food security and associated economic disparity. The impact of these changes will vary across the Caribbean. Each island, a stretch of coastline and communities will experience these changes differently, and have diverse capacities to respond. Adaptation to climate change is therefore inherently a problem of governance.

However, these governance deliberations involve several caveats:

1. focus on climate change adaptation must be cautious not to overlook other sustainable development challenges, which may not necessarily be climate-related;
2. targeted adaptation strategies must emerge through legitimate, fair and transparent processes, to promote the general wellbeing of communities, and increase the ability of individuals and organizations to address emerging threats; and
3. the complexity of these requirements mean that no single actor or institution can successfully manage climate change.

Thus, multiple actors across jurisdictional levels and sectors must collaborate and be flexible with climate uncertainties.



## POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Climate change adaptation in the Caribbean is a problem of multi-level governance
- 7 Multi-level governance is essential as it links policy processes and institutions at different jurisdictional and organizational levels through which societies make collective decisions.
- 7 Our research reveals various multi-level arrangements in the Caribbean contexts that promote adaptive capacity through stakeholder alliances, social networks and partnerships
- 7 Key lessons of these institutional arrangements include collaborative networks that empower and create spaces for social learning and knowledge mobilization.

## WHY A MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE APPROACH TO ADAPTATION

Governance in a multi-level context involves the broader social processes and institutional mechanisms of rules, rights and norms - through which societies can make decisions on climate-related issues of social, economic and environmental importance. For effective climate change adaptation in the Caribbean, multi-level governance is especially important where small and medium-sized communities rely economically, socially and culturally on climate-vulnerable resource sectors (e.g., fisheries) or service industries (e.g., tourism). Often, these communities are already at a high risk to climate change in the absence of clear interventions, or because of poor adaptive capacity, lack of organizational resources, or representation in decision making.

A multi-level approach that includes community-based perspectives alongside those of governments (regional, national), non-governmental organizations, and the private sector is crucial. Increasingly in the Caribbean, the focus of multi-level governance is on developing networks and hybrid partnerships among state and non-state actors that revolve around shared vision, knowledge co-production, and aligning existing institutions to adapt to new challenges. Various actors linked across multiple levels through knowledge sharing, resource flows and personal ties often create the incentives and social mechanisms necessary to respond to extreme climatic events.

The GIVRAPD research design drew upon both governance theory and practice with participatory methodologies and interviews with key stakeholders and community groups. The research question centred on how organizations work together, or lack thereof, in developing initiatives to confront climate change and other challenges. The research focused on two coastal communities: Soufriere in St. Lucia and Bluefields Bay in Jamaica. These examples offer insights into multi-level governance arrangements for adaptation planning.

### CASE STUDY 1: ADDRESSING SCALE MISMATCH THROUGH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION IN ST. LUCIA



Plate1: Stakeholder mapping exercise in GIVRAPD governance workshop in St. Lucia

Because the cost of adaptation planning is high and new institutions take time and enormous resources, collaborative efforts and networks are increasing useful to leverage collective decision-making across several jurisdictional scales. In St. Lucia for instance, existing multi-sectoral and stakeholder partnership created to deal with resource management issues such as critical habitats could also support coastal adaptation interventions. The Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA) initiative is a case in point. It is a coastal-marine zoning program founded on the ideals of community participation with potential adaptation benefits.

The SMMA is governed by a multi-stakeholder board and managed by the Soufriere Marine Management Authority, a community-based organization. This institutional context for the SMMA provides important spaces for learning, interaction and collaboration between community and government partners. A key feature of existing arrangements is the empowerment of community-level actors to guide and steer the processes used to adapt to a range of local challenges, ranging from conflict, to water quality and the effects of a changing climate.

Still, there are several constraints on efforts to take advantage of the 'latent' adaptive capacity provided by the SMMA to leverage support towards adaptation interventions. First, there is the need to mainstream a long-term planning and visioning approaches that make climate change a priority due to its cross-cutting impacts. Second, the SMMA could benefit from increased institutional flexibility in the face of emerging challenges to accommodate new stakeholders and adaptation mandates.



Third, more coherence with terrestrial environmental management is necessary to effectively address climate risks originating from land-based activities, such as coral reef sedimentation associated with flooding events.

## CASE STUDY 2: BRINGING TIES THROUGH NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS IN JAMAICA

Climate change impacts pose a governance challenge due to its multi-faceted nature in terms of scale, sectors, institutions, and actors. Networks through community based initiatives involving state and non-state actors at the local level can be instrumental in bridging organizational resources and meeting multiple objectives such as conservation and economic development. The emergence of these network arrangements at multiple levels and across interest groups provide unique opportunities for adaptation planning in the Caribbean. Two examples are provided to reflect on findings on enabling conditions and barriers from a coastal-marine regional standpoint in Jamaica.



Plate1: Stakeholder mapping exercise in GIVRAPD governance workshop in Jamaica

Contrary to popular belief, Lorem Ipsum is not simply random text. It has roots in a piece of classical Latin literature from 45 BC, making it over 2000 years old. Richard McClintock, a Latin professor at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, looked up one of the more obscure Latin words, consectetur, from a Lorem Ipsum passage, and going through the cites of the word in classical literature.

Social networks are important fabric of societal interactions and speak to relationships and governance attributes that promote trust, social capital, and collaboration. The Climate Change Focal Point Network is a new initiative with representatives from government departments and agencies across Jamaica.

The goal is to facilitate collaboration and coordinate implementation of adaptation strategies across diverse agencies, sectors, and organizations in partnership with the Climate Change Division. The establishment of this network in provides a unique opportunity to strengthen horizontal and vertical coordination between government agencies and stakeholder groups. Increased engagement with community-based organizations, NGOs and resource users are still required to promote social learning at the local level.

Another example of multi-level governance arrangement are emerging public-private partnerships established in communities where diverse actors are coalescing around specific and often shared issues relevant to climate change adaptation. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the Division of Fisheries established a co-management arrangement with the Sandals Foundation – the philanthropic arm of Sandals Resort International. This has led to the Sandals Whitehouse Special Fishery Conservation Area (SFCA) as an established marine no-take area, with shared responsibilities regarding monitoring and enforcement of the marine reserve. Moreover, the Foundation has established a collaborative partnership with the local Gillings Gully Fishermen’s Cooperative to contribute to tour guide management of the SFCA.

## LESSONS FOR REPLICATION AND SCALING-OUT

Many national governments now recognize the importance of a multi-level or ‘networked’ governance perspective. And given that adaptation to climate change is ultimately a very local issue; a community-based and multi-level perspective is a crucial starting point. Effective multi-level arrangements have many important contributions relevant for adaptation mainstreaming. The two cases reflect many of the elements of potentially successful multi-level governance arrangements. These include fostering collaborative and flexible provisions, linking people and organizations vertically and horizontally, building an adaptive capacity to identify interventions that protect livelihoods and ecosystems in a changing climate.

There is also recognition that the success of the coastal activities such as tourism and fisheries are linked and mutually dependent on a healthy coastal-marine environment. Moreover, such multi-level governance arrangements help to align coastal livelihood opportunities with restoration and conservation initiatives.

Ultimately, such arrangements build resilience to global change, because the different actors involved at different levels are better connected, working around a common vision, and leveraging new resources for new opportunities. We draw four policy lessons from these experiences:

1. Empowering communities and community-based organizations to be bridge actors and leverage adequate support and resources from all levels and sectors for implementation;
2. Facilitating long-term strategic planning amongst stakeholder groups including the private sector for public and community partnerships;
3. Providing policy and legislative enabling conditions required to promote collaborative partnerships especially vertical and horizontal linkages;
4. Fostering a holistic perspective for tackling change across climate-sensitive sectors’,

recognizing that there are many drivers of change (both climatic and non-climatic) and responses to these changes must be synergistic across sectors and jurisdictional scales.

## ABOUT THIS BRIEF

This policy brief is a product of research undertaken by the GIVRAPD project, a two year interdisciplinary research project funded by the Climate & Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) in collaboration with government agencies, community stakeholders and universities. The participating universities include University of Cape Town, University of Waterloo, University of Mauritius and University of Oxford. The project was led by INTASAVE/CARIBSAVE in partnership with the African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI), Global Climate Adaptation Partnerships, in addition to the Governments of Saint Lucia, Jamaica, Mauritius and Seychelles. The project seeks to understand the multi-scale socio-economic, governance and environmental conditions that shape vulnerability and capacity to adapt to climate change in four learning sites.



## FURTHER READING

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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