

News Release on the Regional Advisory Committee for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund for the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot

CANARI is the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot. CEPF's 5-year (2010 – 2015) investment strategy for the region focuses on providing support to 11 islands including Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Through this programme, grants will be provided to civil society to conduct biodiversity conservation and capacity building activities within key biodiversity areas and conservation corridors that have been identified through stakeholder consultation within the region.

CANARI has already issued calls for proposals for Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic and established a Regional Advisory Committee for CEPF (RACC) to provide an independent technical review of proposals submitted.



RACC Members and some of the CANARI team, from left to right: Elaine Fisher (Jamaica), Loiza Rauzduel (CANARI), Neila Bobb-Prescott (CANARI and RACC member), Owen Evelyn (Jamaica), L. Fitzgerald Providence (St Vincent and the Grenadines), Anna Cadiz (CANARI), Alex Bellande (Haiti), H el ene Souan (Guadeloupe), Giles Romulus (Barbados), Nicole Leotaud (CANARI), Cletus Springer (Saint Lucia), Judi Clarke (Barbados), Claus Ecklemann (FAO), Florence Sergile (Haiti), Howard Nelson (Trinidad and Tobago), Dr David Smith (Jamaica) and Alberto Sanchez (Dominican Republic). Missing: Maria Eugenia Morales (Dominican Republic), Dr Christopher Cox (Saint Lucia) and David Wege (United Kingdom).

CANARI's intention was to create an independent group to review proposals so as to increase transparency and accountability. The RACC draws together experts from the regions who have been invited to participate in an individual capacity. Collectively, the group has core strengths in biodiversity conservation, civil society capacity building, climate change, creation and management of protected areas and ecosystems, environmental and forest management in the 11 countries eligible for CEPF

support. They are also competent in the four languages of the hotspot (English, French, Kwéyòl and Spanish).

CANARI hosted a meeting in Trinidad for the RACC members on 17 May 2011. The purpose was to orient members to CEPF's strategy and investment priorities for the hotspot, to define their role and responsibilities and to develop the review process for the RACC.

Very importantly, the RACC agreed to the terms of reference for their work. Over the course of five years, RACC members will provide strategic input on priorities for investment, identifying areas for collaboration with other initiatives in the region, and review and provide technical evaluations of small and large grant proposals. They may participate in project monitoring and site visits and have also volunteered to promote the CEPF programme in the region.

Overall, the RACC felt that the meeting was very productive and that the interaction was valuable. Members felt that it was a great opportunity to share knowledge of regional initiatives and activities, to make new connections and to seek synergies among projects addressing similar issues thus ensuring that CEPF complements other efforts.

CANARI is very proud to have the RACC members on board – we certainly have a 'Dream Team' of an advisory committee!

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