The impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly severe and the need for action is more urgent than ever. Caribbean islands, including Barbados 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.

Coastal erosion and degradation of marine and coastal resources have worsened around the coast of Barbados over the last few decades. Reduced beach sediment volume contributes to the erosion in addition to enhancing the vulnerability of the area to extreme weather events.

As a result of these threats, the Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU) has incorporated more Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) processes into its daily functions. These share the common foci of reducing national and community vulnerability and contributing to resilient and sustainable development in the face of climate variability and climate change.

Climate change considerations, therefore, need to be taken into account in all governmental and private sector planning processes to ensure that adaptation and resilience building become a mandatory feature of all socio-economic, sectoral, and environmental development planning processes. Without understanding and embracing our new knowledge about climate change resiliency and disaster risk into ICZM Plans and legislation, there is a greater risk to future coastal developments and the economy of Barbados.
So what’s being done?

It is crucial for Barbados to have a clear ICZM Plan and Policy Framework that better reflects the importance of incorporating climate resilience and disaster risk. Barbados may contribute little to the causes of climate change but the negative impacts are already affecting people, homes, businesses and infrastructure along our coasts. In response to increasingly dangerous hurricanes and rising vulnerability, the Government of Barbados, through the CZMU will be targeting specific urgent actions (through updating plans, guidance, policies and laws) by developing innovative adaptation toolkits, best-practice models and improved mainstreaming of climate and disaster resilience within existing sectors.

Intended outputs

The project will help support the creation of a more resilient planning and legislative system that enables business, communities and government to be better empowered to significantly increase investments in the protection and restoration of key ecosystems to meet adaptation, risk reduction and development goals.

The project approach embraces the strategies of the Physical Development Plan (2017). This advocates the adoption of a Natural Heritage System which will be valued as a means of mitigating the effects of climate change and the related risks of natural disasters. It contributes to climate change adaptation through the:

- Appreciation of assessing the risks facing the Barbadian coastline (see Fact Sheet 1).
- Identification of technical sustainable solutions including the conservation of a range of ecosystem services (provisioning, protection, regulation)
- Adoption of a workable monitoring and evaluation system is vital for the effectiveness of any action to be measured.

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