



MACARTHUR  
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

***Consolidating the role of civil society in biodiversity conservation  
in the Caribbean islands***

Report on the  
**National workshops to build the capacity of civil society organisations to develop  
projects on biodiversity conservation in protected areas in the Caribbean islands**  
(Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines: June-July 2012)

## **1. Introduction**

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is implementing a project on *Consolidating the role of civil society in biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean islands*, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for 2011-2013. The purpose of the Mentorship programme, a component of the 2-year project, is to develop a pool of mentors throughout the region who can help strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the islands of the Caribbean to play a larger and more effective role in biodiversity conservation. The mentorship programme will help to strengthen CANARI's capacity to provide effective and sustained support to other CSOs through its role as the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) for the five-year (2010-2015) Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)<sup>1</sup> Caribbean islands investment and other work.

Following the October 2011 orientation workshop for the pool of 20 mentors from 12 countries, mentors from six countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) carried out roll-out training to assist community groups in project proposal development and organisational management in June and July 2012. National workshops were held and facilitated by mentors in the abovementioned countries with technical and logistical support from CANARI. Because of conflicting schedules, a national training workshop could be not held in Antigua and Barbuda.

The national workshops were designed to build the capacity of civil society organisations to develop projects on biodiversity conservation in protected areas in the Caribbean islands. These national workshops allowed mentors to use the mentoring skills acquired in their previous training, focusing in particular on proposal development and project planning.

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<sup>1</sup> As the RIT, CANARI provides support to potential grantees from civil society to identify suitable projects to address the CEPF strategic directions and investment priorities, to develop proposals and to complete the application process. CANARI will also provide mentoring support to grantees, conduct monitoring and evaluation of projects and assist with reporting. For more information on the CEPF investment, please see [http://canari.org/civil\\_sub5.asp](http://canari.org/civil_sub5.asp).

## 2. Participants

An average of 15 participants attended each national workshop. Participants in attendance were representatives from CSOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), government agencies and also included a few university students. In total, 60 persons representing 40 groups benefitted from mentor-led national workshops.

## 3. Objectives

The specific objectives of the national mentor workshops were the following:

- To analyse priority needs for biodiversity conservation in the country.
- To build understanding of CEPF and other funding opportunities for supporting CSOs work in biodiversity conservation.
- To build the capacity of CSOs to be able to develop projects and proposals to seek support for their work from CEPF and other donors.
- To facilitate greater sharing of experiences and collaboration among CSOs, including potential collaborations or coordination of projects in biodiversity conservation.

## 4. Method

Each national mentor-led workshop was designed as a two-day training workshop on project planning and proposal writing, including a field trip. However, because of time constraints and limited availability of workshop participants, some mentors opted to have a one-day workshop instead, and two of these workshops incorporated a field trip (in Barbados and in Saint Lucia). Prior to the national training workshops, mentors had the opportunity to review and provide comments on a detailed, model session plan to be used as a guide for conducting the sessions. A draft agenda for the workshop, as well as supporting documents were also provided to mentors for their review and use as facilitators, as well as handouts for the workshop participants.

The draft agenda for the workshop is attached as Appendix 1.

## 5. Findings

All mentors reported that the workshop's objectives were met. Sessions were thought to be useful and informative and allowed participants to consider specific biodiversity conservation needs in their respective countries, while increasing their capacity in proposal writing and project development.

### i. Key results highlighted by workshop participants

- The session on the analysis of gaps and priorities for biodiversity conservation in the country was useful in identifying a framework for participants. In Grenada, for instance, participants stated that the gaps and priorities analysis increased their awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation in their country. The analysis also stimulated discussions on possible actions to be taken by community-based organisations to contribute to biodiversity protection in Grenada.

- The session on the CEPF programme gave participants an overview and understanding of the programme and of the mechanisms for applying for a CEPF grant. This session also provided an opportunity to participants to discuss other existing financing mechanisms for biodiversity conservation, and how to access these.
- Participants enhanced their capacity to develop projects and write proposals to seek support for their work through access to CEPF funding, as well as other donors, through undertaking a problem analysis, developing objectives that would be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-limited.

Preparation of a work plan, and budgeting for potential projects also gave participants an overview of the various steps to be taken in developing a project proposal. Participants found the project planning and proposal writing to be useful as it provided them with a basic understanding of the somewhat tedious nature of the entire process.



*Participants listing areas of activity*



*Participants share ideas at the workshop*

Overall, most participants indicated that the workshop's structure and delivery was good regarding clarity of objectives, content, materials, facilitation and relevance to their needs.

## ii. Lessons learned by mentors

Mentors had varying levels of experience in terms of facilitation of a workshop. However, all agreed on the following:

- *Knowing the audience is critical.* It allows the facilitator to tailor the workshop material to suit the audience. In Barbados, for instance, the average young age of the participants required the facilitator to adjust the session on project planning and proposal development, as most of the participants had little or no experience in writing or developing project proposals.
- *Icebreaker and energizers are useful tools that help in building a rapport.* In particular, the energizer role play during the project identification session, portraying a donor and the representative of a group seeking access to this funding, generated lots of interest and animated discussions among participants. The exercise was said to be very useful, with participants being actively involved, highlighting the challenges in preparing proposals from both the funder and the group's perspectives.

- *A field trip represents a good opportunity for participants to increase their awareness of the biodiversity conservation needs.* It also allows participants to share with others their knowledge of the area visited and the challenges to be addressed.
- *Time management is important.* It is critical for facilitators to find a balance between being flexible and giving participants enough room to contribute to discussions, while keeping track of time and of the sessions still to be covered.



*Field trip activities build awareness of conservation needs among workshop participants*

## **6. Follow-up and next steps**

The national workshops facilitated greater sharing of experiences among CSOs, and participants have indicated that they were also willing to collaborate on projects.

Following the national workshop held in July 2012 in Saint Lucia, two follow up field trips were held, and there were three (3) group consultations with two groups, the Aupicon Charcoal Producers in Makote Vieux Fort and the Superior Broom Producers. Groups shared the tools to develop projects that support livelihoods and biodiversity conservation and thus enhance sustainability of management interventions.

In Grenada, participants committed to work together as a team on a biodiversity project. They identified next steps for them to continue working together on a joint project, partnering with an already registered organisation to apply for funding. They also agreed to keep in touch, at least virtually, via e-mail and Skype, before setting up a date for another meeting.

## Appendix 1: Draft Workshop Agenda

### **National workshops to build the capacity of civil society organisations to develop projects on biodiversity conservation in protected areas in the Caribbean islands**

#### **1. Workshop objectives:**

- a. To analyse priority needs for biodiversity conservation in the country.
- b. To build understanding of CEPF and other funding opportunities for supporting CSOs work in biodiversity conservation.
- c. To build the capacity of CSOs to be able to develop projects and proposals to seek support for their work from CEPF and other donors.
- d. To facilitate greater sharing of experiences and collaboration among CSOs, including potential collaboration or coordination on projects in biodiversity conservation.

#### **2. Draft agenda**

##### **Day 1**

8:30 – 9:30	Session 1: Welcome, introductions and expectations
9:30 – 10:30	Session 2: Identifying current and planned initiatives for biodiversity conservation in the country by CSOs, government and other partners
10:30 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:30	Session 3: Analysing gaps and priorities for biodiversity conservation in the country
11:30 – 12:30	Session 4: Review priorities for support of CEPF and other donors and matching these with identified needs and priorities
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 3:00	Session 5: Identifying and analysing problems or needs
3:00 – 3:15	Break
3:15 – 3:45	Session 6: Selecting problems to address in your project
3:45 – 4:30	Session 7: Developing SMART objectives

## Day 2

8:30 – 9:00	Session 8: Debrief and check-in from day 1	
9:00 – 10:00	Session 9: Identifying your project results	
10:00 – 10:30	Break	
10:30 – 11:30	Session 10: Planning your project	
11:30 – 12:00	Session 11: Turning your project plan into a project proposal	
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch	
1:30 – 3:00	Session 12: Tips for proposal writing and practical exercise to develop a proposal, using the CEPF application template	
3:00 – 3:15	Break	
3: 15 – 4:00	Session 13: Sharing, questions (including live chat with CEPF RIT team if needed), discussions, lessons, recommendations and next steps by CSOs	
4:00 – 4:30	Session 14: Wrap-up and next steps, group evaluation, individual written evaluation, thanks and close	