

Policy brief

Enhancing community resilience through ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) in Grenada

Legal and policy reform opportunities for an EbA intervention in Woburn Clarke's Court Bay Marine Protected Area, Grenada.



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Policy Brief Summary:

Legal and Policy Assessment of WCCBMPA, Grenada

This brief summarizes the findings and recommendations of the legal and policy assessment of the Woburn Clarke's Court Bay Marine Protected Area (WCCBMPA), conducted under the Ecological Connectivity and Community Resilience (ECCR) Project.

The goal is to explore legal pathways for implementing ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), which leverages biodiversity and ecosystem services to help communities adapt to climate change.

Why It Matters

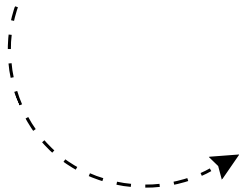
WCCBMPA hosts Grenada's largest intact mangrove system, supporting diverse marine life and providing critical ecosystem services—fisheries, tourism, shoreline protection, carbon storage, and water quality regulation. However, it faces growing threats from unregulated development, pollution, climate change, and fragmented governance.



Key Findings

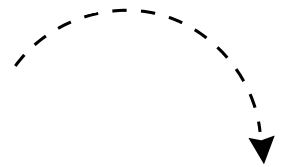
EbA Potential:

Mangrove restoration can reduce disaster risk and enhance community resilience.



Benefits:

Improved biodiversity, water quality, storm protection, sustainable livelihoods, blue carbon opportunities, and cultural value.



Legal Gaps:

While Grenada's laws recognize ecosystem value, they lack integration of nature-based solutions into disaster risk and climate adaptation strategies.

Recommendations

Legal and policy reforms should:

**Strengthen
institutional
mandates.**

**Secure
environmental
safeguards.**

**Enable frameworks
for nature-based
solutions like EbA.**

The issue

Grenada's geographic location and small size make it highly susceptible to natural hazards such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Recent disasters—including Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and Hurricane Beryl in 2024—have caused catastrophic damage, highlighting the urgent need for climate-resilient planning and disaster risk reduction. The Woburn Clarke's Court Bay Marine Protected Area (WCCBMPA), which contains Grenada's largest intact mangrove system, has the potential to serve as a natural buffer against climate-related hazards while supporting livelihoods through fisheries, tourism, and shoreline protection.

The issue

Despite its ecological and socio-economic value, the WCCBMPA faces mounting threats from habitat degradation, pollution, unsustainable fishing, and climate change impacts such as coral bleaching and coastal erosion. These pressures are compounded by weak governance, including limited enforcement, overlapping mandates, poor stakeholder coordination, and inadequate financing. The shift from a protected sanctuary to a multi-use area has further intensified conflicts among users and undermined the sustainability of the ecosystem.

Without targeted legal and policy reforms to support nature-based solutions like ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), the WCCBMPA's potential to enhance community resilience and reduce disaster risk remains unrealized.

Gaps in Law and Policy

Internationally, Grenada has demonstrated its commitment to nature-based solutions and the sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems by ratifying several key conventions. These include the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Grenada is also a party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which recognizes the role of coastal ecosystems in climate mitigation and disaster risk reduction.

Nationally, the legal and policy framework is more complex. While existing laws acknowledge the importance of healthy ecosystems—through provisions for protected areas, coastal buffers, and watershed conservation—they generally do not explicitly link ecosystem protection to disaster risk reduction or climate adaptation. Most of these laws were enacted before the widespread adoption of terms like nature-based solutions (NbS) and ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA). However, newer laws such as the *Physical Planning and Development Control Act (2016)* and the *Integrated Coastal Zone Management Act (2019)* may trigger Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for major infrastructure projects.

National policies, including the *Climate Change Policy* and the *Coastal Zone Management Policy*, are more aligned with international best practices. They recognize the role of ecosystems in reducing disaster risk and promoting climate resilience through NbS. Nonetheless, there is a lack of strong legal enforcement mechanisms to regulate land use and resource management effectively.

Overview of laws and policies according to key NbS indicators

Legislation	Recognition of NbS	Prohibition on Causing Environmental Damage & Remediation Responsibilities	EIA	Restrictions on Exploitation of Key Ecosystems	Land Use Laws and Development Restrictions in Sensitive Areas
Crown Lands Act, 1896	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Fisheries Act, 1996	✗	✗	✗	Somewhat	✗
Fisheries (Marine Protected Areas) Order and Regulations, 2001	✓	✓		✓	
Forest Soil and Water Conservation Act, 1949 (as amended)	✗	Somewhat			Somewhat
Grenada's Beach Protection Act, 1979 (as amended)		✗		✓	
Integrated Coastal Zone Management Act, 2019	Somewhat	Somewhat	✓	✓	✗
National Parks and Protected Areas Act, 1990 (as amended)	✗	Somewhat	✗	Somewhat	✓
National Trust Act, 1967	✗	Somewhat	✗	✓	Somewhat
Physical Planning and Development Control Act, 2016	✗	Somewhat	✓	✓	✓
Town and Country Planning Act, 1958 (as amended)	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓

Policy / Plan	Recognition of Nbs	Prohibition on Causing Environmental Damage & Remediation Responsibilities	EIA	Restrictions on Exploitation of Key Ecosystems	Land Use Laws and Development Restrictions in Sensitive Areas
Coastal Zone Management Policy, 2019	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grenada Maritime Economy Plan, 2021	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
National Climate Change Policy for Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique (2017-2021)	✓	Somewhat	Somewhat	Somewhat	Somewhat
Grenada Building Codes and Standards, 2000	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Grenada National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2016-2020	Somewhat	Somewhat	✗	Somewhat	Somewhat
Grenada Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP) 1985	Somewhat		✗	Somewhat	Somewhat
National Forest Policy (1999) and Strategy (2000)	Somewhat		✗	Somewhat	Somewhat
Land and Marine Management Strategy, 2011	Somewhat		✓	✓	✓
National Environmental Policy and Management Strategy, 2005	✗		Somewhat	Somewhat	Somewhat

Policy Recommendations

- 1 Clarify Coastal Land Tenure and Zoning Frameworks**
Secure land tenure is essential for long-term mangrove protection. Legal ambiguity undermines restoration investments and community stewardship.
- 2 Amend the Fisheries Act and Marine Protected Areas Regulations**
Provide statutory backing for EbA and ensure alignment with Grenada's commitments under the CBD, UNFCCC, and the OECS Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy.
- 3 Adopt a National Ecosystem-based Adaptation Policy or Strategy**
A coherent policy signal would encourage investment, harmonize sectoral planning (e.g., tourism, fisheries, agriculture), and enable access to international climate finance.
- 4 Mainstream EbA into Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations**
This strengthens enforcement of “avoid, minimize, restore” principles and protects mangrove ecosystems from tourism and marina development pressures.
- 5 Establish Legal Mechanisms for Community Co-management and Stewardship**
Local engagement enhances enforcement, sustainability, and livelihood integration of EbA interventions.
- 6 Enable Blue Carbon and Ecosystem Service Valuation Instruments**
These tools can incentivize mangrove restoration and help generate sustainable finance streams for maintenance and monitoring.
- 7 Leverage Regional Legal Instruments**
Aligning EbA-related reforms with regional instruments such as the OECS St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability and the Caribbean Biological Corridor Initiative can enhance donor support, knowledge sharing, and legal consistency across Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Implementation Considerations

The Grenada Red Cross Society and the IFRC recognise that engaging in law and policy reform will take significant resources and effort. In this regard, we are committed to:

Strengthen Community Awareness and Participation

Build grassroots support and stewardship for the EbA intervention.

Build a Coalition of Champions

Establish a diverse advocacy alliance including government agencies, fisherfolk, youth, women's groups, and NGOs.

Engage Development Partners and Funders

Position the WCCBMPA EbA intervention as a flagship pilot for blue carbon and nature-based climate finance.

Mobilize Evidence and Local Knowledge

Equip advocates with compelling data and stories to influence decision-making.

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legal and policy
assessment report**

