

# Building civil society capacity for conservation in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories

## STUDY TOUR OF BONAIRE: The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance and Stichting Nationale Parken Bonaire

Divi Flamingo, Kralendijk, Bonaire  
7th - 10th December 2010,



Desiree Croes, Education Coordinator and Diana Sint Jago, Pride Coordinator, STINAPA presentation at the STINAPA offices.



Junny Janga, WSNP Park Manager, talks to study tour participants at the WSNP visitor centre.

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## Acronyms

ARLG	Action Research and Learning Group
BIG	Bonaire Island government
BNMP	Bonaire National Marine Park
BVI	British Virgin Islands
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CURO	Council of Underwater Resort Operators (Bonaire)
DCNA	Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance
DEFRA	UK Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NA	Netherland Antilles (re: NA Guilders – local currency)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PA	Protected Area
Statia	St. Eustatius
STINAPA	National Parks Foundation/Stichting Nationale Parken (Bonaire)
TCI	Turks and Caicos Islands
TPA	Terrestrial Protected Area
UK	United Kingdom
UKOT	UK Overseas Territories
WSNP	Washington Slagbaai National Park
WWF	World Wildlife Foundation

# **Building civil society capacity for conservation in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories**

## **REPORT OF THE STUDY TOUR TO BONAIRE**

### **1. Background, study tour objectives and approach**

The study tour was conducted under the project 'Building civil society capacity for conservation in the Caribbean UKOTs', a three-year (2009-2011) research and capacity building project, coordinated by the Commonwealth Foundation and implemented regionally by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) under funding from the UK Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs's (DEFRA) Darwin Initiative. The project aims to enhance the capacity of 10 civil society organisations (CSOs) in the five Caribbean UKOTs<sup>1</sup>, to support the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in their respective territories and to strengthen overall CSO participation in biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean UKOTs.

CSOs in the UKOTs are called upon to play a critical but complex role in biodiversity conservation in the territories. They must balance advocacy with partnership and support to the national and UK government, the private sector and other CSOs as well as mobilisation of the public and other civil society actors and practitioners.

The study tour was designed to contribute to the action research and learning process that is central to the project design and to enable project participants to learn from conservation initiatives and CSOs in another country. Specifically, the study tour aimed to facilitate the sharing of experiences on:

- differences and commonalities between civil society governance structures and approaches;
- institutional frameworks and networks that enable or hinder civil society involvement in implementing CBD commitments; and
- good practices that could be applied in the Caribbean UKOTs.

The overall project aims to maximize peer learning so the study tour was designed to provide as many opportunities as possible for UKOT participants to learn from their host CSOs through classroom question and answer sessions, presentations, site visits and discussions in the field, as well as informal discussions.

The report is divided into six sections. This introductory section, which provides the background, study tour objectives and approach, is followed by [Section 2](#), which gives a brief overview of the host organisations. [Section 3](#) provides an analysis of key lessons learned from the study tour after which [Section 4](#) provides a detailed compilation of all information gathered about each of the study tour host organisations, their structure, management arrangements,

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<sup>1</sup> Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands.

funding and current challenges. Background information on nature conservation in Bonaire and the Dutch Caribbean is also discussed. [Section 5](#) provides the day-to-day account of the workshop proceedings and finally, the results of the workshop evaluation by participants are presented in [Section 6](#). See [Annex 1](#) for a list of participants, [Annex 2](#) for the Agenda and [Annex 3](#) for a list of persons that the group met with on the study tour.

## 2. Host organisations

Two key Bonaire-based CSOs were the focus of the study tour. They were:

- a) **Stichting Nationale Parken (National Parks Foundation), STINAPA**, which manages two protected areas on Bonaire: the *Washington Slagbaai National Park* (WSNP), a 5,643 hectare terrestrial protected area (TPA) encompassing the northwest section of the island and the 2,700 hectare *Bonaire National Marine Park*, a marine protected area (MPA) encompassing the entire coast of Bonaire to a depth of 60 metres.
- b) **The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)**, - an organisation dedicated to supporting the six CSOs - one on each of the six Dutch Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten that manage protected areas. DCNA fundraises, provides institutional capacity building to the CSOs and lobbies for greater recognition, awareness and financial support for biodiversity conservation within the Netherlands for the Dutch Caribbean.

The Dutch Caribbean islands, like the UKOTs are overseas entities<sup>2</sup> of Europe. Bonaire is a 'special municipality' of the Netherlands<sup>3</sup>. The Dutch Caribbean islands, like the Caribbean UKOTs, support more biodiversity than the whole of their respective mainland countries, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

## 3. Lessons Learned

The UKOT participants learned a tremendous amount from the host organisations in Bonaire. On the penultimate day, the group distilled some key lessons learned about the Bonaire organisations. During the four days, a number of conclusions as well as specific lessons around the key themes of this project: organisational and institutional structures, strategic approaches and leadership and management emerged. The lessons and conclusions are discussed below. The points raised in the study tour are being further distilled into a more comprehensive case study of civil society involvement in biodiversity conservation in the Dutch Caribbean, which should be available from CANARI by April 2011.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Overseas Entities' is the collective term used to describe overseas countries and territories (e.g. UKOTs) and outermost regions linked to the Member States of the European Union.

<sup>3</sup> For more information see: <http://www.kralendijk.net/en/New+constitution.2951> and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BES\\_islands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BES_islands)

## **Key Conclusions**

- **Enabling legal framework:** Bonaire has implemented a number of progressive legislative decisions with respect to biodiversity and resource conservation (some of these are discussed in [Section 4](#) and will be more fully explored in the case study). Key amongst these are the laws that (a) cede management of the island's protected areas to STINAPA<sup>4</sup>; (b) provision of powers to STINAPA to enforce conservation laws within the protected areas<sup>5</sup>; (c) charging of entry fees to all persons entering the MPA and TPA<sup>6</sup>; and (d) give STINAPA the power to collect and retain all user fees<sup>7</sup>.
- **Financial self sufficiency:** user fees collected by STINAPA provide an adequate income source to allow the CSO to be financially self-sufficient. User fees cover salary for 20 staff and all maintenance costs including four boats. The legislation states that the user fees must be used for Park management.
- **Key ingredients for CSO effectiveness:** (a) financial sustainability (b) legal security that provides management control over the resource (c) coherent organisational structures and (d) professional approaches to organisational management are some of the key ingredients behind STINAPA's effectiveness and its position as a powerful player in the decision-making structures regarding nature conservation on Bonaire.
- **Key leaders:** clearly, there have been some key figures within the biodiversity conservation 'movement' in Bonaire. This point will be explored further in the case study. Participants met two key persons: the Directors of STINAPA and DCNA. Other key leaders of the 'movement' that were discussed are 'Captain Don' who started the first dive shop on Bonaire and aggressively promoted coral reef conservation on the island as well as the government of Bonaire. The Bonaire Island government (BIG) has shown leadership and foresight in establishing a good legislative framework and in devolving management as well as the tools to manage (financial control of user fees) to STINAPA.
- **Meeting indigenous needs:** particularly with regard to the DCNA, participants felt that the organisation's model and approach were meeting a real need for Dutch Caribbean islands. DCNA has developed indigenously and therefore has a good understanding of the needs and peculiar constraints of nature conservation practitioners in the Caribbean overseas entities. Although the model has been developed within the region it has been designed as an influential platform to engage globally on behalf of the Dutch Caribbean territories.

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<sup>4</sup> Relevant legislation: Island Resolution Marine Park Bonaire (revised 2010) and Island Ordinance Nature Management Bonaire (revised 2010)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Nature Conservation Island Ordinance Bonaire (revised 2010)

<sup>7</sup> Island Resolution Nature Management (revised 2010)

## **Specific lessons:**

### *Organisational and institutional structure*

- **Representative of key stakeholders on Boards:** the structure of the Board of Directors of both STINAPA and DCNA allows all key stakeholder sectors to have their say in the governance of the organisation. However, there have been challenges in maintaining 'local' representation on the Board. As a result, there was concern that the Board of STINAPA might be a closed club and that there was a danger of local voice being excluded.
- **Coherent structures:** STINAPA's management structure is organised into management units and this makes roles very clear. The units clearly fit into the whole (see diagram of [STINAPA's structure on page 7](#))
- **Links with wider stakeholders:** both organisations maintain good links with government at both levels. STINAPA sits on other governmental Boards as a way of influencing their approaches and policies. DCNA makes regular visits to the Netherlands to influence policy there. Members of DCNA's Board (e.g. international NGOs) help to keep DCNA and island representatives linked in with the international conservation community.

### *Strategic approach*

- **Keeping the strategic focus:** neither organisation is trying to do everything. They have clarified what is their core focus and mandate. In discussions, both organisations frequently referred to their mission. For example, STINAPA does not engage in any commercial activities within the park. They have sought to consolidate their role as manager and supervisor of the resource. DCNA does not get involved in any day to day management issues at any of the parks. Its focus is institutional support. By sticking to their core mission, the organisations have been able to hone their organisational skills and their message.
- **Prioritisation:** prioritising and setting targets is clearly institutionalised in STINAPA's planning and overall approach.
- **High standards:** both organisations have set out to be a model for others. STINAPA staff recognise their role as managers of a model MPA for the Caribbean and DCNA aims to provide a model in its governance and approach for all Dutch Caribbean nature conservation organisations. This sets a benchmark for the way in which each of the organisations communicates itself to external groups and upholds standards internally.
- **Clearly defined roles:** both organisations have clearly defined their roles. DCNA in particular has been mindful to clarify what the organisation can and cannot do and to reduce the chances of conflict with local organisations in sourcing funds. The STINAPA Board is also clear on its role – it is there to develop policy and not to get involved in operational issues, which is the staff's role.
- **Building support of their constituency:** both organisations have invested time and funding into education and awareness work with the communities that they seek to influence in order to build their support. STINAPA has invested in education of the Bonaire population (see [Education](#) section) while DCNA has invested in awareness in the Netherlands.

STINAPA's programmes, such as the Junior Ranger programme, help to develop a new generation of potential rangers and advocates for resource conservation.

- **'Keep your enemies close'**: this is a quote from the STINAPA Director. STINAPA has recognised that even though the tourism industry and decision-makers present the greatest threat to the resource they need to 'keep them close' in order to influence what they do.

#### *Leadership and Management*

- **Planning, reflecting and more planning**: planning is part of STINAPA's culture. All staff participate and appear to expect to participate at some level in the organisation's planning. There is also continuous performance review.
- **Communication internally and externally**: communication externally about what STINAPA does is a high priority. The organisation's signs and logos are clearly visible around the island. As soon as you arrive at the airport there are informational boards about MPA fees and use. Internally, use of graphic boards demonstrating status of mooring buoy maintenance (see photo on front of report) and other visual management tools are in the office for all staff to see, which creates a culture of transparency.
- **On the lookout for opportunities and trends**: DCNA keeps a close eye on what is happening in the wider context (i.e. in the Netherlands and internationally) to identify where there are opportunities for the Dutch Caribbean conservation organisations. Likewise, STINAPA also invests time in looking at tourism trends to determine opportunities and to help to plan budgets for the following year.
- **Investment in human resources and capacity building**: in-house training provides staff with a very good skill set. Staff are paid at rates competitive to other sectors and were enthusiastic and passionate about their role.

## 4. Findings and information gathered

### ***Background to nature conservation in the Dutch Caribbean***

There are six islands of the Dutch Caribbean – three Windward islands: St. Maarten, St. Eustatius (Statia), and Saba and three Leeward islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao. Historically, the six Dutch Caribbean islands have not collaborated on projects on advocacy for nature conservation concerns. In addition to the challenges posed by the distance between the Windwards and Leewards, language has been a barrier to greater integration, sharing lessons and joined up working among the islands. The main language on some islands is English, some Papiamentu while in others it is Dutch.

The biological diversity on the islands is very rich. Together the islands are home to 200 endemic species (compared to two endemics on metropolitan Netherlands) and there are diverse ecosystems – forests, deserts, coral reefs, seagrass and mangroves. Despite this richness, the islands do not get a proportionate share of the resources allocated for biodiversity conservation for the Netherlands and they are unable to access funding from many of the

international funds dedicated to biodiversity conservation in developing countries because the islands are considered part of Europe. This situation is similar in the UKOTs.

Bonaire kick-started conservation efforts in the Dutch Caribbean. It was the first of the Dutch islands to establish an MPA in 1978 and a TPA in 1979. In 1996, a number of key nature conservation practitioners and decision-makers on some of the Dutch Caribbean islands recognised that well managed, well-funded parks were the best arrangement if designated at sufficient size to conserve key species and habitat, protect ecosystem services and maintain the landscape value of the islands. Therefore, each island needed to have at least one MPA and one TPA on each island. However, this has been difficult to achieve on all islands. For example, land prices on St. Maarten are so high that this has prohibited the establishment of a terrestrial park, while Aruba has only just established an MPA. Other park management organisations have run into financial difficulties.

The Dutch Caribbean governments realised early on that they did not have the capacity or desire to manage PAs and decided to cede the management of the islands' PAs to CSO 'managers'. All PAs in the Dutch Caribbean are therefore managed by CSOs. The organisations in each island work relatively autonomously from their island governments. Although their autonomy means they can more easily source money outside of governments, securing funds for nature conservation from their own island governments has been very challenging

### ***Bonaire's history of biodiversity conservation***

Bonaire has had a good history in conservation. It is a tiny island with a population of 15,000. Tourism<sup>8</sup>, and in particular dive tourism, is the mainstay of the economy. The dive industry was started in 1962 and each year, 32,000 divers visit Bonaire's coral reefs.

A number of progressive laws relating to biodiversity conservation were established from the 1970s onwards. Some important legislative decisions were:

- 1971 spear-fishing was outlawed.
- 1978 declaration of first protected area (MPA)
- 1979 declaration second protected area (TPA)
- 1985 removal of conch from Bonaire water was prohibited.
- 1992 a dive fee (now called an entry fee) was introduced for the first time despite protests from the dive operators.

At the time, the implementation of a user fee as a contribution towards resource conservation and management was unprecedented in the Caribbean and a relatively new concept outside the region. All of the funds from this levy go directly to STINAPA for PA management.

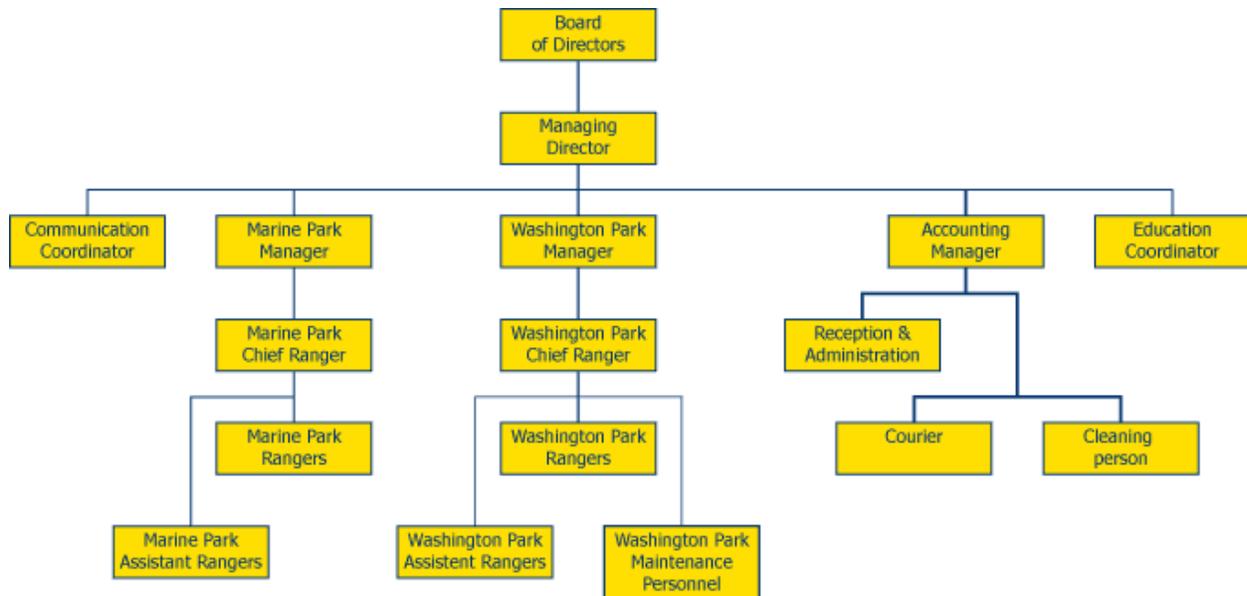
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<sup>8</sup> Cruise ship tourism is also a major component of the tourism market in Bonaire. Every year 250,000 cruise ship visitors come to the island.

According to STINAPA, in the early 1990s, BIG conducted a survey amongst the population on how they wanted the island to develop. It was found that Bonaire residents wanted to conserve the nature and culture of the island. This has been taken on board to a large extent in BIG development planning<sup>9</sup>. It has been realised that nature is important for Bonaire's development.

### **Stichting Nationale Parken Bonaire (STINAPA)**

#### *STINAPA structure*



Source: [www.stinapa.org](http://www.stinapa.org)

#### *Board of Directors*

STINAPA's Board consists of 11 members who represent the following interests:

- Tourism industry
- Hotel industry (represented by the Bonaire Hotel Association)
- Dive industry (represented by CURO: Council of Underwater Resort Operators)
- Farmers
- Fisherfolk
- Government - BIG (2 persons)
- Independent members (3 persons)

Although each of the members must be selected by their representative 'industry' or 'interest group', STINAPA's management team (the Board and Managing Director in consultation with its Park Managers) have the final say as to whether they accept or reject the person who has been put forward and this right has been exercised in the past. The Board holds ten meetings per year.

<sup>9</sup> Bonaire recently developed its first Land Use Zoning Plan

### *Management functions and role*

The organisation is divided into five units: Administration; Monitoring and Research; Law Enforcement; Information, Education and Outreach; and Travel and Training. STINAPA's core Management team includes the Director, the two Park Managers and the Accounting Manager. This team meets weekly on Tuesday mornings. These meetings are to keep the management team informed about the activities in each unit and to reach consensus on strategic and tactical decisions. Policy-related suggestions are usually developed by the Management team and presented to the Board of Directors for approval. The entire staff team meets every month at the WSNP offices.

STINAPA made the decision some time ago that it would not engage in any commercial activity (even the shop at the WSNP is leased to a private operator from nearby Rincon) and has assumed three key roles:

1. Collector of user fees and manager of funds
2. Trainer – to ensure that all operators within the MPA and TPA operate sustainably  
For example, STINAPA worked with a newly established kayak tour company in Lac Bay (the large mangrove lagoon within the MPA) to ensure that their operations were sustainable. STINAPA developed a self study training course for operators with a training handbook and exam at the end; guidelines/code of conduct for their operation; a legal status for operators. An agreement was made that kayaking could only take place in one particular zone.
3. Supervisor and manager of the resource

### *Bonaire National Marine Park*

Visitors who enter the MPA must pay an entrance fee. This is USD 25 for scuba divers (valid for one year) and USD 10 for other users (e.g. snorkelling or boat trip). The fee can be paid at dive centres, at hotel reception desks or at the visitor centre at WSNP.

STINAPA manages 100 moorings<sup>10</sup> within the BNMP. Their permanent mooring programme began in 1991. The dive industry has a special arrangement with STINAPA. They pay 500 NA Guilders (USD 280) per year plus additional costs for installation and maintenance fees. The dive shops are responsible for doing their own 'soft' maintenance (of ropes and mooring) while STINAPA does the 'hard' maintenance (of blocks and pins). All dive sites are located along the leeward side of the island.

Two reserve sites – no fishing zones – are also demarcated on the north western side of the island. These sites were selected by fishermen<sup>11</sup>. Fishing is no longer a major livelihood activity but used as supplemental income for a small number of people. According to BNMP, Park staff

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<sup>10</sup> Moorings are now made locally – to STINAPA's specifications – to suit the geological conditions of the island's sea bottom (hard rock as opposed to sand for which most commercial mooring systems have been designed)

<sup>11</sup> STINAPA drew on the experiences of the Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA) in zoning sites and involving fishermen in the process. A study tour was arranged for STINAPA and its fishermen to SMMA to learn how it was done and the benefits of no-fishing zones.

have a good relationship with fishermen and all fishermen have been given free moorings for their boats.

STINAPA has been delegated powers to enforce the conservation laws within the MPA but the BNMP Manager and Chief Ranger are the only staff members who have police powers. The Manager and Chief Ranger can arrest and charge anyone found, for example, spearfishing, taking conch without a permit, wearing gloves while diving and illegal construction within the MPA boundaries.

#### *Washington Slagbaai National Park*

The TPA is located close to the second largest town, Rincon. The park is composed of two ex-plantation sites – Washington plantation and Slagbaai plantation. Washington is still privately owned but certain rules apply to the owner's use of the land. Slagbaai is government land which has been vested to STINAPA's management. Most staff that work at the Park come from Rincon and it is felt that there is good nature awareness in Rincon and support for the protected area.

The current fee arrangement for park use means that visitors who pay to dive within the MPA can also gain free entry into WSNP. In 2009, there were 85,000 visitors to the park, 50,000 of which were 'free' visitors<sup>12</sup>. Although all user fees from both BNMP and WSNP are centrally managed by STINAPA and funding allocated to both parks according to their budgetary needs, the income from ticket sales from one-off visits at the WSNP gate is significantly less than the maintenance costs at the TPA. The Park Manager is presently working to change the entrance fee system to make the Park more self sufficient.

The highest priority and most difficult task of the WSNP management team is ensuring that the 76 kilometres of dirt roads are accessible and that fencing is intact and the Park is well-kept. Park activities operate under a regular timetable<sup>13</sup>.

There is a 'scientific house' where researchers can stay. All researchers undertaking research and conservation work within the park must sign a policy prior to the start of their study, stating what they plan to do with the research. Only work beneficial to STINAPA can be conducted. In addition, final copies of the research must be lodged with STINAPA.

#### *Education programme*

STINAPA conducts a nationwide Education programme. Schools education work is focused on hands on, experiential approaches e.g. use of visual aids and field trips. STINAPA also collaborates with other NGOs for education work on a project basis. There is also a teachers' education and support programme. In 2009, 2,500 children benefited from the schools programme.

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<sup>12</sup> The park manager commented that even with a 'contribution box' placed in the toilets, visitors were still reluctant to make any financial contribution.

<sup>13</sup> For example: every Wednesday – maintenance of equipment and every Thursday - departmental meetings.

Access to work with secondary school students is more difficult than primary age so other creative approaches have been put in place such as:

- partnership work with a youth activities organisation - Jong Bonaire (ages 14+)
- development of a Junior Ranger Club - which provides basic ranger training (biology, geology, diving). This programme has been running for two years.

The Communications programme works with people of all ages over 18. The programme is funded through a range of sources: WWF Netherlands and funding from local companies and banks for specific campaigns. Companies have been willing to sponsor activities as a way to demonstrate their green credentials particularly if they have their logo alongside WWF's. The focus of the communications programme is to demonstrate the interconnectedness between nature and Bonaire's people and development.

A number of different media are used: signs, brochures, newspaper, and websites. Regular communication tools include:

- campaign newspaper – printed quarterly; 5600 printed. This is delivered free door to door to all Bonaire households
- weekly columns in the local newspaper
- frequent radio spots on island radio channels
- press releases on a case by case basis

The third and newest 'arm' of STINAPA's conservation programme (not yet shown in the organogram above) is the Conch awareness project. The awareness project has been modelled on the Rare Pride concept<sup>14 15</sup>. Awareness instruments for this project include movie clips on line, puppet shows and work in schools.

### *Management planning*

In July or August of every year the management team meets to discuss and decide on the strategic goals for the following year. Management plans for both parks are for a five-year period, after which they are reviewed. The WSNP Management Plan will be reviewed in 2011. The first management plan was completed in 2006.

In developing the plans, STINAPA identified a range of issues of concern for nature conservation within the parks and Bonaire based on ongoing monitoring and research. A cross-section of STINAPA stakeholders participated in the management planning through public meetings and one-to-one interviews. Stakeholders were asked to rank the level of threat against each of the conservation issues. Those with the highest threat were given highest priority on the Management Plans. Stakeholders were also asked about the kinds of partnerships that STINAPA should develop to carry out its programme.

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<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.rareconservation.org/about>

<sup>15</sup> Using the Rare Pride concept STINAPA found it difficult to make the conch into a charismatic 'character', making the design of the logo particularly challenging. The final poster/logo design is of an old hand passing the conch to new hand symbolising the passing of the care of the conch on to the next generation.

### *Staff training and human resources*

All technical employees enter as Assistant Rangers. They undergo a rigorous in-house training programme that informs them about how they can grow within the organisation. The training includes dive training, rescue training, computer skills, mechanic, boat handling, first aid, and radio operator. All rangers have scuba diving certification to the level of a rescue diver.

In 2000, STINAPA hired a company to reorganise its personnel structure and management. There is a transparent pay scale. Salaries are very competitive with those in other sectors. A number of internal policies are used, including one on the dress code for staff.

### *Relationship with the Bonaire Island Government (BIG)*

On the whole, STINAPA has a very good relationship with BIG. Communication is open and links are good (when discussing both positive and difficult issues). STINAPA's Director referred to their relationship with BIG as 'challenging' at times but not 'in conflict'. Government has created a conducive operating environment for STINAPA's efforts by devolving management control of the resource *and* control of the financial income from dive fees. At present BIG pays the salary for the Education Coordinator and a part time assistant. STINAPA would like BIG to contribute more given the critical role that the organisation plays in Bonaire's development.

### *Funding*

The organisation works on an annual budget of about 1 million NA Guilders (USD 560,000). User fees bring in about 850,000 NA Guilders (USD 476,000). Other funding comes from BIG (for the Education Coordinators post), DCNA funding and grant funding from IUCN (for the Conch rehabilitation work) and WWF Netherlands.

WWF Netherlands has been its most important donor. WWF provided funds for STINAPA's establishment and development. Another major funder, Stichting Doen (a Dutch donor) that had also funded STINAPA's efforts since its foundation, stopped its funding in 2005 as it felt the organisation was strong enough to survive and that BIG should provide additional funding.

### *Challenges*

In the past, there have been conflicts within the Board because of the range of interests represented there. Board members consulted consider this a conflict between short-sighted interests and a longer term vision for nature conservation and Bonaire. These conflicts of interest continue to some extent but have been better managed now through the implementation of an agreement that Board members were asked to sign, in which they pledge to put the interests of STINAPA and its mission above that of the interests of their representative organisations.

At present the Board is dominated by expatriates and both Board members and the Director expressed concern that local people are not adequately represented on the STINAPA Board. Others noted that locals were not vocal enough about inappropriate development choices. As a result, public education is seen as a continuous and critical need.

Impacts to the protected resources from outside the MPA and TPA continue to be a threat to the natural resource base and biodiversity of the island. STINAPA sits on a committee that determines land use but cannot vote. Voting members are elected by the government. Sometimes BIG is willing to listen to STINAPA's advice, but this is not always the case.

Due to the power that STINAPA currently holds, there continue to be powerful development interests on the island that would like to see STINAPA dismantled.

### ***The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)***

DCNA was formed after the St. Eustatius National park office had to close its doors due to lack of funding in 2002/3. It was decided that this was an unacceptable situation and solutions should be found to ensure adequate and well-financed conservation.

The Board of DCNA made a conscious decision to be based in Bonaire. In the past, most resources in the Dutch Caribbean were allocated to Curaçao while islands like Bonaire were marginalised. Therefore DCNA's location symbolised its inclusive agenda: to support all islands equally.

DCNA has a small staff of up to 4 persons at the Secretariat. Consultants and sub-contractors help deliver the work on a case by case basis. The Secretariat is responsible for reporting to funders.

#### *DCNA role*

DCNA's five main roles are:

1. Fundraising on behalf of all islands. DCNA made a decision that it would not seek funding from local sources so that it would not compete with the parks and NGOs for funds. DCNA aims to look specifically for international sources and long term funding (see Trust Fund below).
2. Representation – DCNA represents the parks to the outside world and provides a stronger voice in the Netherlands and internationally on behalf of the six islands.
3. Information Centre – provides a clearing house and resource on nature conservation information. DCNA also provides a general template that can be adapted for management plans in each of the islands. This also helps to standardize approaches and plans.
4. Institutional capacity – DCNA does not get involved in any of the day to day management of the parks. Institutional capacity building work focuses on training and capacity building at the parks. Staff exchanges for peer learning have proved very powerful.
5. Education and outreach – awareness in the Netherlands has been important for recognition of Dutch Caribbean nature and conservation needs. Communication with key change agents and Dutch media was the focus of DCNA's 2010 programme.

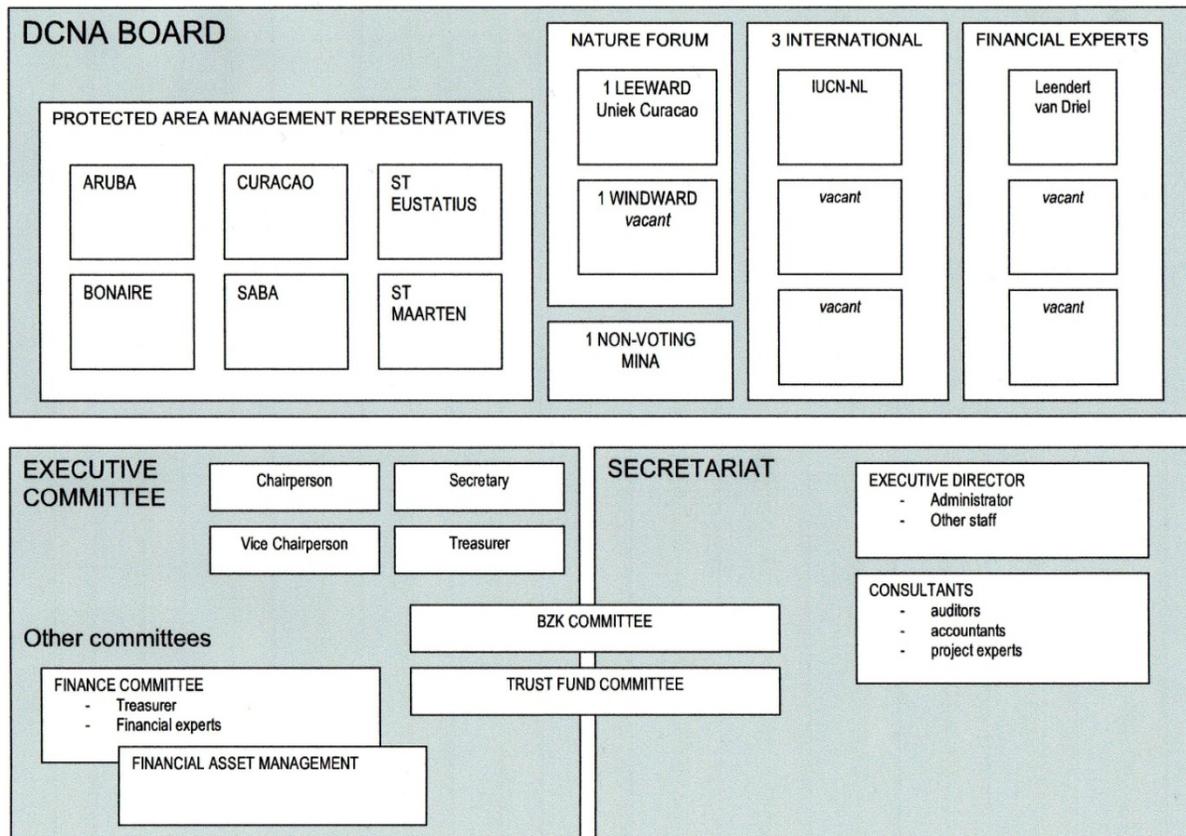
All DCNA projects must be multi – island. It was found that running a pilot project on one island and then transferring the model to other islands has worked well. Overall, DCNA aims to lead

other organisations in the Dutch Caribbean by example, particularly with respect to governance arrangements.

*Board of DCNA*

The DCNA Board consists of:

- One island park(s) manager representative from each island
- Three persons with financial and other expertise, preferably at the CEO level. At present the organisation has a venture capitalist as well as a bank manager and stock market broker on the Board.
- Two persons from other local conservation organisations so that local conservation efforts are not forgotten – one person represents each of the three Leeward islands and another represents the three Windwards islands
- Three International NGOs (IUCN is one)



Source: [www.dcnanature.org](http://www.dcnanature.org)

The Secretariat has put together a one-day training programme to orient new Board members. There is an Executive Committee and a Finance Committee. There is also a Trust Fund Committee made up of internal and external experts (see Trust Fund below) There are ad hoc committees to work on specific projects as the need arises. The Board meets twice a year.

DCNA decided to create a Council of Patrons to give the organisation additional *gravitas* and influence within the Netherlands. The organisation was thrilled when it managed to get the agreement of the Queen of the Netherlands to become one of its patrons on a recent visit to Bonaire. DCNA has identified the biggest conservation players in the Netherlands and seeks out the ones that are interested in the region.

#### *Board challenges*

- There has been a high turnover of Board members. There's been a 99% turnover in five years and 50% turnover in one year.
- There is a tendency within the Dutch Caribbean CSOs to become reliant on one person to lead and manage the organisation.
- Each of the parks retains autonomy on who represents them on the DCNA Board and in some cases the person representing the park is not best suited to the role. Many Board members are poor at taking information back to the park Boards. DCNA prefers to have the Park Managers as representatives on the DCNA Board, but this is not always the case.
- Need to be creative in the way Board members are engaged. DCNA is always looking for ways to make the organisation seem desirable for people to sit on its Board.

#### *Trust fund*

Conservationists in the Dutch Caribbean had petitioned the central Netherlands government for 10 years to provide additional funds for biodiversity conservation.

In 2003, the Netherlands government commissioned a study to determine the long-term funding needs for protected areas and nature conservation in the Caribbean territories. The outcome was a recommendation for a Trust Fund of €24 million Euros (USD 32.64 million) which could fund the running costs for two parks on each island from the interest earned from the Fund.

The Netherlands government agreed in 2004 to put €1million per year (USD 1.36 million) for 10 years towards the DCNA operating costs and the Trust Fund for the Dutch Caribbean. At the same time, the Ministry of Nature and the Environment (in the Netherlands) secured €500,000 (USD 680,000) per year from the Dutch Lottery fund to go towards the Trust Fund. Some of this money was earmarked for DCNA's establishment. Currently, the Trust Fund has €5 million (USD 6.8 million) after 5 years.

DCNA currently works on an annual budget of €1,700,000 (USD 2.3 million). Each park is given between €155,000 and €85,000 (USD 210,800 to USD 115,600) for operational support per year. Personnel costs are €150,000 per year. It was decided, right at the beginning that any spare funds would go into the Trust Fund<sup>16</sup>, requiring careful budgeting and working opportunistically to deliver the programme. The Trust fund is managed by the Board and Secretariat jointly and the Trust Fund committee on the Board meets monthly or every two months.

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<sup>16</sup> 2010 is the first year in which the DCNA budget has had a surplus.

### *Relationship with the Netherlands government*

DCNA's relationship with the Netherlands government has been challenging and there are many cultural differences but over a long time there have been some significant achievements. The Director goes to the Netherlands three times a year but finds that the organisation has more of an impact when officials come to the Caribbean.

The constant change of Ministers in the Netherlands is a threat to decision-making. DCNA has determined that it is more fruitful to invest in civil servants since they are in office longer. Having patrons has made a difference to the interest and influence within the Netherlands.

## **5. Structure and proceedings of the study tour**

This section provides an overview of the format and day to day proceeding of the study tour (see [Annex 2](#) for the agenda and [Annex 3](#) for a full list of persons that the group met with).

### ***Day 1 – Introductions and expectations***

The majority of the participants had met before at the March 2010 Action Research and Learning Group (ARLG) meeting in Nevis, so the study tour began just with brief re-introductions. The one new participant, Nicquell Garland, President of the Rotaract Club of Providenciales in Turks and Caicos (TCI) was asked to present an overview of her organisation using the same process as the others had used at the ARLG:

#### Rotaract Club of Providenciales

- Rotaract Club is a service organisation. It is the junior arm of the Rotary Club.
- Rotaract has a number of projects that look at food and health needs of TCI.
- With regard to biodiversity and nature conservation, the organisation's closest working partners are the Department for Conservation and Resources and the TCI National Parks Trust.
- The organisation's main threats are membership retention and mobilising members.

Afterwards, participants were asked to recollect a significant fact about or a perception of the organisation represented by the person sitting next to them. This helped participants to recall issues that organisations were addressing at the time of the last meeting; things that other organisations had achieved that they felt were significant; and commonalities between their organisations.

In order to 'kick-start' thinking and analysis, the facilitator made a short PowerPoint presentation to open up discussion on some key questions and opportunities for learning that the study tour presented for participants. Main areas of potential learning and key research questions presented were:

- *Organisational and institutional structures:*
  - *Re: DCNA:* Have the Dutch Caribbean islands always been a natural network? What are the challenges of communication? Are all members functional?
  - *Re: STINAPA:* How does it work with BIG? What makes up its institutional structure? What are the benefits of DCNA membership? What are Board and staff relationships like and how have these changed over time?
- *Leadership, stakeholder mobilisation and participation of stakeholders:* Who have been the key leaders in the organisations' development? How are stakeholders mobilised? What approaches were used? How are the general public involved?
- *Financial sustainability:* Are these organisations financially sustainable? What makes an organisation financially sustainable?
- *CSO roles:* How did the roles of each CSO (DCNA and STINAPA) become defined? Were there any conflicts in the process?
- *Legislative frameworks:* What is the legislative mandate for STINAPA and the other PA managers in the Dutch Caribbean? Do they differ? What are the commonalities and differences in the legislative mandates for the UKOT National Trusts? What role have the Bonaire CSOs played in shaping the legislative frameworks?
- *Political status:* In what ways has Bonaire's relationship to Europe helped or hindered Bonaire's nature conservation? Can UKOTs see similarities in their own relationship to UK government?

The group then discussed their expectations for the trip. Each participant was asked to write down two to three expectations on a post it note. The expectations were reviewed in plenary and grouped together under common themes. Expectation themes included:

1. Finding out more on fundraising strategies/ how to generate sustainable income/ achieve financial sustainability/ innovative financial mechanisms.
2. Learning how to be an effective partner / partnership and avoid conflicts with other CSOs/ how can co-management arrangements between government and civil society be adapted to the UKOTs.
3. Finding out more on developing institutional business plans and strategic plans.
4. Examining Board structures and how they impact the running of the organisation.
5. Comparing legislation for conservation sites and protected areas between Bonaire and UKOTs.
6. Discussing how political influences hinder and help organisational development.
7. Gaining ideas for involving members and keeping them interested.
8. Exploring the possibilities of pursuing an umbrella organisation for UKOTs in the Caribbean.
9. Better understanding the role/ support of private industry in nature conservation.
10. Gaining ideas for effective biodiversity awareness and public education approaches.

In the afternoon our study tour hosts, DCNA followed by STINAPA, made 60 – 90 minute PowerPoint presentations about their organisations followed by question and answers from participants.

Each of the UKOT teams also made ten minute presentations about their organisations and biodiversity conservation in their territory for the benefit of our hosts. Representatives from DCNA and STINAPA had an opportunity to ask participants questions about their organisations and about the biodiversity conservation issues currently being addressed in the UKOTs.

### ***Day 2: Bonaire National Marine Park (BNMP)***

Participants travelled to the STINAPA office, which is also the office of the BNMP. Presentations were made by the coordinators of each of the main BNMP management units during the morning and after lunch sessions. The Units that UKOT CSOs were exposed to were:

- Law Enforcement;
- Maintenance; and
- three sections of the Education and Advisory Unit:
  - Work with both primary and secondary schools;
  - Public communications targeting the over 18 age group; and
  - Conch Restoration Campaign awareness

Participants had lunch at the hotel restaurant of Captain Don's Habitat, where the group was joined by two members of STINAPA's Board: Bruce Bawker, who represents the Dive Operators of Bonaire, and Jack Chalk, hotelier and independent member on the Board. The two Board members gave a brief informal introduction about:

- their roles on the STINAPA Board;
- their perceptions of the benefits of STINAPA to their own interests; and
- the benefits of STINAPA to the territory.

Participants were able to ask questions and discuss issues with them over lunch. Of particular interest during this session were discussions on:

- Board structure, Board-staff relations and Board composition;
- The role of the Board (operations vs. policy)
- The role of politics in nature conservation
- Balancing the interests of the stakeholders that you represent (self-interest) on the Board against the interests of STINAPA as an organisation (interests of the whole).

These have been discussed mainly as part of ['Challenges' in Section 4](#)

In the final afternoon session, Elsmarie Beukenboon, STINAPA's Director, presented and discussed organisational management issues of STINAPA. This included:

- organisational structure, mission and culture;
- park management plans, their development;
- organisational planning;

- staff training and policies; and
- STINAPA's budget and sources of funds.

These are discussed from pages [8 to 9](#) and [11 to 12](#) in Section 4

### ***Day 3: Washington Slaagbai National Park***

On Day 3 participants travelled to the Washington Slaagbai National Park, located in the north of the island. The group was met at the visitor centre by the Park Manager, Junny Janga, and Chief Ranger, George Thodé, who gave participants an orientation to the visitor centre and offices then led the group on a tour along one of the main trails within the Park.

Participants were impressed with the visitor centre for its use of local materials, simple yet informative content of displays and use of effective, low tech approaches. Information included a good mix of environmental, cultural and historical information about the area.

During the presentations, discussions and tour, the group discussed:

- management, maintenance and operation of the Park;
- relationship of the Park and its staff to the nearby community;
- schedules of work and prioritisation of work on the Park;
- financial sustainability of the park's activities;
- relationship between the WSNP and BNMP;
- existing policies including policies governing the work of external researchers.

See ['Washington Slaagbaai National Park' in Section 4](#)

After returning to the hotel in the afternoon, the group spent the rest of the afternoon distilling the lessons from the last two and a half days. Using three of the key project themes: (1) Organisational and institutional structure; (2) Leadership and Management; and (3) Strategic Planning, participants worked in three thematic groups to identify and analyse lessons learned from the host organisations. The results of that session, as well as other points of analysis gained from the study tour, have already been discussed in [Section 3](#).

### ***Day 4: DCNA and project small grant component***

Kalli De Meyer of DCNA returned to continue her presentation from Day 1 on the regional organisation and to answer specific questions that had emerged over the last few days. In her presentation Kalli gave further information about the DCNA's:

- structure and relationship with the other Dutch Caribbean islands;
- Board relationships and effectiveness;
- DCNA's relationship with the Netherlands; and
- funding of DCNA.

See ['Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance' in Section 4](#)

Kalli concluded her presentation by recommending that CANARI, participants and DCNA find opportunities to continue the dialogue and sharing between the English speaking and Dutch speaking Caribbean.

For the remainder of the morning session, participants worked in their country groups to brainstorm and develop their ideas for the small grant component of the project, under which each organisation is eligible for a £6000 (USD 9000) grant for some aspect of organisational development. Each UKOT team chose one project idea to work on that could either be developed and implemented jointly or by just one of the organisations. In line with the small grant application form and process, participants structured their brainstorming into thinking through:

- (1) Goal of the project;
- (2) Objectives; and
- (3) Tactics and strategies to achieve the objectives.

Following the planning, the groups presented their ideas in a plenary session where clarity of goals and objectives was discussed and the ideas refined.

It was agreed that participants would sharpen up their initial project ideas on their return home and put together a full application to be submitted to CANARI by January 31<sup>st</sup> 2011.

The goals (in draft) of the projects discussed were:

- Anguilla – to improve the ability of the Trust to be a voice (advocate)
- BVI – to improve communication about the Jost Van Dyke Preservation Society and its outreach
- Cayman Islands – to better communicate the work of the Trust and its profile
- Montserrat – to develop a strategic plan for the Montserrat National Trust and Small Business Association for the next 3-5 years
- TCI – to improve the National Trust's in-house and public biodiversity awareness

The morning session and the study tour concluded with a written evaluation of the four days; the results of which are presented in the following section.

## **6. Evaluation results**

Using the evaluation form format, indicative comments and results from the nine evaluations are captured below:

1. Did the study tour help you to compare and contrast different civil society governance structures and approaches? Yes/No

100% Yes

2. Did the study tour help you to look at the different institutional frameworks and networks that can help and hinder civil society involvement in biodiversity conservation?

100% Yes

3. Did the study tour provide you with good practices that can be applied in the Caribbean UKOTs?

100% Yes

4. What is the most important thing that you learned from this study tour?

- Business-like approach to the work of Bonaire organisations
- Importance of focusing on goals/ mission
- The advantages of having an organisation like DCNA
- The importance of keeping user fees allocated for resource conservation (and ideally separate from government)
- Building on what you have

5. What did you like about this study tour?

- Learning about different organisational structures
- Opportunities to talk to park managers, staff and interaction between hosts and participants – good feel of what is going on
- Excellent presentations by DCNA and STINAPA
- To see that someone is succeeding in conservation management
- All the objectives of each day were met/ good time management / mix of theory and practical

6. What could have been improved or done differently?

- Having a hotel with internet access in the rooms
- Time to see Lac Bay

7. Please rate the following sessions

	Poor → → V Good				
	1	2	3	4	5
Day 1: Introduction to the study tour				44%	56%
Day 1: Introductory presentations by our hosts					100%
Day 2: Visit to STINAPA's office				33%	66%
Day 3: Visit to Washington Slagbaai National Park				22%	78%
Day 3: Review of lessons learned				22%	78%
Day 4: Presentation and Q&A with DCNA				11%	89%

Day 4: Consolidating lessons and small grants				<b>22%</b>	<b>78%</b>
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8. How would you rate the following areas of the study tour structure and delivery? Please tick one for each area.

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Clarity of objectives	<b>78%</b>	<b>22%</b>		
Content	<b>89%</b>	<b>11%</b>		
Materials	<b>78%</b>	<b>22%</b>		
Facilitation	<b>78%</b>	<b>22%</b>		
Field trips	<b>89%</b>	<b>11%</b>		
Relevance to your needs	<b>66%</b>	<b>33%</b>		

Any additional comments on the above:

- Keep up the good work

9. Identify at least one thing that you will do differently in your organisation as a result of this study tour.

- Take a different approach to communication and public awareness
- Involve opponents
- Get my organisation to broaden its horizons more/become more active/ engender positive views towards training
- Have consistent meetings with staff
- Start planning for our next strategic plan – critically assess what we want to do
- More planning
- Consider structure and composition of the Board
- Organisational charts to track activities

10. What might prevent you from applying the lessons learned from this study tour?

- Lack of understanding from other members of the organisation
- Lack of cooperation from Board members
- Limited human resources and time
- Constantly putting out fires rather than planning

11. Any other comments?

- Keen to continue links with DCNA
- Looking forward to the ARLG

## ANNEX 1: PARTICIPANTS

The intention was for each UKOT to be represented by two CSOs, each with one representative from the management team; however the Cayman Islands was only represented by the National Trust. Each of the other four UKOTs (Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands), were represented by two civil society organisations: the National Trust in each of those territories as well as a partner.

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## **ANNEX 2: AGENDA**

### **BUILDING CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY FOR CONSERVATION IN THE CARIBBEAN UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES**

#### **Study Tour of The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance and Stichting Nationale Parken Bonaire**

7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Divi Flamingo, Kralendijk, Bonaire.

#### **AGENDA**

**Day 1:** *Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December*

#### **Arrival of participants, introductions and introduction to DCNA and STINAPA**

##### **Objectives for the day**

- To share expectations and agree on study tour agenda and process
- To share organisational backgrounds
- To understand the history, development and structure of DCNA and STINAPA
- To discuss the status of biodiversity conservation in the Dutch Caribbean - achievements and main challenges

##### **AM**

10:30 – 11:00 Welcome and introduction of new participants, organisation of roles for the week

11:00 – 11:20 Review of ARLG outcomes and how this has informed the study tour

11:20 – 12:00 Review of expectations, confirmation of agenda and preparation for afternoon session

##### *LUNCH*

##### **PM**

1:00 – 1:15 Introduction of project to our hosts and expectations of study tour

1:15 – 2:00 Presentation on DCNA, development and biodiversity conservation in the Dutch Caribbean

2:00 – 3:00 Brief country presentations by UKOT participant organisations, UKOT biodiversity conservation challenges followed by discussion and Q&A with DCNA and STINAPA

3:00 – 4:45 Presentation on STINAPA – history, structure, current role, relations with territory government and how the management plans for Bonaire National Marine Park (BNMP) and Washington Slagbaai National Park (WSNP) were created.

##### *BREAK*

5:00 – 5:20 Review of day's proceedings, key points

5:20 – 6:00 Small groups to prepare key questions to consider during Days 2 and 3

**Day 2: Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December**

**Field Trip, Bonaire National Marine Park, Bonaire**

**Objectives for the day**

- To learn about STINAPA's approach to biodiversity conservation
- To analyse the institutional and organisational structure, funding and strategic focus of the Bonaire National Marine Park's (BNMP)
- To learn about the relationship with the BNMP's stakeholders
- To analyse the socio-political and economic context that has promoted civil society participation in biodiversity conservation Bonaire.

Departure from hotel: 8:30 **AM**

9:00 – 10:00 Boat tour of Bonaire Marine Protected Area

10:15 – 11:30 Presentation on STINAPA's biodiversity conservation activities at BNMP and WSNP

11:30 – 1:30 Presentation and discussion with BNMP stakeholders over lunch

**PM**

1:30 – 3:30 Introduction to BNMP Management Units: Law Enforcement, Maintenance, Research and Monitoring; Education and Advisory. Demonstration of BNMP management tools.

3:30 – 4:00 Presentation on STINAPA legal frameworks

4:00 – 5:00 Discussion and Q&A between UKOTs and STINAPA

RETURN TO HOTEL

**Day 3: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December**

**Field trip to Washington Slaagbai National Park and reflections on lessons learned for UKOTs**

**Objectives for the day**

- To analyse Washington Slaagbai National Park organisational structure, funding and strategic focus
- To identify key lessons from study tour on what has helped and hindered civil society participation in Bonaire and Dutch Caribbean focusing on:
  - Institutional arrangements
  - Policy environment
  - Organisational capacity, strategic direction and approach
  - Funding environment and financial sustainability
  - Stakeholders and leaders
- To identify what lessons can be applied in UKOTs and UKOT organisations

Departure from hotel: 7:30 **AM**

7:30 – 8:00 Debrief on reflections from field trip and review of key questions for Day 3 field trip

8:00 – 10:00 Arrival at visitor centre and short tour of Park

10:00 – 11:30 Presentation and demonstration by WSNP Manager on management tools

11:30 – 1:30 Meetings with stakeholders of Park over lunch

**ARRIVAL BACK AT HOTEL: 2:00 PM**

2:30 – 3:00 Open and facilitated discussion on reflections and key lessons from Days 1-3

3:00 – 4:15 Group work drawing on key project themes for institutions and organisations in UKOTs

4:15 – 5:00 Presentation of group work

6:00 – 7:00 **COCKTAIL PARTY**

**Day 4:** *Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December*

### **Small grants progress, evaluation and departures**

- To review progress and support small grant identification and application
- To evaluate the study visit.

**AM**

8:00 – 9:00 Action planning within country on organisational priorities, plans and actions

9:00 – 10:00 Discussion and Q&A session with Kalli De Meyer, DCNA for points of clarification, additional information and discussion on networking opportunities with UKOTs

10:00 – 10:20 Review of small grant programme and discussion of organisational progress on applications. Brainstorming on new ideas for small grants post-study tour

*BREAK*

10:20 – 11:00 Individual or country group work to advance small grant applications and action plans

11:00 – 12:00 Summary and evaluation

*LUNCH AND DEPARTURE*

## ANNEX 3: STUDY TOUR RESOURCE PERSONS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Post, Organisation</b>	<b>Area of expertise</b>
<b>Elsmarie Beukenboom</b>	Director, STINAPA	NGO management and development, Dutch Caribbean nature conservation; tourism
<b>Ramon de Leon</b>	Manager, BNMP, STINAPA	Park Management; Bonaire nature conservation
<b>José (Junny) Janga</b>	Manager, WSNP, STINAPA	Park Management; Bonaire nature conservation; Tourism
<b>Edwin (Dean) Domcassé</b>	Chief Ranger, BNMP, STINAPA	Enforcement; park management; relations with park users
<b>George Thodé</b>	Chief Ranger, WSNP, STINAPA	Park management; nature conservation; tour guiding
<b>Karen van Dijk</b>	Communication Coordinator, STINAPA	Public education and outreach (over 18s)
<b>Desiree Croes</b>	Education Coordinator	Environmental education (schools)
<b>Diana Sint Jago</b>	Pride Coordinator	Public environmental education and outreach (conch)
<b>Kalli de Meyer</b>	Director, DCNA	NGO management and development; Dutch Caribbean nature conservation