

Policy, Legislative and Institutional Tools for conservation and restoration in Trinidad and Tobago

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Background

- ▶ Prior to 1998, environmental policy and legislation was fragmented as evident by the enactment of over 100 laws with each responding to a particular environmental problem.
- ▶ The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago supports the need for effective implementation of policies to monitor, regulate, manage and improve the environment, ecosystems and government services with the aim to reverse environmental degradation.
- ▶ Therefore, in recent years the Government has developed an overarching policy and legislative framework to enhance the sustainable management of the nation's ecosystems and their resources.



National Policies promoting conservation and restoration

1. The National Environmental Policy (2006)
2. The National Forest Policy (2011)
3. The National Protected Areas Policy (2011)
4. The National Wildlife Policy (2013)

National Environmental Policy (2006)

► Goal:

- To ensure environmental sustainable development in order to enhance the quality of life and meet the needs of present and future generation.

► Objective:

- Conserving the vitality and diversity of the natural environment through conservation of ecological systems and the biodiversity within.

► Specific strategies and tools:

- The establishment of a system of protected areas and a system for the protection of animals and plants through the designation of environmentally sensitive areas and environmentally sensitive species respectively
- Conservation of representative examples of all coastal and marine ecosystems by including them in a system of protected areas and the establishment of a coastal management and zoning.

National Environmental Policy (2006)

Specific references and tools:

- Maintenance of forested areas for conservation purposes and regulation of the use of their resources through the implementation of management plans, adopting appropriate land practices/ and BATs and management practices and better enforcement and monitoring.
- Rehabilitation of primary watershed areas and restricting development on them
- Providing economic incentives to private landowners to establish and maintain private forests and agro-forestry especially in critical watershed areas and reforestation of degraded forest land with ecologically compatible tree species;
- Diversifying plantation forests away from monocultures of trees;
- Preserve representative examples of all wetland types in the country by including them in a system of protected areas
- Institute mechanisms for the restoration of degraded wetlands, as far as possible, to their original state;
- Enforce rehabilitation programmes by operators at mining sites and regulate mining activities in environmentally sensitive areas.

National Forest Policy (2011)

► Goal:

- To guide the sustainable management of the forest resources of Trinidad and Tobago to provide for the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of its citizenry, contribute to sustainable development of the country and enhance quality of life while simultaneously protecting biological diversity and ecological processes.



► Objectives:

- Optimise the contribution of forest resources to livelihoods while ensuring sustainable use of forests, including extraction of timber and wildlife;
- Protect native genetic, species and ecosystem diversity;
- Maintain and enhance the natural productivity of forest ecosystems and ecological processes (watershed functions, etc.) to provide important ecosystem services

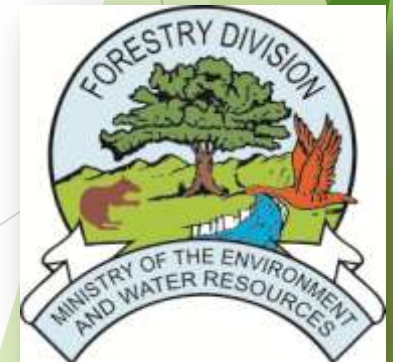
National Forest Policy (2011)

► Strategies:

- Conserve ecologically functional areas of all forest ecosystems including ecological corridors and buffer areas (including agricultural land and other semi-natural ecosystems of importance to biodiversity conservation) and critically threatened areas
- Promote conservation of hillside cover and other vulnerable places
- Conduct appropriate reforestation, rehabilitation and restoration of forests including sensitive or critical areas and degraded areas (e.g. abandoned quarries or agricultural areas) with the primary goal to return forests to their natural state
- Ensure that lands best suited for the provision of forest products and services remain under forest cover

► Current Forest Management Regimes

- Forestry Division is the primary state agency responsible for forest management in the forest reserves of Trinidad and Tobago.
- Categories of forest reserves:
 - Production forests (teak and pine plantations - approx. 28 ha or 21% of the forest reserves, plantation forestry is not practiced in Tobago)
 - Protection forests (all area above the 90 meter contour - 79% of the forest reserves in Trinidad, all forest reserves in Tobago are managed as protection forests.)
 - Forest Reserves include areas simultaneously designated as wildlife sanctuaries, prohibited areas, marine parks, ESAs and Ramsar Sites.
 - Forested land is privately protected including 526ha of forest in Arima and the Aripo Valleys in Trinidad and several private reserves in Tobago (Adventure Farm, Arnos Vale, etc)



National Protected Areas Policy (2011)

► Goal

- To establish an appropriate framework for the selection, legal designation and coherent management of a national system of protected areas.

► Objectives

- Conserving the country's natural heritage, genetic, species, ecosystem diversity and functionality, evolutionary and ecosystem process and biochemical cycles
- Conserving the country's cultural, spiritual/religious and historical heritage
- Optimizing the contribution of PAs to sustainable livelihoods and human well-being, including opportunities for resource mobilization and recreation

► Key Strategies

- Conservation and restoration of populations of rare, endangered and endemic species through appropriate systems of ex-situ and in-situ conservation
- Protection of representative, important, rare or unique biological and geological features
- Restoration and protection of ecosystems that provide essential resources and important ecological services

National Protected Areas Policy (2011)

► Strategies

- Integration of the provisions and intent of the NPAP including compensation and restoration requirements are incorporated into the land use and physical development plans and permitting processes and into national socio-economic policies
- Development of sustainable financing of Protected Areas through the creation of a Forestry and Protected Areas Fund, user fees, PES schemes, taxes and fines, participation in the carbon market, budgetary allocation for the FPAMA, etc
- Establishment of a Forest and Protected Areas Management Authority to administer and manage the implementation of the Forest and Protected Areas Policies.
- Re-classify and establish a new classification system for Protected Areas adapted from the IUCN protected areas management categories:
 - Scientific Reserves
 - Special Conservation Reserves
 - National Parks
 - Natural Landmarks
 - Habitat or Species Management Reserves
 - Protected Landscape or Seascape
 - Sustainable Use Reserves

National Wildlife Policy (2013)

► Goal

- The sustainable management of the wildlife resources of Trinidad and Tobago which provide for the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of present and future generations and wildlife management that contributes to the sustainable development of the country and enhances human life while protecting ecological processes.

► Objectives

- To protect nationally and globally critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, and/or near threatened wildlife populations, whether resident or migratory;
- To maintain viable representative populations of native wildlife species particularly endemics;
- To optimise the contribution of wildlife resources to livelihoods, cultural and spiritual/religious use, while ensuring sustainable use of wildlife resources, including hunting, capture of cage birds, captive breeding, artificial propagation and international trade, where possible, feasible and desirable;
- To maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of wildlife habitats in order that it continues to function to support sustainable and viable populations of wildlife species.



National Wildlife Policy (2013)

► Strategies:

- Establishing a legally designated national list of CR, EN, VU, or NT and affording the highest level of protection to the habitats that support them (Scientific Reserves or Special Conservation Reserves)
- Developing management and recovery plans which may include ex-situ conservation where appropriate
- Prioritising the establishment of a new national system of PAs to ensure critical wildlife habitats are preserved
- Ensuring that lands best suited for wildlife habitats remain ecologically intact
- Conducting appropriate rehabilitation and restoration of wildlife habitats including in critical/sensitive areas and degraded areas
- Establishment of the FPAMA to effectively administer and manage the implementation of the Wildlife Policy
- Formulation and adoption of Wildlife Recovery Plans
- Development of sustainable financing of wildlife management through the creation of a Forest and Protected Areas Fund, budgetary allocations, payments for access to wildlife resources, taxes and fines, etc

Other National Policies

► National Climate Change Policy

- The policy provides guidance for the development of an appropriate administrative and legislative framework for the pursuance of a low-carbon development path for Trinidad and Tobago, and as designed to harmonise with other sectoral policies.
- The development is effected through suitable and relevant strategies and actions to address climate change, including sectoral and cross sectoral adaptation and mitigation measures.
- Measures:
 - Enhancing natural carbon sinks by conserving forests and protecting natural systems including rehabilitation of degraded areas that contribute to carbon sequestration
 - Enhancing the resilience of natural bio-physical systems so as to maximise ecosystem services through the development of a system of protected areas.
 - Promoting community based adaptation through expanded use of the Green Fund for capacity building and enhancing resilience.

Other National Policies

► Policy and Programmes on Wetland Conservation for Trinidad and Tobago (2002)

- Developed to help manage the threats to wetlands and requires that the government protect, manage and restore wetlands in order to sustain and enhance their ecological and socio-economic values and function for current and future generations

► National Tourism Policy (2010)

- Developed to guide tourism development in the country.
- Objectives include, *inter alia*, the enhancement, protection and preservation of the natural and social environment
- Strategies include:
 - Collaboration with appropriate organisations to address improper industrial practices and ensure policing of coastal waters to prevent improper practices such as sand mining, pollution of rivers and swamps etc.
 - Designation of restricted areas in Tobago: Little Tobago, Waterfalls around the island, rainforests and all dive sites surrounding the island.

Legislation

► Environmental Management Act

- Provides for a co-ordinated approach to environmental management through a national environmental policy, environmental programmes, public awareness and development of subsidiary legislation for environmentally sensitive species and areas; pollution and hazardous substances; air and noise pollution; wastes; hazardous substances and spills; and assessment of environmental impacts through a certificate of environmental clearance.
- The Act also provides for the establishment of the Environmental Management Authority, Environmental Trust Fund and Environmental Commission.
- The Act also provides for the designation of a defined portion of the environment within Trinidad and Tobago as an Environmentally Sensitive Area and certain species as Environmentally Sensitive Species for the purposes of conservation and protection.
- ESAs: The Aripo Savannas Strict Nature Reserve, Matura National Park and the Nariva Swamp Managed Protected Area
- ESSs: Trinidad Piping-guan (Pawi), West Indian Manatee and the White-tailed Sabrewing Hummingbird

► COWA

- The Conservation of Wildlife Act replaces earlier legislation for the protection of “wild bird” and “ground game”.
- This Act enables the protection and conservation of fauna (mammals, birds and reptiles) through the regulation of hunting by a system of permits, closed seasons and game sanctuaries. The Act prescribes a closed hunting season which outlaws the taking, sale, purchase and possession of wild meat during this season

Legislation

► Forest Act

- The Forests Act enables the designation of Forest Reserves and Prohibited Areas, and provides for the regulation of the exploitation of timber and non-wood forest products from state lands. It controls logging and sale of forest produce through the issuance of a Conservator's licence and a removal permit

► Fisheries Act

- The Fisheries Act is the primary legislation governing fisheries in Trinidad and Tobago prescribing jurisdiction over all rivers and the territorial sea. Its regulations specify the size and dimensions of nets or similar implements, determine the size of various catch, prohibits the sale of undersized catch, and prohibits fishing in certain areas.

► The Draft Forestry, Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation Bill

- Enabling legislation necessary for the implementation of the three (3) recently approved National Policies (Forest, Protected Areas and Wildlife Policies), and is currently being circulated for public comment.

National Plans

► National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2001)

- Trinidad and Tobago's NBSAP, passed by Cabinet in 2001
- Addresses the issues affecting biodiversity locally in the context of sustainable use and conservation.
- It also calls for the implementation of the necessary legal framework in order to protect the country's natural resources, recognizing the need for capacity building, research, conservation, wise-use of resources, education and public awareness.

Conservation and Restoration Strategies

► Two-Year Moratorium on Hunting in Trinidad and Tobago

- The Trinidad and Tobago Government has placed a two-year moratorium on hunting with effect from the 2013-2014 hunting season which commenced on October 1, 2013, as it continues its efforts to protect and conserve wildlife resources in the country.
- During the ban a scientific survey is to be conducted to get a more accurate appreciation of the country's existing wildlife and natural resources.
- the Office of Attorney General is currently reviewing the penalties and fines in the Conservation of Wildlife Act to deter illegal hunting activities.
- The Government is proposing fines be increased from the present low of TT\$400 (One TT dollar ≈ US\$0.16 cents) to as high as TT\$100,000 plus jail sentences from six (6) to 12 months.
- It is envisioned that these amendments will discourage individuals from contravening wildlife regulations including the two-year moratorium on hunting.

Conservation and Restoration Strategies

► Designation of Environmentally Sensitive Species

- Five (5) sea turtles have recently been designated as Environmentally Sensitive Species (ESSs). There are now seven (7) species of sea turtle left in the world, five (5) of which live in our waters and/or return to our shores to lay their eggs:
 - Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*); The Leatherback turtle is the best known of the local sea turtle species. Trinidad's population of nesting females is one of the three largest in the world, and the beaches of the north east coast are the best managed and monitored on the island.
 - Green (*Chelonia mydas*);
 - Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*);
 - Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricate*) and
 - Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*).

Programmes and Initiatives

- ▶ **The National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP)**
 - Established in 2004, the NRWRP mandate is the reforestation of denuded lands including watersheds.
 - Core functions include reforestation and maintenance of denuded lands, watershed rehabilitation, protection of reforested areas, maintenance of biodiversity, encouraging of eco-tourism, forestry and agro-forestry production and support for business development of community groups.
 - Achievements (2012-2013):
 - 2,050 acres reforested and 16,000 acres were protected from fire damage through day time fire watch during the dry season.
 - 200,000 mixed forest seedlings have been produced for replanting and 2 new nurseries were established.
 - Digital maps were generated to show lands reforested and protected by reforestation groups.
 - Training sessions were conducted for 170 Supervisors in GPS use. 1,960 community workers were trained in fire suppression techniques



Programmes and Initiatives

► The Green Fund

- An national environmental fund created in 2001
- Is capitalized by a tax of 0.1% on the gross sales or receipts of companies carrying on business in Trinidad and Tobago
- Provides assistance to community groups and organizations for activities related to reforestation, remediation, environmental education and conservation of the environment.
- Since its inception, the fund has successfully financed a number of certified activities totalling \$117, 011, 878 e.g. Nariva Swamp Restoration

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Thank You!

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