



Analysis

Organising for large-scale system change

The Environmental Action (ENACT)
programme, Jamaica

Peter Morgan

A case study prepared for the project 'Capacity, Change and Performance'

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Study of Capacity, Change and Performance

Notes on the methodology

The lack of capacity in low-income countries is one of the main constraints to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Even practitioners confess to having only a limited understanding of how capacity actually develops. In 2002, the chair of Govnet, the Network on Governance and Capacity Development of the OECD, asked the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) in Maastricht, the Netherlands to undertake a study of how organisations and systems, mainly in developing countries, have succeeded in building their capacity and improving performance. The resulting study focuses on the endogenous process of capacity development - the process of change from the perspective of those undergoing the change. The study examines the factors that encourage it, how it differs from one context to another, and why efforts to develop capacity have been more successful in some contexts than in others.

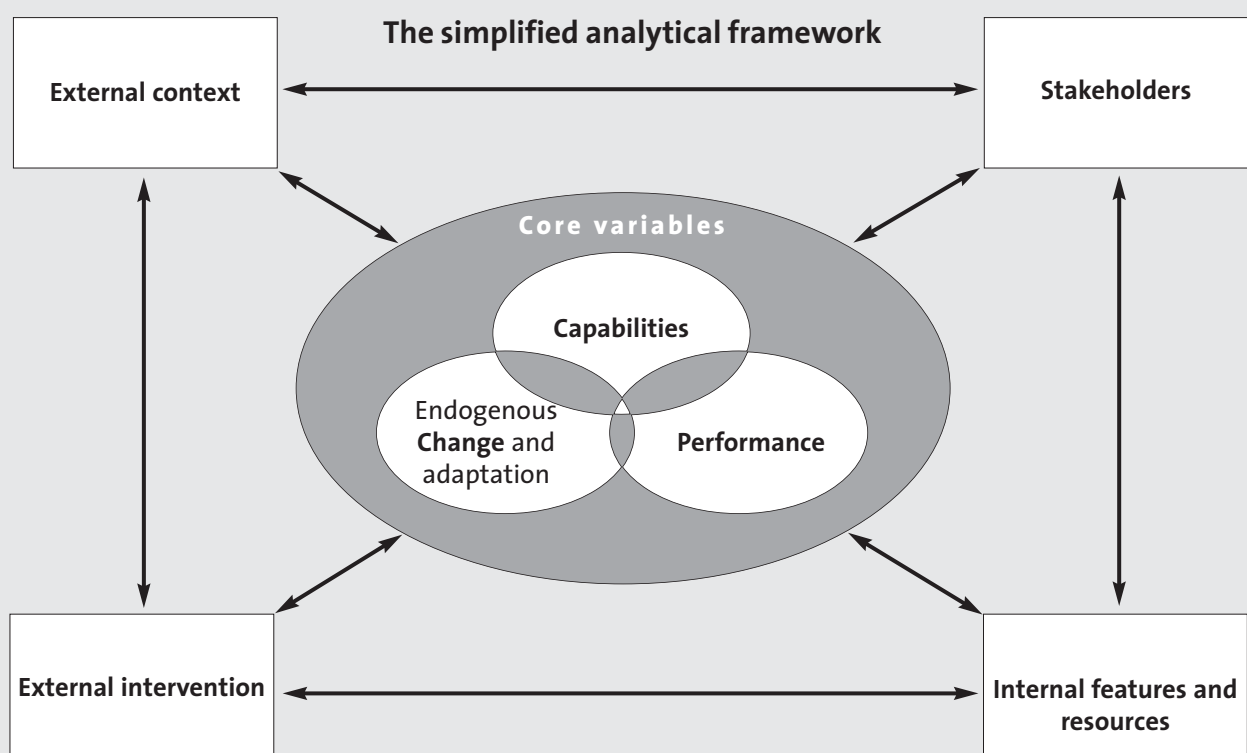
The study consists of about 20 field cases carried out according to a methodological framework with seven components, as follows:

- **Capabilities:** *How do the capabilities of a group, organisation or network feed into organisational capacity?*
- **Endogenous change and adaptation:** *How do processes of change take place within an organisation or system?*
- **Performance:** *What has the organisation or system accomplished or is it now able to deliver? The focus here is on assessing the effectiveness of the process of capacity development rather than on impact, which will be apparent only in the long term.*

- **External context:** *How has the external context - the historical, cultural, political and institutional environment, and the constraints and opportunities they create - influenced the capacity and performance of the organisation or system?*
- **Stakeholders:** *What has been the influence of stakeholders such as beneficiaries, suppliers and supporters, and their different interests, expectations, modes of behaviour, resources, interrelationships and intensity of involvement?*
- **External interventions:** *How have outsiders influenced the process of change?*
- **Internal features and key resources:** *What are the patterns of internal features such as formal and informal roles, structures, resources, culture, strategies and values, and what influence have they had at both the organisational and multi-organisational levels?*

The outputs of the study will include about 20 case study reports, an annotated review of the literature, a set of assessment tools, and various thematic papers to stimulate new thinking and practices about capacity development. The synthesis report summarising the results of the case studies will be published in 2005.

The results of the study, interim reports and an elaborated methodology can be consulted at www.capacity.org or www.ecdpm.org. For further information, please contact Ms Heather Baser (hb@ecdpm.org).



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Acronyms

CASE	College for Agriculture, Science and Education	NEPA	National Environment and Planning Agency
CEO	chief executive officer	NGO	non-governmental organisation
CDE	Capacity Development in Environment	NRCA	National Resources Conservation Authority
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency	MIND	Management Institute for National Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management	PMU	programme (project) implementation unit
ENACT	Environmental Action Programme	TA	technical assistance
GIS	geographic information system	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund	UWI	University of the West Indies
NEEC	National Environmental Education Committee		

Executive summary

This case study looks at the experience of the Environmental Action (ENACT) programme, a collaboration between the government of Jamaica and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). ENACT's mandate was to work with Jamaican organisations in the public, private and non-profit sectors to improve their capabilities to identify and solve national environmental problems. The design of the ENACT programme began in 1990 but activities in the field only got under way with the assignment of a Canadian adviser in 1994. It took until 1999 to put in place all the pieces needed to make ENACT into a high-performing support unit.

There were four key aspects of the approach adopted by the two governments to guide ENACT's work:

- a process approach based on responsive entrepreneurship;
- working across a wide spectrum of capacity development initiatives;
- working with a wide variety of stakeholders and partners; and
- working at a variety of levels.

The first aspect requires some explanation. The ENACT team did not push involvement and compliance in their programme. They did not try to mainstream ideas by a top-down approach. They were also not interested in getting customers to buy in through a social marketing approach. Rather, they were looking to add value to the programmes of others. They proactively sought out pockets of energy, interest and commitment and tried to respond to the needs of the groups involved.

CIDA played a critical facilitating role, and succeeded in maintaining continuity on the major issues facing the programme. For the most part, CIDA took a strict hands-off approach, allowing the ENACT team to organise itself internally and externally to meet its overall objective, and to respond to stakeholder demands. The activities of the Canadian adviser evolved from providing leadership to acting as a 'heat shield' to buffer ENACT from external intrusions, to motivate and support operations, to keep the unit's financial and administrative systems efficient, and to liaise with Canadian stakeholders. Except for a brief period, CIDA staff put in place management and oversight mechanisms appropriate for such a programme.

The ENACT programme generated its effectiveness over time by achieving the right 'fit' both internally and with the conditions and demands of the surrounding environment. The ability of a programme to position itself and then manage its work strategically for productive purposes seems crucial for improving capabilities and performance. Part of this process of 'fit' has to do with getting a number of activities, functions, processes, people, etc., to interact together as a system. At a deeper level, it also has to do with matching initiatives to the level of organisational sophistication of the sector or country at a particular time. Making that happen in the ENACT case took the better part of seven years.

The ENACT experience indicates that many of the ideas outlined in the DAC Guidelines for Capacity Development in Environment, issued in 1995, remain relevant at an abstract level, but it also points to some gaps. First, the guidelines were issued before results-based approaches gained favour among the international funding community, and it is by no means clear that the emphasis on long-term processes rather than short-term products would still be accepted. Second, the guidelines are, in effect, values rather than operational principles, focusing more on the 'what' than on the 'how'. As such, they need to be supplemented with insights from implementation experience.

1 Introduction

This case study looks at the experience of the Environmental Action (ENACT) programme, a collaboration between the government of Jamaica and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) that began in 1991. ENACT's mandate was to work with Jamaican organisations in the public, private and non-profit sectors to improve their capabilities to identify and solve national environmental problems. The design of the ENACT programme began in 1990 but activities in the field only got under way with the assignment of a Canadian adviser in 1994. It took until 1999 to put in place all the pieces needed to make ENACT into a high-performing support unit of the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA).

Due to the complexities of the experience of the ENACT programme, this case contains within it a number of themes that are instructive in their own right. These themes can be summarised as follows:

- The wider Jamaican context and its influence on the ENACT programme. Despite its comparatively small size, Jamaica has had a dramatic history leading to a country of contrasts and paradoxes. Part of the challenge facing the ENACT programme was to create the right 'fit' between this context and its strategies for enhancing capabilities and performance.
- The growth and development of the ENACT programme unit. Specifically, it examines how the four main participating groups - NEPA, CIDA, the Canadian executing agency and the ENACT field team - collaborated over time to make the unit effective. The focus of this case is therefore limited to what was perceived to be its comparative advantage, namely, process issues in support of large-scale system change.
- The strategies for capacity development chosen by the ENACT programme over the period 1996-2004 to improve the capabilities and performance of its Jamaican stakeholders and partners, and why these choices were made.

The value of this case lies in understanding the challenge facing both the two governments and the ENACT unit and how that challenge was addressed. In 1991, the idea of embedding ideas and practices to do with the environment and sustainable development in the public, private and civil society sectors in

Jamaica was not a common one. Any effort to do so would involve large-scale changes at a variety of levels and sectors. Twelve years later, substantial progress had been made. This case outlines the strategies employed and the outcomes achieved over the period 1994-2003.

The analytical framework used to guide the case study (see inside front cover) identifies seven interdependent dimensions: the external context, ENACT's stakeholders, the structuring and positioning of the ENACT unit, ENACT's strategies for capacity development, emerging capabilities, the effectiveness of the external intervention, and finally, the emerging levels of performance. This case looks mainly at strategic directions that can be compared with those of the other case studies. It does not include a detailed analysis of the actual ENACT programme components,¹ nor is it a management review or an overall organisational assessment of ENACT. It looks back rather than forward, its purpose is explanatory, and it makes no recommendations or proposals for future action.

A final word about definitions. The term 'capacity' is used in this case to refer to the ability of the organisation or system *as a whole* to perform.² As such, it is not equated with any subsidiary element such as particular 'capability'. That term refers to an ability of the organisation or system to do something in particular such as facilitation or to learning or managing projects. Most of this case is about 'capability' as opposed to 'capacity' development. Finally, the term 'performance' is used to mean accomplishment or execution or delivery. It is not about potential or capability.

Background

The design of the ENACT programme began in 1990 at the CIDA head office, led by a group of officers who were interested in applying some of the emerging principles of capacity building for sustainable development.³ Discussions with interested Jamaican officials, including the then head of the National

Notes

- 1 For further information, visit www.enact.org.jm
- 2 Alan Kaplan (1999) defines capacity as 'the ability of an organisation to function as a resilient, strategic and autonomous entity' (*The Development of Capacity*, p.32).
- 3 The DAC issued a set of principles for Capacity Development in Environment in 1995 - see box 2.

Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA), started in 1991 and continued into 1994.⁴ Official CIDA approval for C\$ 21 million came in August 1993.⁵ A Canadian technical assistance adviser arrived in August 1994 for two years, with a mandate to assist the NRCA in planning future activities. During this period, the main outlines of the ENACT programme were put in place. Officials in the NRCA and other agencies also made sustained efforts to consult widely with a variety of Jamaican organizations and groups interested in the environment and sustainable development. CIDA contracted a Canadian consulting firm in May 1996 to help with the implementation of the ENACT programme, and two full-time Canadian staff arrived in October 1996. The two governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding in April 1997. The current ENACT programme manager began in October 1998. The programme is due to end in mid-2004.

This report does not describe in detail the five programme areas that make up the overall ENACT programme, which in turn were divided into about 30 components. These five programmes were the greening of government, capacity development for NEPA, local sustainable development planning, environmental education for sustainable development, and support to the private sector

ENACT has functioned as a concentric organisation - a tight full-time core acting as a coordinating unit, surrounded by outer rings of occasional partners, consultants and advisers. The core includes 12 staff positions: one programme manager, seven professional staff, one office manager and three administrative staff.

In April 2001 the NRCA, the Town Planning Department and the Land Development and Utilization Commission were merged to create the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) within the Ministry of Land and the Environment. With this merger the government aimed to integrate environmental, planning and sustainable development policies and programmes and to improve customer service.

Notes

⁴ The head of the NRCA, Franklin MacDonald, later became CEO of NEPA, a position he still holds.

⁵ CIDA reduced this figure to C\$15 million in 1995.

2 The wider Jamaican context

The ENACT programme was intended to have a broad systemic impact in terms of enhancing Jamaican capabilities and performance for sustainable development. Some understanding is therefore needed of the dynamics of the wider context that ENACT aimed to change. It is easy for case studies to see programmes as self-contained and independent of their context, whereas they remain open systems that respond to the environment that surrounds them.

Jamaica is the third largest island in the Caribbean, with a population of about 2.8 million, of whom 57% are under 30 years of age and 55% live in urban areas. The per capita income is about US\$3100 (2400), making it a middle-income country ranked 79 out of 177 in the UNDP Human Development Index in 2004. Jamaica's economic situation has deteriorated sharply over recent years. The level of debt and deficit is now twice the guidelines set by the International Monetary Fund. At the time of writing, the government was facing a major budget crisis that could affect ENACT. For some years, there has been high pervasive unemployment, reinforcing the startling disparities in wealth. In common with countries such as El Salvador and Pakistan, Jamaica has continued to export many of its most talented people.

Some readers will be surprised by the richness of the Jamaican biodiversity. It ranks as the fifth most diverse country in the world in terms of endemic species - 24% of its 3300 plant species are found only in Jamaica. It is the home of many rare birds and mammals. Some 80% of the island is highland, and forests cover 24% of the land area. Beaches make up 2.5% of the coastline. Not surprisingly, it suffers from a series of familiar problems that have contributed to environmental decline, including deforestation, oil spills, poor to non-existent treatment of sewage and solid waste, declining water quality, damage to coral reefs, air pollution in Kingston, land degradation, pollution of coastal waters, and damage to wetlands.

Jamaica is closely connected to the globalising world given its membership in most international organisations and its large diaspora. Its public sector organisations appear familiar to a casual observer. Many of these are trying to become more effective with pro-

jected reforms that often suggest a country with a wide range of advanced technical skills. There are plans, for example, to introduce GIS technology into the planning and land registry departments of local authorities. The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), in the Ministry of Land and the Environment, is currently implementing an integrated national applications processing system⁶ focusing on computerisation. Since 1998 Jamaica has also been implementing a public sector modernisation programme, complete with citizen's charters, executive agencies, decentralisation, modernised planning frameworks and talk about 'joined-up' government. The reform of local government began in the 1990s and is now moving beyond a narrow focus on the delivery of a few municipal services to a broader approach to improving the process of local governance.

Like many other countries, Jamaica suffers from major cleavages between the bureaucracy and politicians. Within the public sector, there are obvious pools of expertise and commitment that can be harnessed to energise new policies and innovations. ENACT itself has benefited from the support of such groups. Politicians, on the other hand, have traditionally been much more involved with the struggle for position and control within the country. They face a quite different set of incentives and are not likely to be interested in broad, long-term programmes that generate only dispersed benefits.

A complex range of informal institutions in Jamaica are equally, if not more important in terms of shaping progress on sustainable development.⁷ Jamaica has had a turbulent history marked by the growth of dramatic social divisions. The institution of slavery, battles over the control of land, the role of the church in governance, the influence of a mercantile elite and the rise of a small number of families that control most of the national wealth have all played a role in shaping Jamaican society. Most of the 'modern' institutions - the legislature, political parties, much of the state apparatus, schools, the police and the judiciary - were developed to serve the needs of influential groups, and few have managed to acquire much in the way of legitimacy or capacity to deliver services to the broad mass of the population. New informal institutions, both predatory and well-intentioned, have set up groups to compete for control and resources within and outside the country. Some of these have superseded the existing formal institutions such as the police or local governments in various parts of the country. Such struggles for legitimacy, control and

resources can be seen in many countries with dysfunctional systems of governance, including Brazil, Kenya, Pakistan and Russia.

These governance issues have implications for the ENACT programme. It is relatively easy for the many supporters of ENACT to get carried away with the inherent virtue of strategies to do with participation, policy integration, systems management, holistic approaches and all the other mechanisms currently in fashion among the international development community. By themselves, these ideas remain useful, but they will only have a symbolic impact if the governance issues lying at the heart of Jamaican society remain unresolved. Citizens need to be reconnected back into a legitimate system of governance. The environmental behaviour of citizens - farmers, urban dwellers, fishermen - will have to be influenced through incentives and other policy measures. Unless that happens, ENACT's effectiveness within the modern formal sector will make little difference. The drive for survival will continue to push ordinary citizens towards actions that undermine sustainable development, regardless of its inherent value.⁸ This is not an argument for the inherent futility of ENACT's work. Indeed the reverse. The modern formal sector must try to become more relevant by taking a broader view in assessing the constraints that are inhibiting the prospects for sustainable development.

Most observers see the lack of social capital in Jamaican society as a key 'missing link' in efforts to promote sustainable development. One analyst noted the contrasts between Jamaica and Barbados in terms of the lack of trust among groups and individuals, the constraints on collaboration, and the high level of political violence and factionalism.⁹ It is commonly observed in Jamaica that there is a paradox between the obvious wealth of individual talent and the inability to convert this richness into collective performance. This accounts in part for the dichotomy between the high intellectual content of discussions on sustainable development, and the lack of implementation and enforcement. The challenge is to convert the individual talent and energy of Jamaicans into collective action.

Notes

- 6 See Lumsden (2003), *Capacity Assessment for the Planning and Development Division of the NEPA*, p.52.
- 7 One rough estimate is that 80-90% of national activities take place outside the official formal planning system. About half the economy takes place in the informal sector.
- 8 For an analysis of this issue, see Montgomery (1990), 'Environmental management as a third world problem', *Policy Sciences*, vol. 23(2).
- 9 See Ross-Brewster (1996) *Social Capital and Development: Reflections on Barbados and Jamaica*, CARICOM Perspective. According to David Bell (1999), more Jamaicans died in violence in 1998 than were killed in Kosovo (note B, p.1).

3 The baseline: Jamaica in the early 1990s

To assess the overall contribution of the ENACT programme, we need some sort of baseline or starting point. This section gives a brief overview of the capabilities and performance with respect to the environment and sustainable development in Jamaica in the early 1990s.

The paradoxes of Jamaican life were evident in the public sector. Most large public bureaucracies were structured along the traditional command and control pattern with a good deal of the usual hierarchical, authoritarian behaviour. Few were much concerned with outcomes, capabilities or performance. Intersectoral coordination was minimal, and organisational 'stovepipes' predominated. Not surprisingly, government structures worked on the basis of informal relationships and personalisation. At the same time, government organisations were more stable than those in many other poor countries because of the adequate salaries and benefits they offered.

Many public sector organisations contain within them reserves of innovation and commitment that could be mobilised to address environmental issues.¹⁰ The understanding of some public officials of the ideas underlying sustainable development was relatively advanced in the early 1990s. The government had signed all the main global agreements and protocols concerned with sustainable development,¹¹ and was an early supporter of the Rio Conference and Agenda 21. Jamaica had begun its own work on the 'greening' of government before similar programmes had started in Canada. But this advanced level of interest did not translate into a capacity for implementation, and Jamaica still lacked a clear national vision for sustainable development. Coalitions at the political level for such reforms did not exist and would not come into being during the course of the ENACT programme. The organisational and institutional framework remained weak, and initiatives aimed at protecting the environment and sustainable development were unlikely to attract much in the way of financial support from the government. Efforts to enhance capabilities also faced

the same constraints - lack of political and financial support.

Non-state actors in Jamaica played modest roles in promoting the environment and sustainable development. The private sector and the trade unions were not heavily involved. An atmosphere of distrust characterised the relations between the government and civil society.

Box 1: The evolution of organisational and institutional approaches to sustainable development

Let us look at a hypothesis on the evolution of organisational and institutional approaches to sustainable development. Although countries differ dramatically in their inclination to change their structures and processes in support of the environment and sustainability, most evolve through stages of capacity development as they try to deal with the issues. Each of these stages may be prolonged, lasting a decade or more, depending on circumstances.

In the first stage, the organisational approach is mainly incremental. Public sector organisations experiment with modest reforms and try to improve existing procedures and practices, as in the various efforts at the greening of government. Environmental inventories are carried out and priorities are debated. Awareness raising campaigns are launched, and training programmes are introduced. New policies and strategies are designed although implementation may lag far behind. Few mandates are challenged or new structures created with the possible exception of ministries of the environment.¹² The focus of capacity building is on improving the capabilities and performance of individual organisations.

At some point, pressures for more fundamental reforms begin to build. International experience and pressure support less incremental approaches. Groups and individuals in society and within government accept the need for new institutions and organisations that can deal with a high level of complexity among systems - physical, organisational, social. More efforts are made to establish new kinds of intersectoral or non-sectoral solutions. Experiments are tried with new structures such as networks or integrating organisations.

Notes

- 10 The deteriorating environment had been an issue in the 1989 Jamaican election.
- 11 Including the Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), and the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea.
- 12 See Baker (1989), 'Institutional innovation, development and environmental management', Part 1, *Public Administration and Development*, vol.9, p.41

In assessing the ENACT experience, we need to keep in mind the stages in the evolution of organisational and institutional approaches to sustainable development outlined in box 1. It is likely that countries need to evolve through these stages slowly as learning accumulates and political support builds. Strategies for enhancing capabilities and performance have to be matched to fit the country's capacity to absorb them at various points in time. This case study argues that much of ENACT's effectiveness came from its ability to make this 'fit' with Jamaican needs that were typical at the early stage of the implementation of approaches to sustainable development.

4 ENACT's stakeholders

The ENACT programme has operated within a complex web of stakeholders that fall into five main groups:

- The key stakeholders include the government of Jamaica (NEPA),¹³ the government of Canada (CIDA headquarters and the High Commission in Kingston) and the Canadian office of the executing agency. As we shall see, the relationships among these stakeholders changed over the life of the programme.
- The second group was the wide range of participating organisations in Jamaica with which ENACT entered into some kind of working relationship. The closest relationships were with public sector, such as the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture. Strong common interests, geographical proximity and bureaucratic capabilities characterised many of these relationships, and they evolved into strategic alliances.
- It was more challenging, but no less productive, to establish ties and build relationships with actors in the private sector and civil society. Actors in academia, municipal governments and local communities were hard to contact but it seems that many collaborated with ENACT in planning and implementing activities. The number of organisations in both of these groups was probably about 40 to 50.
- Organisations, groups and individuals, mainly within the public sector, that did not participate in the ENACT programme but occasionally provided useful support. These included staff in the Cabinet Office, outside consultants and others. ENACT made efforts to build up and maintain this web of relationships to support its work.

- A final group of stakeholders grew out of the many ENACT courses and educational programmes. As we shall see, a key part of ENACT's strategy was to create a critical mass of sustainable development supporters throughout the country who would continue to push for change after the ENACT programme came to an end. Estimates of the size of this group are also rough, but may include as many as 6000 individuals.¹⁴

ENACT's relationships with this broad range of stakeholders were characterised by the absence of conflict, controversy or collusion, since most of them operated in different functional spheres and areas of Jamaica and rarely interacted. Since most of the relationships were personal and informal, ENACT team members had to be able to relate to a wide variety of people and groups at many different levels.

5 The structuring and positioning of the ENACT unit

The key intervention of the ENACT programme was the establishment of an organisational unit within the government to help enhance Jamaican capabilities for environmental and sustainable development. The underlying assumption was that such a unit could be effective in addressing one of the most challenging tasks facing any government - that of achieving organisational innovation and change. This section looks at the organisational evolution of the ENACT unit over the period 1996-2003 as it addressed that challenge.

Efforts to enhance capabilities and performance usually involve some sort of process management. Most fail to achieve their objectives, especially those within the public sector, although in Jamaica a few, including the ENACT programme, have generated some real value. This section tries to explain the

Notes

- ¹³ NEPA was created in April 2001 as one of the new executing agencies under the public sector modernisation programme, reporting to the Ministry of Land and the Environment. NEPA's mission is 'to promote sustainable development by ensuring protection of the environment and orderly development in Jamaica through highly motivated staff performing at the highest standard according to our Citizen's Charter'.
- ¹⁴ Fouillard and Carter (2001), *ENACT Programme Operational Review*, p.72.
- ¹⁶ The head of the NCRA, Franklin MacDonald, later became the CEO of NEPA.

structuring and positioning of the ENACT unit that led, in part, to its effectiveness, and section 6 analyses the actual processes of change and capacity development that the ENACT unit used both within and outside the public sector.

Discussions between the two governments started in 1991, with the executive director of the National Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA)¹⁶ representing the government of Jamaica, while CIDA acted for the government of Canada. Over the next three years, most of the planning activities took place in Jamaica, led by a group of government officials and national consultants. The second planning phase continued in 1994-1996, using the services of a Canadian technical assistance adviser working with the NRCA. Jamaican officials did not want commercial consultants from Canada to participate in this second planning phase; long-term public servants with experience in the government of Canada were thought to be a better source of technical advice for the particular needs of the ENACT programme. These two interconnected planning phases (1991-1996) set the strategic directions for the programme.

The ENACT programme was to focus on long-term issues such as capacity building, given its ten-year horizon from 1994-2004.¹⁷ Many of the new ideas coming out of the Rio Summit and the OECD's Development Assistance Committee made sense to Jamaican officials, especially those with international experience. Donors such as USAID were directed towards activities more suitable for short-term interventions in a conventional project format. Government staff, in effect, tried to match ENACT's

comparative advantage to the kinds of issues that governments do not normally address - those that are important but not urgent. This wide scope of activities was reflected in the programme components selected during the period 1994-1996, including the greening of government, assistance to the NCRA, environmental education, the private sector, and local government.

The ENACT programme acquired a different identity and legitimacy within the government during these two periods, a positioning strategy that continued in 2003 to energise the programme. ENACT was one of the first donor-supported interventions in Jamaica to set capacity building as its core objective. It would work with and through Jamaican organisations to accomplish its aims.¹⁸ Up to that point most aid programmes in Jamaica had the image of being supply-driven resource providers. Jamaican officials would agree to support the donor's agenda in exchange for access to tangible goods - vehicles, equipment, training, funds and technical assistance - and resources that were not available in Jamaica. The ENACT programme tried to alter that image by emphasising the potential value of combining outside and Jamaican ideas about sustainable development and then embedding them in Jamaican organisations, institutions and processes. The programme was intended to support a process rather than to supply a product. Jamaican officials wanted the ENACT process to crystallise slowly and focus on bringing new ideas to the Jamaican scene. Planning was to be done on an iterative basis with the emphasis on responding to Jamaican needs and commitment.

Officials designing such a unit as ENACT within the public sector usually face a critical choice about its location within the bureaucracy. Should it be attached to a central agency, for example, or be part of a line ministry, or should it be located outside the main structure of government altogether? Should it be located high up in the structure, or would it be better off in the middle? What should be its mandate? Where should it be physically located? The decisions about ENACT's location were taken mainly by Jamaican officials - it would be part of NEPA, which would provide some bureaucratic buffering and protection. From the outset, the NEPA leadership ensured that the unit would have the flexibility to work freely, informally and laterally across organisational boundaries within all sectors, almost as a consulting firm offering free services. It also had good access vertically to senior officers in ministries and in the Cabinet Office.

Notes

- 17 According to Franklin MacDonald in the early 1990s the 'government of Jamaica was not in a hurry'. It wanted to think through the long-term implications of sustainable development before making major decisions.
- 18 The two governments agreed that the purpose of ENACT was to 'improve the capability of the key players at the government policy, private sector, community and general public levels to identify and solve Jamaican environmental problems and to enhance these improvements by linking and coordinating capacity development activities across the levels and sectors targeted'.
- 19 Programme (or project) implementation units have been unfashionable in some development cooperation circles for most of the last decade. They are usually accused of being artificial units set up by funding agencies to insulate their projects from dysfunctional local conditions. As such, they are not seen as supportive of capacity development or institutional sustainability. But they remain a key mechanism for many programmes. See, for example, Tarverdian (1996), *Adjustment Operations in Transition Economies: The Role of Project Implementation Units*. See also Pincus (2002), 'State simplification and institution-building in a World Bank financed development project', who criticised the Bank for not setting up a programme support unit to protect a development activity from recalcitrant government bureaucrats.

Box 2. DAC Guidelines for Capacity Development in Environment

The DAC Guidelines set out the basic orientations for the capacity development in environment (CDE) approach within the framework of development cooperation as follows:²⁰

- CDE is based on promoting sound environmental considerations and criteria in the development process
- CDE integrates environment and development concerns
- CDE is a multifaceted, long-term process
- CDE is process rather than product oriented
- CDE is a systemic approach
- CDE is a process that belongs to and is driven by the community in which it is based;
- CDE is aimed at strengthening institutional pluralism in civil society;
- CDE must take gender issues fully into account in all respects and levels of development and implementation;
- CDE must actively seek to develop appropriate approaches to include all disadvantaged groups in society; and
- CDE involves a variety of management techniques, analytical tools, incentives and organisational structures in order to achieve a given policy objective.

The complex organisational positioning of the ENACT unit needs a brief elaboration given its critical impact on its work. ENACT was to be supervised by the CEO of NRCA, and later its successor NEPA, an agency whose own capacity development was the focus of one of ENACT's five programmes. Yet, at the same time, ENACT's resources and attention could not be captured by the NRCA/NEPA and used for their own purposes if its crucial range and flexibility was to be preserved. Part of the solution was to structure the ENACT unit itself as a hybrid programme implementation unit (PMU).¹⁹ It was set up as a temporary unit dedicated to coordinating the implementation of the ENACT programme. It was, however, to be staffed by both Canadian TA co-operants and Jamaican government officials who were paid directly by NEPA. Indeed, NCRA/NEPA paid a good deal of ENACT's local expenses over the years through the Capital B budget.

More than many similar programmes, ENACT was intended to be values-driven. The work plans and patterns of stakeholder engagement could change over time, but its identity and style of working would flow directly from these values, which both governments and ENACT staff would have to support. In practice, the adherence to these values was a stabilising influence on the ENACT unit over its organisational life. The nature of the values themselves came largely from the sustainable development movement and

from the DAC Guidelines issued in 1995 (see box 2).

ENACT's interventions were to extend across a wide range of actors, including central and local governments, communities, the private sector and, initially, Jamaican trade unions. Environmental management was to be the entry point to involvement with the larger issue of sustainable development.

The period 1991-1996 marked the 'direction finding' or strategic design phase of the ENACT programme. CIDA contracted a Canadian consulting consortium in May 1996, marking the beginning of the operational phase of the programme. Over the next six years, both governments and the ENACT unit collaborated to craft an effective management strategy that would both build on the strategic decisions taken up to 1996 and would also 'fit' the emerging needs of the programme and the Jamaican context. In retrospect, we can see that the management strategy evolved as follows.

ENACT's effectiveness in capacity development clearly depended on the unit having a high level of operational autonomy to react to opportunities. The organisational structure of the programme and the unit changed over the period 1996-99. The management of the unit - its work programme, linkages and partnership strategies, investment and personnel decisions, etc. - could not be tightly controlled by the

Notes

²⁰ DAC (1995) *Donor Assistance to Capacity Development in Environment, Development Cooperation Guidelines Series*, p.7 (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/55/1919786.pdf). ¹⁴ For more about the history of missionary activities in PNG, see Wagner *et al.* (1989) and Sillitoe (2000).

two governments or by the Canadian consortium. Authority was therefore progressively delegated to the unit, especially after the appointment of a new programme head in June 1998.

The highly interactive nature of ENACT's work - networking, facilitating, mediating, persuading, mobilising, demonstrating and image building - led inexorably to the need for front line staff with local experience and networks. This, in turn, led to the decision to increase the number of Jamaican full-time staff and to reduce the number of short-term Canadian consultants; in effect, the ENACT unit was slowly 'Jamaicanised'. The increasing authority being devolved from CIDA and the Canadian consortium was used to empower the staff. The programme made efforts to equalise the professional support and resources available to all ENACT staff.

ENACT's effectiveness depended critically on its ability to motivate and retain staff. The issue of staff motivation had particular relevance for units such as ENACT that worked in sustainable development given the values, commitment and expectations that self-selecting staff usually brought to this kind of work. For both ENACT staff and many of the people with whom they worked, working on issues to do with environment and sustainable development provided them with an opportunity to contribute to the renewal of Jamaican governance and society. Every unit of this kind needs some kind of organisational 'glue' or cohesion to keep it together. In the ENACT case, the glue came from a common allegiance to a set of values and principles that have been part of the programme from the outset.

Part of ENACT's emerging effectiveness after 1998 came from its ability to build the skills of its staff and then to deploy them in the most effective way. The staff had to have a general understanding of the substantive issues facing their partners in order to communicate effectively. But too much attention on technical issues would detract from their efforts at process and facilitation. What mattered was the balance and combination of skills. When situations required specific technical knowledge, ENACT could bring in consultants and other technical support.²¹

The management techniques used by the unit were adapted to meet the particular need to work in a fast-changing, interactive way. The detailed management plan devised in 1997 was scrapped and

replaced by something much simpler and more flexible.²² Programme planning became more interactive. The initial approach to performance monitoring - highly predictive, detailed and mechanistic - was abandoned as unworkable.²³ The rather elaborate governance structure involving both a steering and a management committee was simplified, and authority was again shifted down to front-line staff.

The leadership style of the unit also changed. In 1996-1998 the unit had been headed by a technical environmental specialist with little experience in managing an entrepreneurial unit. The new programme head appointed in October 1998 was more management-oriented. But more complex leadership issues needed to be addressed in addition to basic management. A heroic style of leadership by a Canadian was felt to be inappropriate. What the programme head needed to supply were the skills to manage the ENACT unit as an organisational system - to act as a 'heat shield' that would buffer the staff from external intrusion, motivate and support their operations, ensure the efficiency of the unit's financial and administrative systems, and liaise with Canadian stakeholders, especially CIDA and the implementing consortium. One hypothesis that emerges from the ENACT experience is that it is more likely to find and exercise this kind of leadership through a consulting contract as opposed to an individual TA arrangement.

The experience of structuring and positioning the ENACT unit yields two insights. First, this case illustrates the slowly developing nature of many process approaches that focus on capacity development. They are, in practice, complex dynamic systems that require a combination of values, components and practices to 'fit' together. In the ENACT case, it took from mid-1991 until early 1999 to put in place all the pieces necessary to make it a high-performing support unit. Its positioning and mandate had to be right. Its programmes had to be relevant. Its legitimacy as a process programme had to be earned. It took time for the unit to learn how to be effective. The right kinds of leadership and staffing had to be slowly put in place. If this insight is correct, it has implications for the assessment of the performance of these kinds of processes. When should they be conclusively assessed? Can individual aspects be assessed on their own? And so on.

Notes

- 21 ENACT issued between 70 to 100 contracts per year, 90% of which were sourced in Jamaica.
- 22 The initial management plan was about 300 pages long, accompanied by a 22-page logical framework analysis.
- 23 It was suggested that all ENACT staff should submit monthly reports detailing achieved and anticipated targets.

Second, the ENACT unit was a customised response to a set of Jamaican conditions, and its functioning depended critically on Jamaican resources and expertise. These included the strategic vision of the Jamaican officials, most of which was sustained throughout the life of the programme. Jamaican energy and commitment at the middle levels of many organisations fuelled the process. Jamaica could supply staff with sufficient talent to meet the process demands of such a unit. Many of these conditions do not apply in other countries. The ENACT 'formula' is thus not likely to be easily replicated elsewhere.

6 ENACT's strategies for enhancing capabilities and performance

The previous section described the evolving structure and positioning of the ENACT unit as it organised itself to carry out its work in Jamaica.

Simultaneously, the team also had to support the efforts of its stakeholders and partners both within and outside government. This section examines the approaches to capacity development adopted by the ENACT programme, and why these choices were made.

First, however, we need to step back and be clear about the key assumptions underlying the ENACT programme. The two governments had to decide how to design and implement large-scale organisational change. At the risk of over simplification, two options were available. The first involved a conventional, top-down restructuring along the following lines. The governments and the ENACT unit would draw up and attempt to implement an explicit road map for reform at either the societal or public sector level. The ENACT team would prescribe and push for a detailed set of capabilities or levels of performance that would be needed to implement a grand strategy for sustainable development in the Jamaican context. The strategy would be programmed and proceed according to preset goals and targets, with an emphasis on the restructuring of formal organisations, the installation of new 'hard' systems and the creation of new institutions and organisations designed to support sustainable development.

This option was not selected. The governments agreed on a second, more incremental and opportunistic approach. From the outset, the ENACT programme was not set up to begin its work by designing complex attempts and organisational and institutional change. Instead, it would experiment with different approaches to enhancing capabilities and performance at a variety of levels, and would seek out willing partners. At some point in the future, a broader strategy, backed up by operational learning and emerging political support, would hopefully emerge. In the meantime, the unit would focus on building awareness in addition to enhancing capabilities and performance in selected locations. ENACT would work across a wide spectrum of activities, some of which would only have a tangential connection to organisational and institutional change.

Nor would the ENACT programme have a tight view of capacity development. It did not develop an explicit analytical framework or 'model' to assess capabilities and performance. It did not push for the creation of new organisations. It did not, for example, try to push the government as a whole to set up enhanced government-wide capabilities such as information management systems. It made only limited efforts to help reorganise entire organisations.²⁴ The ENACT approach to enhancing capabilities and performance was, for the most part, far less prescriptive and intrusive.²⁵

The grand strategic calculation of the ENACT programme was that it could follow an incremental approach across a wide spectrum of actors, levels and tactics - a breadth option - and still help Jamaica to generate a critical mass of capabilities and performance improvements that would make a difference. At the very least, its investments would produce a critical mass of people within and outside government who would generate the energy, connections and commitment needed to sustain the process of capacity development after the termination of ENACT as an organisational unit.

In the following, we look at four key aspects of the approach selected by the two governments to guide ENACT's work: using responsive entrepreneurship, working across a wide spectrum of capacity develop-

Notes

24 See Lumsden (2003) *Capacity Assessment for the Planning and Development Division of the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)*, February 2003.

25 As in all organisational strategies, there is a downside to this 'emergent' approach. The lack of explicit debate and the unwillingness to adopt a well-defined model at the outset can lead staff to lose touch with the discussion and resort to business as usual. Thus more, not less, effort has to be invested in continuous learning and the management of ideas and understanding of participants.

ment initiatives, working with a wide variety of stakeholders and partners, and working at a variety of levels.

1. Using responsive entrepreneurship

Facilitating units within large bureaucratic structures can adopt a variety of process approaches. They can, for example, rely on a conventional *mainstreaming* approach (as is frequently employed to promote gender equity) in which the policy and programme are centrally determined and then applied uniformly, at least in theory. All operational staff are accountable for integrating activities relating to the policy into their work. Senior managers are expected to enforce mainstreaming. Checklists are frequently used to monitor compliance. Staff are rewarded (or not) on the basis of performance appraisals. The dynamic is one of supply and enlightened enforcement. The onus is on the targeted staff to comply.

A less intrusive approach is based on the principles of *social marketing*. From this perspective, targeted staff members are seen as clients or customers who are free to buy into or at least accept the programme or service on offer. The emphasis is on persuasion, on building awareness, and on inducing officials to try something that has wider social benefits. The relevance of the product or service in question and demand creation are key. The onus is on the provider to make the case for the adoption of the programme that it supports.

The ENACT team followed a somewhat different approach. The top-down application of conventional mainstreaming was not an option in the Jamaican context. Even the lighter touch of social marketing *by itself* involved too much intrusive selling to groups that might not be appropriate partners for the ENACT programme. In fact, the ENACT team did not support the idea of groups and individuals buying into its programme. Their intention was to enhance the capabilities of others to deliver programmes that would support sustainable development. What was

needed was something that was far more demand-driven and that fitted in better with Jamaican conditions.

What emerged over time was an approach that combined a variety of elements in a coherent form of process management. Part of it bore some resemblance to a venture capital model in which initiatives come from the participants rather than the investor.²⁶ It was also similar to consulting work in which enhancing the client's organisational effectiveness is the priority. Another part reflected the techniques of social marketing in which clients are introduced to ideas and practices that will generate broader social value. Finally, part was based on the general idea of partnership in which both parties combine their resources to achieve an objective that needs collective action.

In an effort to capture the nature of the ENACT approach,²⁷ this report uses the awkward term 'responsive entrepreneurship', which has the following characteristics. The ENACT team would not push for involvement and compliance in the programme. Rather, they were looking to add value to the programmes of others. Such initiatives could take the form of new techniques for achieving the greening of government, or finding better ways to dispose of used motor oil or a new coffee roasting method. ENACT was as much responsive as it was proactive. The team members used their networks and access to people to seek out opportunities. Put another way, they searched out pockets of energy, interest and commitment, groups or individuals who would be willing to work with ENACT on capacity issues. ENACT called this working with 'primacy processes' - activities that were already working. The emphasis was on responding to real as opposed to 'constructed' needs, a pattern of behaviour that was new inside the government.

The ENACT experience leads us to think more about the nature of the 'demand' for capacity development. In the early stages, much of the demand for ENACT's services in the public sector was latent, in the sense that there were groups or organisations that showed no immediate interest but were willing to collaborate with outside groups if approached appropriately and directly. Finally, ENACT was increasingly faced with specific requests for the unit to participate in projects and activities. By 2003, all of these patterns were in a shifting mix. Much of the effectiveness of units such as ENACT appears to depend on their abil-

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- 26 For an analysis of this approach that captures most of the issues, see Letts et al. (1999) 'Virtuous capital: investing in performance', in *High-Performance Nonprofit Organizations: Managing Upstream for Greater Impact*, ch.9.
- 27 One ENACT team member described the approach as combining 'the magic of art and the logic of science'.
- 28 For example, the ENACT officer dealing with environmental education conducted her work using the stationery of the National Environmental Education Committee and was paid by NEPA.
- 29 This is a common pattern; see Borins (2001) *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*, p.21.

ity to adapt their management strategies to deal with varying patterns of demand over time. In some situations, in some countries and on some issues, such units must become more proactive and able to search out latent demand. In others, it must be able to balance supply and demand as its credibility and legitimacy increase.

The resulting relationships between ENACT and various groups within the government frequently took the form of partnerships in which both sides would contribute ideas, resources and legitimacy.²⁸ Most interventions relied on dialogue, facilitation, demonstrations, accommodation and some persuasion.²⁹ As we shall see, the nature of these partnerships normally went far beyond the traditional quick fix of a capacity assessment followed by a short consultancy or an injection of resources. The ENACT programme was thus more than just a catalyst or coordinator; it tried to become a co-creator of results.³⁰ It is also important to remember that the ENACT unit focused on organisations and groups that had already demonstrated their commitment to achieving results.³¹

The ENACT programme did not take on controversial or politically intractable issues connected to the enhancement of capabilities and performance. It did not threaten the prerogatives, mandates or vested interests of powerful groups such as public sector unions or central government agencies. It did not press for the reform of legislation concerned with environmental and sustainable development.³² In some ways it was a 'stealth' programme specialising in 'middle-up and down' initiatives - i.e. it addressed interventions largely controlled by senior and middle managers in the public sector who rode below the political radar screen. It did not appear, in practice, to buy into the idea that support from the highest political levels was critical for its effectiveness at the early stage of organisational evolution.³³ Few of their initiatives represented dramatic breakthroughs in capability and performance, but they could be effective on a cumulative basis if pursued with persistence and patience.³⁴

Most efforts at capacity development in the public sector unconnected to specific projects suffer from a lack of funds and process support. Staff at the middle levels of organisations usually cannot access seed money for services, workshops, publications or expert advice. In Jamaica, the actual funding of innovation

through the enhancement of capabilities was not easily obtained through regular channels. This gap created opportunities for the ENACT team to inject resources into the system, which it did by supplying small amounts of funding and consulting advice. The unit therefore acted as a capability investor, trying to shift the balance in particular situations towards innovation and organisational change. It worked on the assumption that the provision of financial resources followed results rather than preceding them.

The ENACT team's varied approach to publicising its role and achievements also needs to be mentioned. On the one hand, it made sustained efforts to reinforce, through documents, workshops and other public events, the programme's 'brand' or image as a supporter of Jamaicanisation and of partnership. At the same time, it took care to adopt a low profile in terms of taking individual or unit credit. The credit for any success was to be passed on to the partners through or with whom the ENACT unit was working. The programme head, in particular, was careful to avoid public attention, since too much intrusive or publicity-grabbing behaviour would likely undermine the very legitimacy and credibility that the unit needed in order to do its work.

Much more could be said about the process and organisational change techniques used by the ENACT unit. These included the use of informal networks, its balanced reliance on so-called 'champions', and its

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- 30 For a detailed description of ENACT's process management techniques at various levels, see Lumsden and Lafontaine (2003) *Capacity Development (CD) for Sustainable Development: Review and Recommendations*, section 4.
- 31 In practice, and without being aware of it, the ENACT unit followed a style of relating to partners that closely resembles an approach described in Schaffer (2002) *High-Impact Consulting: How Clients and Consultants Can Work Together to Achieve Extraordinary Results*. This included defining goals in terms of client results rather than consultant products, matching the project scope to what the client is ready to do, aiming for rapid-fire success to generate momentum, building a partnership to achieve and to learn, and finally, leveraging resources and getting more results with fewer consultants.
- 32 Such as the Land Development and Utilisation Act, the Watershed Protection Act, and the Wildlife Protection Act
- 33 This approach changed as soon as ENACT took on the task of promoting some sort of 'sustainable unit' at the highest levels of government.
- 34 See Borins (2001) *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*.
- 35 According to the Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica, the ENACT programme 'produces like crazy'. Interview in Kingston, 24 February 2003.

customising of different approaches to fit the particular client group. It should also be noted that the ENACT unit faced a different set of challenges in working with the private sector. Techniques that had met a favourable response in the public sector, e.g. certain kinds of training, incentives and awareness raising, generated little interest among the corporate private sector, although at the local level private firms showed a stronger interest.

2. Working across a wide spectrum of capability improvement initiatives

The second element of the ENACT strategy centred around the type of capability development initiatives that the team should support. At least two options presented themselves. Should the programme specialise in certain capability enhancement activities such as advising its partners on the design and implementation of organisational change, much like a consulting firm? Or, should it operate across a much wider spectrum of activities, ranging from awareness raising and general training to the upgrading of administrative and technical systems?

Putting the choice another way, should ENACT go for *depth* in terms of the enhancement of specific capabilities and performance in particular organisations, or would it be best to go for *breadth* and address a wide range of needs in wide range of situations? With the agreement of both governments, ENACT opted for the second alternative - that of breadth and coverage. For the most part, ENACT supported smaller, more modest interventions rather than tackling the reform of systems or organisational functions. Table 1 lists the main categories of activities with respect to capacity development in ascending order of intensity and intrusiveness.

In the absence of a detailed analysis it is difficult to estimate the proportion of ENACT's resources devoted to each of these activities. A rough guess would be that five activities - awareness raising, formal training, networking, research and development and functional improvements - absorbed the bulk of ENACT's time and resources.

Table 1. ENACT's capacity development activities.

Type of capacity development activity	Examples of ENACT involvement
Action research and demonstration	Working at the local government and parish level
Awareness raising, confidence building, changing attitudes, motivating, advocacy, modelling	Working with the Business Council for the Environment
Formal training	Providing training at various levels, including for teachers and public servants
Networking, connecting, bridging, facilitating, partnering, resource mobilisation	Nationwide consultations on local sustainable development planning
Assistance with policy change	Including sustainable development ideas in the public sector reform programme and the national sustainable development plan (in progress)
Enhancing specific capabilities	Improving plans and budgets through the public sector modernisation process led by the Cabinet Office
Organisational change and capabilities improvement	Leadership development, and encouraging innovation within NEPA

3. Working with a wide variety of stakeholders and partners

The ENACT programme was designed on the basis of strengthening institutional pluralism - encouraging civil society, responding to the needs of communities and disadvantaged groups, and interacting with the private sector and other key groups.³⁶ Its strategy was therefore to work with a wide variety of stakeholders and partners both within and outside government (see table 2). On some issues, such as envi-

ronmental education, ENACT worked with the Ministry of Education, the NGO community and local schools. Similarly, its work with local governments involved parish councils and development committees, community-based organisations, NGOs, the local private sector, etc.

Table 2. ENACT's stakeholders and partners.

Programme	Stakeholders/partners	Focus of capability and performance improvement
Greening of government	At least eight public sector agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic planning Self-monitoring of environmental guidelines Working with the Social Development Commission on a mission statement
NEPA capacity development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various process and organisational improvements centred on regulations and their enforcement
Environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture NGOs working in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporating environmental and sustainable development issues into the curricula of some primary and secondary schools Introducing environmental studies courses at all teacher training institutions Implementing environmental education for sustainable development in the curricula of primary schools nationwide
Local sustainable development planning and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Local Government and Community Development NEPA Parish councils and development committees in Portland and Kingston 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines and training on local sustainable development planning Multi-stakeholder workshops Improving planning mechanisms and processes at the parish level Identifying sustainable tourism development projects Infusing sustainable development into the Sustainable Development Commission of the Ministry of Local Government, parish councils and NEPA policy documents Mobilising resources for local initiatives
Private sector	Various groups, including the automotive parts sector, the Coffee Industry Board, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motor oil disposal methods Car repair Coffee marketing

³⁶ The ENACT programme in 1991-94 foresaw establishing linkages with trade unions, but this did not happen.

4. Working at a variety of levels

One of the initial design principles of the ENACT programme was the need to take a systemic approach to capacity development. Specific capabilities were themselves systems made up of a variety of components, processes, resources and ideas, and were developed in the context of a variety of levels which themselves had to be understood from a systems perspective. ENACT's efforts at capacity development thus took place at a variety of levels or, perhaps more accurately, as part of a collection of nested systems - individual, functional, organisational and multi-organisational - that interact at different times and in different ways (see table 3).

Summary

Much like the design of the ENACT unit itself, the ENACT approach to process management and capability improvements responded to the special conditions of Jamaica. The ENACT experiment, for example, had acquired a legitimacy within Jamaican circles during the inclusive but lengthy design phase that helped to generate a continuing demand for its services during implementation. The approach was also based on a series of strategic calculations about needs and the capacity to absorb change at that stage of Jamaican development. It was based, for example, on the premise that the ENACT programme's comparative advantage, and hence the potential to make a real contribution, lay in promoting breadth rather than depth in terms of capabilities and performance.

Table 3. Systems and support.

Nature of the system	Type of ENACT support
Individual	Training Awareness raising
Organisational	Support for broad organisation-wide change and functional improvements
Multi-organisational	Working with multiple stakeholders

Box 3. NRCA studies its capabilities

In 1999, the National Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) decided to conduct a study of its capabilities to achieve its mission. With the help of the ENACT programme, it engaged a consultant who suggested a participatory process involving about 25 meetings with staff at different levels. A survey to assess the NRCA's image among the public was also carried out. The consultant's report provided a functional analysis of the NRCA plus a series of related recommendations on existing and required capabilities, a ranking of priority capability needs plus implementation and sustainability issues.

The report itself was issued in November 1998 and was typical of most consulting reports that are produced around the world. Nothing came of it. Opinions on its fate differ. For many, it was simply overtaken by the reality of a major reorganisation of the NRCA in 1999, which absorbed the time and attention of NRCA managers. But other constraints were also evident. The consultant hired for the study had failed to win the confidence of the staff, which damaged the commitment to the recommendations in the report. In particular, the consultant had not understood the job content of many of the NRCA positions. The report paid no attention to the human side of the capabilities issue, which also lowered its value in the eyes of many participants. No budget had been allocated to support the change management process recommended in the report, or to embed any of its lessons into the NRCA's regular structures and procedures. In short, the process of assessing NRCA's capabilities was never institutionalised. The report also did not get to grips with any of the deeper strategic issues facing the organisation and was unable to turn the contents into more than an inventory of organisational capabilities. Many of these issues remain unresolved today and ENACT has once again tried to work with NEPA to address them.³⁷

7 Degree of improved or enhanced capabilities

There is a good deal of anecdotal evidence about ENACT's effectiveness in improving the capabilities of its partners. It has earned widespread credibility throughout the public sector in Jamaica and beyond for its work. But it remains difficult to analyze systematically its effects on capabilities. Both CIDA and the ENACT team have tried to find effective ways to assess these results.³⁸ The initial monitoring effort funded by CIDA focused on tight centralised control and mechanistic counting designed primarily to serve CIDA's accountability requirements. All the participants regarded it as inappropriate and CIDA rightly discontinued the effort in 2001. The ENACT team has subsequently experimented with other approaches to monitoring, including the one currently in use at the local government level, which is intended to be far more learning friendly.

The ENACT programme presents particular methodological difficulties to the assessment of capabilities in four respects. First, ENACT has no overall programme that can be assessed in an aggregated way. Its outcomes are, by design, dispersed over time and space, embedded in many different organisations and people, and are extremely difficult to attribute as part of any so-called *results chain*. The lack of focus on one or two organisations, for example, prevents much in the way of sustained performance assessment. Second, part of ENACT's approach is to work through others and pass on the credit whenever possible. Artificial attempts at attribution and claiming credit in an effort to demonstrate its own contribution are not helpful to its credibility, regardless of their validity for symbolic results-based management. Third, monitoring and evaluation are likely to be more valid if they are designed and implemented on a participatory basis and in the context of genuine demand from partners and beneficiaries. But this requires a much longer lead time and the investment of a good deal of ENACT staff time to get properly established. Finally, assessing ENACT's results requires the use of a variety of different monitoring techniques across a number of activities ranging from the individual to the multi-organisational. Designing and combining these different techniques is difficult for a programme with a heavy workload.

Rather than provide comprehensive laundry lists of apparent capability enhancements, this section therefore groups ENACT's results into four main categories that seem the most relevant for outcome analysis - individual, organisational and multi-organisational, and the overall effects.

Individual

Many of ENACT's efforts have been focused at the individual level. First, its resources were targeted at training or raising the awareness of individuals at the operating level. According to a recent estimate, about 15,000 people, including teachers and public servants, have received some sort of ENACT-supported training, such as courses at the University of the West Indies (UWI), the College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE) and the Management Institute for National Development (MIND). Second, increasing numbers of primary and secondary school students have been exposed to environmental issues. Third, ENACT has tried to influence decision makers in organisations such as the Business Council for Education and in the Cabinet Office. In terms of capabilities, the question is whether ENACT's focus at the individual level has affected personal values and organisational behaviour, and if so, whether those changes in individual behaviour add up to a sustained improvement in capabilities.

Organisational

ENACT can point to a variety of functional improvements, including the adoption of strategic environmental assessments for all proposals submitted to Cabinet, and the self-monitoring of the implementation of environmental guidelines by at least eight public agencies. Several training organisations such as MIND and UWI have used ENACT resources to offer new courses in sustainable development. About 1200 primary and secondary schools and two teacher training colleges have also added courses on the environment. Two parishes in Kingston and St Andrew and Portland have upgraded their capabilities for participatory planning. Much of the work on the greening of government and on improving skills within NEPA to ensure compliance and enforcement fall into this category.

Notes

³⁸ See, for example, White (2001) *Defining Indicators of Stakeholder Satisfaction and Organisational Performance*, report submitted to the ENACT programme, December. have been introduced.

The factor that seems to have determined the effectiveness of the improvements in capabilities at the organisational level was the nature of the interventions. Those that were additive or which upgraded or extended existing processes or functions were usually more effective in terms of capacity improvement. Those that involved deeper changes or the creation of new capabilities and organisational functions were less likely to succeed.

Multi-organisational

It is important to divide efforts to improve capability at the multi-organisational level into two groups: the simple, i.e. those requiring independent but common action (e.g. the adoption of environmental assessment guidelines) versus the more complex, i.e. those needing coordinated joint action (e.g. the environmental education programme). ENACT appears to have had reasonable success in both categories, including its assistance to the National Environmental Education Committee (NEEC), a multi-stakeholder body that produced the National Environmental Education Action Plan.

A more integrated approach

Any discussion of capabilities enhanced by ENACT for environmental and sustainable development must address the issue of the progress towards a specialised sustainable development unit within the Jamaican system. A brief history is useful here. The government established a Sustainable Development Council in 1994 after the Rio Conference, although it was never resourced or supported and achieved little. Haphazard efforts throughout the 1990s such as the start of the Sustainable Development Planning Unit located in the Planning Institute of Jamaica also made little headway.³⁹ ENACT itself has encouraged the government to take more decisive steps, but the matter remains under debate in Cabinet and in other fora.

Readers need to think carefully about the organisational evolution of these kinds of dedicated units. Policy analysts, media commentators, aid officials and most consultants tend to favour such units, preferably located high in the government. The theory is that only such an integrated formal structure can coordinate and, if need be, compel cohesive

action in support of multi-sectoral policies. The imputed value of centralised, integrated decision making apparently has wide appeal.

The difficulty with these types of integrating units remains their implementation and sustainability. Countries that have tried to extend the reach of such units to promote sustainable development have encountered great difficulties, especially in the early stages of their institutional and organisational development. In highly politicised countries the incentives working in favour of such approaches are extremely weak. Other organisational strategies such as informal coordination and networking structures seem better suited to support collective efforts. In Jamaica, efforts were made over the years to support the Sustainable Development Council, which existed before the launch of the ENACT programme. Over the past year, the discussion has begun to focus on the possibility that the ENACT unit itself could take on an overall coordinating and facilitating role on sustainable development as it approaches the end of its donor-supported life. Whatever the outcome, experience points to the slowly evolving nature of such of interventions.

Notes

³⁹ There is also an advisory council on sustainable development under the National Planning Council. It has also been proposed to establish such a unit in the Cabinet Office.

8 External intervention

The ENACT programme is also a case study of a donor - in this case the Canadian International Development Agency - searching for the most appropriate way to interact with a complex programme to try to build capabilities and performance. By their very nature, such interventions have uncertain methodologies and hard-to-measure outcomes. Balancing a clear vision and improvisation is usually difficult. The case shows that CIDA addressed, mostly effectively, three key questions: How should such a programme be designed? How could CIDA help to manage such a programme in order to meet its own accountability requirements? How should a bilateral donor support such a programme to achieve results?

As described above, CIDA contributed a range of ideas in the early design period (1991-94) which, for the most part, provided a durable basis for the overall intervention. Most of these ideas were based on the DAC Guidelines, which CIDA itself had helped to craft in the early 1990s (see box 2). The added ingredient was CIDA's willingness to let the Jamaican authorities explore these ideas in their own way and at their own pace up to 1996. In retrospect, this approach to the design of a complex, multi-component programme seems to have been effective - patient, incremental and open-minded. The results in terms of Jamaican ownership continue to energise ENACT's work.

Many process-oriented programmes such as ENACT eventually succumb to the intrusions of outside groups determined to micro-manage them. In the mid-1990s most of CIDA's internal incentives and rewards pushed operational staff towards controlling projects and programmes to achieve short-term results. Yet programmes such as ENACT do not lend themselves to this approach. They can not function effectively as externally controlled production machines churning out a stream of preselected results. Donors can 'manage' them only in an indirect way by helping to get their positioning, stakeholder relationships and field management right. Part of the value of the ENACT case lies in the fact that it highlights the efforts of the CIDA staff to put in place management and oversight strategies that were appropriate for such a programme. They resisted the temptation to push for inappropriate short-term results. They focused more on encouraging 'fit'

than on exercising control. The long-term perspective was preserved. Authority was delegated to the field team. An inappropriate approach to monitoring was abandoned. CIDA insisted - correctly - on a different approach to programme leadership.

What was even more unusual was the consistency of effort. Donors tend to rotate operational staff quickly for reasons to do with internal management. This constant rotation, combined with the wide discretion given to operational project staff, can result in the huge swings in donor behaviour and preferences as experienced by programme field staff such as those in the ENACT unit. Such swings can have negative effects on programmes that depend on consistent effort over some years in order to make an impact. In the ENACT case, the basic principles put in place in the period 1991-94 were sustained through a number of CIDA staff changes, due largely to the continuity of the Jamaican supervisory personnel. But CIDA also succeeded in maintaining continuity on the major issues facing the programme.

In sponsoring these types of large process programmes all donors face three key challenges. The first is to put in place, in cooperation with country authorities, a system of indirect control and supervision that allows the field unit the operating space it needs, while at the same time helps to meet their own accountability requirements. The second challenge is to build the capability to support such programmes through knowledge management and the provision of relevant insights from experiences elsewhere. The third is to help put in place an appropriate approach to monitoring and evaluation that will enable the field staff and the programme participants to learn systematically about the outcomes of their work. CIDA succeeded in meeting the first challenge, and is still working with the ENACT unit on the second and third.

9 Emerging levels of performance

A number of Jamaican observers have expressed some scepticism about the whole notion of capacity development. In their view, donors and country governments collude to keep the aid game going by using the capacity development label to dress up conventional activities, particularly training. They are, however, not usually able to point too much in terms of real increases in performance.⁴⁰ Capacity development thus becomes a kind of symbolic cover, but is devoid of much real content.

This raises a legitimate issue that goes beyond the boundaries of the ENACT case. We need better ways of assessing performance and of understanding the 'drivers' that lead to organisational performance under a variety of circumstances, and the contribution of capabilities to that emerging performance. In view of the short time available to carry out this case study, and the fact that the ENACT programme is still at an early stage of in terms of assessing its own and its partners' performance, it was not possible to do much in the way of rigorous performance analysis. The following are some of the most evident examples of the performance outcomes of ENACT's work:

- By increasing their efficiency, the Ministry of Finance and other operating ministries have saved over J\$800,000 (euro 10,200) per year.
- A variety of training organisations, including CASE, MIND and UWI, have improved their capabilities and increased their outputs.
- Strategic environmental assessments have been institutionalised across government and appear in all proposals submitted to the Cabinet.
- Parish councils where ENACT has been involved⁴¹ are more effective than those that have not received such assistance.
- Other countries and organisations around the world, including South Africa, Zimbabwe and the International Olympic Committee, have used the Jamaican National Environmental Education Action Plan.

10 Summary

The ENACT programme generated its effectiveness over time by achieving the right 'fit' both internally and with the conditions and demands of the surrounding environment. The ability of a programme to position itself and then manage its work strategically for productive purposes seems to have been crucial for improving capabilities and performance. Part of this process of 'fit' has to do with getting a number of activities, functions, processes, people, etc., to interact together as a system. At a deeper level, it also has to do with matching initiatives to the level of organisational sophistication of the sector or country at a particular time. Making that happen in the ENACT case took the better part of seven years.

The time dimension needs to be kept in mind as donors get involved in more complex programmes and demand more short-term results to demonstrate their own effectiveness to domestic constituents. The ENACT programme is involved in a process of improving capabilities and performance that will need decades to achieve a sustainable level of outcomes. Its own performance must be assessed as a small part of a much larger series of events.

It is instructive to look back at the DAC Guidelines for Capacity Development in Environment issued in 1995 (see Box 2) and match them against the ENACT experience almost a decade later. Many of the DAC ideas remain relevant at an abstract level, but a couple of gaps should be noted. First, the guidelines were issued before results-based approaches gained favour among the international funding community, and it is by no means clear that the emphasis on long-term processes rather than short-term products would still be accepted. Second, the guidelines are, in effect, values rather than operational principles, focusing on the 'what' rather than on the 'how'. As such, they need to be supplemented with insights from implementation experience.

Notes

⁴⁰ For an example of this perspective, see Haley and Clayton (2003) 'The role of NGOs in environmental policy failures in a developing country', *Environment Values*, 12.

⁴¹ Lumsden and LaFontaine (2002) *Capacity Development (CD) for Sustainable Development Review and Recommendations*, p.20.

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