

Caribbean Women in Forestry

CAWFOR



Strategic Plan

2014 - 2016

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Executive Summary

CAWFOR staff, Board of Directors, Partners and members from throughout the Caribbean region assisted in developing this Strategic Plan in May 2013. This is the first Strategic Plan for CAWFOR covering a three year period 2014-2016. CAWFOR'S mission is to ensure that the traditional, technical and professional knowledge, skills and roles of women are effectively incorporated into the sustainable management of the Caribbean's forest resources.

To achieve CAWFOR's mission activities are organized into four strategies: 1) Research; 2) Awareness building; 3) Advocacy; and 4) Empowering women leaders.

Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

CAWFOR's vision is a Caribbean region where there is gender equality in the sustainable management of forest resources.

Mission Statement

CAWFOR's mission is to ensure that the traditional, technical and professional knowledge, skills and roles of women are effectively incorporated into the sustainable management of the Caribbean's forest resources.

The Caribbean region encompasses the English, Spanish, Dutch and French Speaking islands and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member countries of Central and South America.

History

During the International Year of Forests 2011 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations hosted a symposium titled 'Women in Forestry in the Caribbean'. The symposium was deemed relevant since although worldwide research on the issues facing women in forestry had been conducted and documented, no similar research had been conducted within the Caribbean region. Thus it was felt that the symposium would be a launching pad for similar research to be conducted in the Caribbean so as to determine whether or not there were similar gender issues in the field of forestry. It was also envisaged that the symposium would help to develop strategies to address

any issues that may be voiced so that women could play an equitable and effective role in forest management in the Caribbean.

Findings coming out of the symposium indicated that female forest officers face similar challenges as female forest officers across the world, and these issues can be broadly categorised as: 1) gender isolation; 2) gender biasness; 3) gender inequality; and 4) lack of knowledge and sensitivity regarding gender in the workplace.

In order to deal with the issues identified during the symposium two strategies were developed namely: 1) establishment of the Women in Forestry in the Caribbean Network – a mentoring network specifically formulated to provide a forum where female forest officers can share and build solidarity; and 2) establishment of the Caribbean Women in Forestry (CAWFOR) – a NGO group that aims to advocate for gender equality via the development and implementation of gender policies throughout the Caribbean forestry sector (private and public) and builds capacity of women leaders working in sustainable forest management.

CAWFOR was legally established in 2012 via registration as a non-profit company under the Companies Act of Trinidad and Tobago.

Needs and challenges

1. *Characterisation of forestry as a male profession:* Women have significantly contributed to the management of the world's forests either through traditional forest management or scientific forestry. However, when it comes to the field of formal forestry, the focus has been on timber production, which is traditionally viewed as men's work. The characterisation of forestry as a male profession may shut out women from jobs in the field of forestry that they may have been willing to undertake but because of cultural views they are not given the opportunity. A study on gender mainstreaming in ten African countries found that 'gender inequality in forestry organisations in Africa is striking' (FAO 2007) where evidence indicated that the percentage of women in leadership positions in formal forestry was almost

nonexistent. Although a formal survey of women in leadership positions in formal forestry in the Caribbean has not yet been conducted, the situation is similar given the reality that there is currently only one female Conservator or Chief Executive Officer in charge of a Forestry Department in the English-speaking Caribbean islands. The characterisation of forestry as a male profession has shut out women from jobs in the field of forestry and thus the forestry sector has failed to be truly gender diverse.

2. *Women are developing unhealthy coping mechanisms:* The forestry sector is one that is dominated by men and one that privileges men over women. The implications of this hyper masculine situation within the social and working institutions of formal forestry have led to the hiding of femininity in the forestry sector in Nepal (Gurung and Lama 2003), women acting more masculine as demonstrated by female forest officers in Australia (Buchy 2001) and the development of unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as hiding their femininity, by female forest officers. Surprisingly, there are no conclusive theories that explain why gender segregation occurs within the forestry sector so that there has been a failure in analysing relatable feminist theories by which the issues outlined can be understood and thus solved.

3. *Discriminatory policies and practices:* There are discriminatory structures and practices within forestry where female forest officers do not get the same degree of respect, promotions and recognition that male forest officers benefit from. Currently policies, plans and practices that govern forest management are not gender sensitive in recognising how women and men appreciate forests in very different ways and how women can make unique and valuable contributions to sustainable forest management.

4. *Women have weak voice in decision-making:* Not surprising there are limited opportunities in forestry organisations for women's voices to be heard due to the hyper masculinity or the exaggeration of male stereotypical behaviour prevalent in the forestry sector, although there are some hints that gender marginalisation may be beginning to change.

All of these challenges have effectively hindered the development of a gender balanced forestry sector.

Opportunities

There is a paradigm shift currently taking place in the forestry sector worldwide. Increased global demands and pressure on forest ecosystems has led to an evolution of the forestry sector where factors such as the transference of management of some of the world's forest resources to local communities has led to a shift from publically managed and operated industry to one that increasingly has as its main actors, players from the private sector (The Expert Consultation on Forestry Education (ECFE), FAO 2001). This shift towards a more multidisciplinary approach to management of the world's forests and the devolution of management responsibilities from public institutions to the private sector coincided with a change from timber extraction to forests being managed for its environmental services (ECFE, FAO 2001).

Consequently more and more attention is placed on the value of the forest ecosystems as a unit inclusive of ecosystem biodiversity and the link to current social and economic issues such as livelihoods, poverty alleviation and human health. Interestingly if some of forestry's features, such poverty alleviation was more commonly talked about *more women might surface as supporters and/or career professionals in the field*. **We have not yet fully experienced this shift in Caribbean Forestry.** There are new opportunities with this paradigm shift in Caribbean forestry for women to not only enter the hyper masculine world of forestry but also to become leaders within this field. However in order to achieve these goals there must be advocacy against gender discrimination and the drafting and implementation of gender sensitive policies within Caribbean forestry.

CAWFOR is well-placed to take advantage of this paradigm shift and empower women in forestry, including through:

1. Conducting research to build sharing knowledge on what are the key gender issues in forestry in the Caribbean
2. Communicating knowledge to build understanding of what are the issues and to build commitment of stakeholders to collaborate in addressing the issues
3. Working directly with women in the forestry sector to build their capacity to function as effective and confident professionals
4. Engaging male and female leaders to be supporters, advocates, champions, and enablers
5. Influencing the development of an enabling institutional environment, where policies, practices, structures and processes give women equal opportunities and recognition engaging and influencing public policy and governance for sustainable development

Guiding principles

Development and implementation of gender sensitive policies and practices require that decision-makers, politicians, and other key stakeholders recognize the important roles, rights and responsibilities that are interwoven between women and the wise use of forest resources. CAWFOR aims to demonstrate the following five core principles that it considers vital to gender equality with the Caribbean forestry sector:

1. Weave a story – sharing experiences and identifying gender issues within the field of forestry -
2. Vocalize gender – advocating for and participating in the gender sensitisation and awareness
3. Build bridges - linking, supporting and mentoring female forest managers in the Caribbean
4. Shift perceptions – building the capacity of women to play an active and effective role in forest management in the Caribbean
5. Catalyse change – developing and implementing gender sensitive plans, programmes and policies for the Caribbean forestry sector

Operational spheres

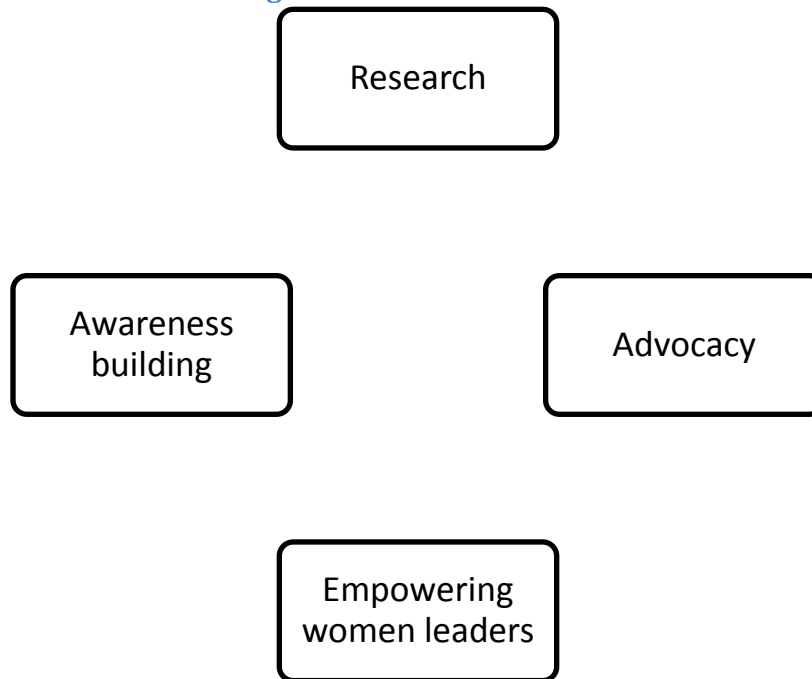
Through the guidance of these core principles CAWFOR will work to influence development of policies on gender sensitisation and gender equality to ensure that the technical and professional knowledge, skills and roles of women are incorporated into the sustainable management of the Caribbean region's forest resources by means of the following:

1. Representing CAWFOR's members at national, regional and international forestry and environmental fora to advocate on gender issues
2. Conducting outreach, capacity building and technical advice programmes on gender aspects of forest management
3. Participating in the gender sensitisation of national, regional and international forest, environmental and biodiversity policies and legislations
4. Increasing the proficiency of forest organisations in the Caribbean Region in building women's leadership and enshrining gender into management, research and development

CAWFOR's Core Strategies

CAWFOR will focus on four strategies (Figure 1) to fulfill its mission to ensure that the traditional, technical and professional knowledge, skills and roles of women are incorporated into the sustainable management of the Caribbean region's forest resources for a more gender balanced forestry sector.

Figure 1: CAWFOR's Four Strategies



Strategy One: Research

The apparent discrimination against female forest officers in formal forestry has been aligned to the stereotypical male and female roles, and also reflected in the values of societies that are influenced by cultural, historical and social imperatives. Thus the underlining drivers of the discrimination women face in forestry and their responses to this discrimination has its grounding in feminist analytical frameworks (Figure 2), such as doing gender, power/knowledge nexus and homosociality.

Therefore, the challenge remains in identifying why gender discrimination exist within forestry and CAWFOR hopes to contribute to this area of concern by bringing together a range of feminist ideas and concepts and linking them to the experiences of women in forestry.

The Research Strategy will help to determine the causal factors of female discrimination within forestry and understand gender issues within the Caribbean forestry sector. In order to achieve these goals the experiences based on localised realities of women in forestry will be shared, researched and analysed as a means for generating knowledge, since recordings of lived

experiences can be useful in validating knowledge claims. Then the knowledge generated from these lived experiences of women or within the Caribbean forestry sector will be used along with analytical concepts used in feminist theorising to develop forestry-feminist frameworks. The Research Strategy will therefore promote ongoing investigations linking feminist and forestry scholarships.

Figure 2. Strategy One - Research & Feminist analytical frameworks

Doing gender	Power/knowledge nexus	Homosociality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Gender like culture, is a human production that depends on everyone constantly ‘doing gender’ often without thinking about it’ (Lorber1991) • the sense of accomplishment that women get from doing the masculine gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who produces power and who disseminates this power, are means of controlling persons and within society • pleasure derived by meeting the standard set of power that is spread through knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the non sexual attraction men feel for one another and the consequent control of valuable resources • men form bonds or brotherhoods that help them secure valuable resources such as power and money

Strategy Two: Awareness Building

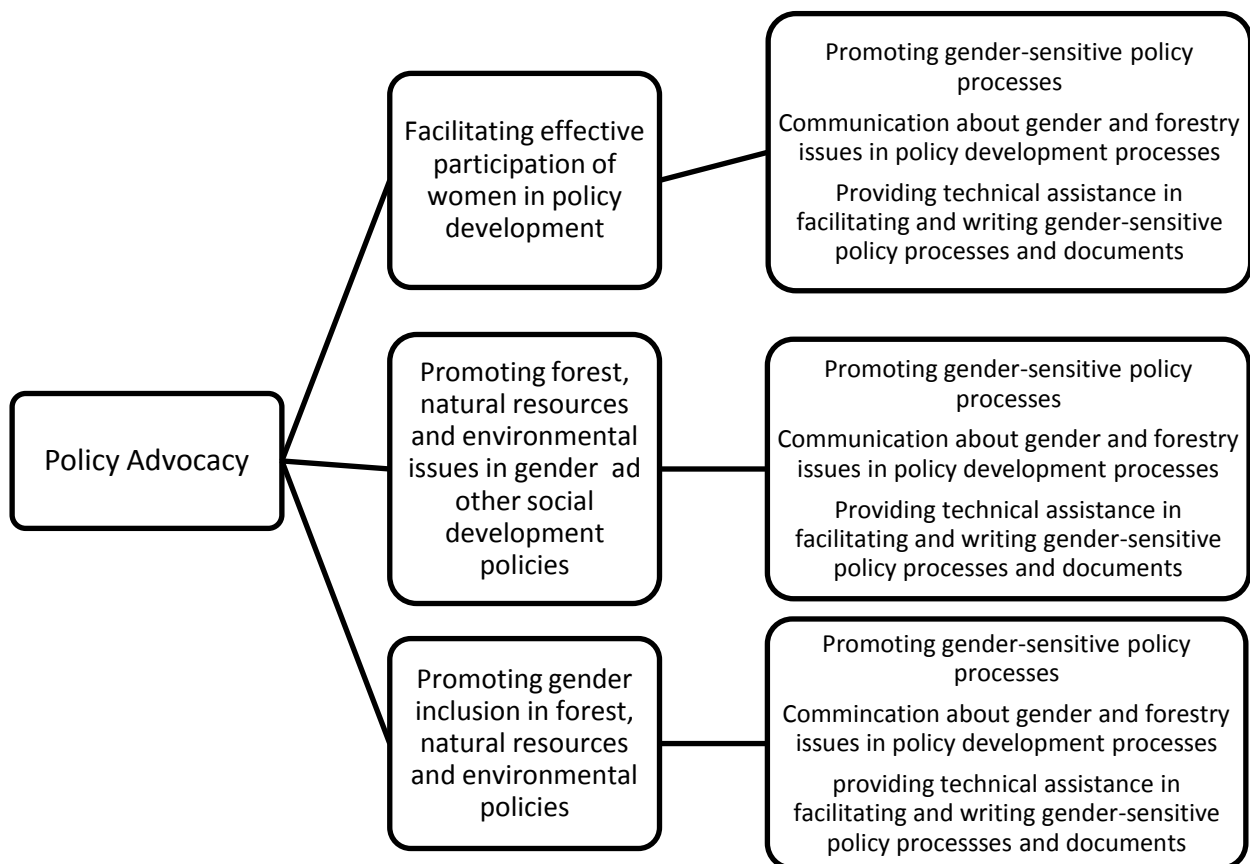
CAWFOR will communicate the knowledge built in its Research Strategy to build awareness and understanding of the issues and commitment of forestry leaders to address the issues. CAWFOR will also conduct communication to catalyse change in policies and practices to build a more enabling institutional environment for women in forestry.

Strategy Three: Advocacy

CAWFOR will advocate for gender equality and assist the governments of the Caribbean region in meeting their gender obligations under national, regional and international laws and policies including the various Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including through:

- Catalysing and supporting increased participation of women in policy development for the forestry sector;
- Providing technical assistance in the gender sensitisation of national, regional and international forest, environmental and biodiversity policies and legislations;
- Promoting inclusion of issues related to women in forestry issues in gender policies; and
- Assisting the governments of the Caribbean with developing gender statements that can be included in the policies and/or subsequent legislative frameworks for the forestry sector.

Figure 3: Strategy Three – Advocating for policies reform



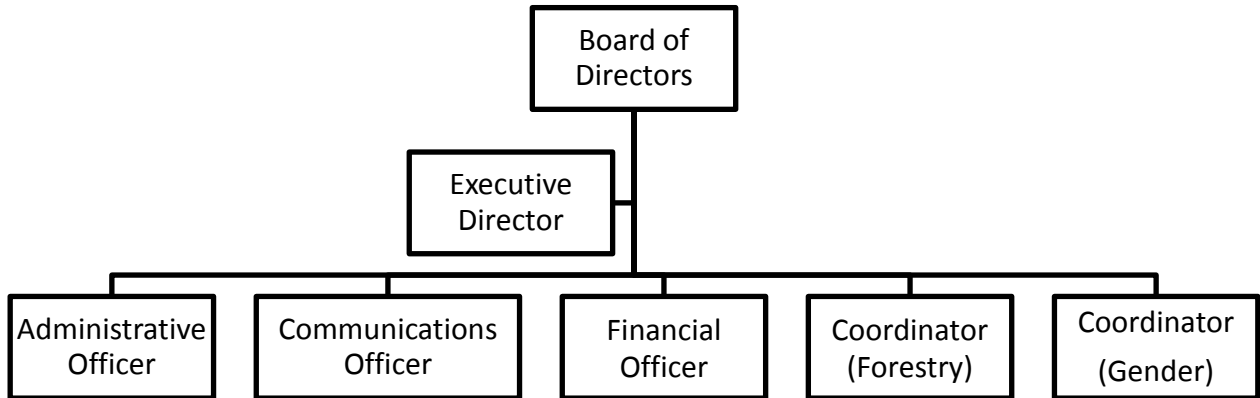
Strategy Four: Empowering women leaders

CAWFOR will seek to increase the proficiency of forest organisations in the Caribbean Region in building women’s leadership and enshrining gender into management, research and development. CAWFOR will empower women through building their capacity via outreach, training mentoring, coaching and networking.

Structure

CAWFOR is governed by an elected Board of Directors. The Executive Director is an *ex officio* member of the Board and reports directly to the Board. CAWFOR will seek to further develop its staff capacity by adding additional staff to execute its programmes (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Organisational Structure



Priority Action Areas

Year One

- Developing a research strategy and conduct preliminary research on women in forestry in Trinidad and Tobago
- Communicating findings to raise awareness on women and forestry issues in Trinidad and Tobago
- Raising CAWFOR'S profile in the media and build strategic partnerships in Trinidad and Tobago and with regional organisations
- Conducting outreach to women working in forestry in Trinidad and Tobago to inform them about CAWFOR and engage them as beneficiaries and partners
- Strengthening the organisational capacity of CAWFOR, including via building human resource capacity and establishing operational policies and procedures eg, launch of NGO, audit. Annual Work Programme Annual Awareness Walk, fundraisers(1-3)
- Conducting a membership drive to engage women in forestry across the Caribbean
- Conducting advocacy and supporting policy development
- Developing a sustainable financing strategy

Year Two

- Expanding outreach to other Caribbean islands
- Conducting a membership drive to engage women in forestry across the Caribbean
- Strengthening the organisational capacity of CAWFOR, including via building human resource capacity and establishing operational policies and procedures eg, capacity building for female leaders , building relationships, networking and partnering
- Conducting advocacy and supporting policy development
- Deepening and widening research on gender and forestry across the Caribbean
- Communicating findings to raise awareness on women and forestry issues in Trinidad and Tobago

- Raising CAWFOR'S profile in the media and build strategic partnerships in Trinidad and Tobago and with regional organisations

Year Three

- Conducting regional needs assessment and develop a capacity building strategy
- Conducting a membership drive to engage women in forestry across the Caribbean
- Conducting advocacy and supporting policy development
- Deepening and widening research on gender and forestry across the Caribbean
- Publishing research papers and case studies
- Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impacts of CAWFOR's work and developing a new strategic plan to guide the organisation's work
- Strengthening the organisational capacity of CAWFOR, including via building human resource capacity and establishing operational policies and procedures eg, establishment of office, recruitment of core staff
- Communicating findings to raise awareness on women and forestry issues in Trinidad and Tobago
- Raising CAWFOR'S profile in the media and build strategic partnerships in Trinidad and Tobago and with regional organisations

Financial projections

It is planned that CAWFOR's operations and progame activities will be supported through several revenue streams including government grants, NGO grants, private foundation support, consulting contracts and partnerships. It is anticipated that, since CAWFOR's goals and objectives are in alignment with some of the key goals of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and donor agencies, funding will be awarded in order to assist us in fulfilling our mandate under this strategic plan.

Our expenditure costs during the first two years will be centered around our growth initiative and core activities such as the establishment of an office, overhead costs, the employing of key staff members and the sensitisation of key stakeholders on gender issues that exist in the Caribbean forestry sector. A detailed annual budget will be developed.