



Discussion Paper for the development of the CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy- Invasive species management

April 2018

Synopsis

Caribbean countries generally have a history of European colonisation and associated monocultural agricultural systems (e.g. sugar-cane and banana plantations). This has deleteriously impacted on the region's biodiversity due to extensive land clearance compounded by the associated introduction of invasive species, like the mongoose for pest control and bamboo for riverbank stabilisation. Invasives are expected to be more successful under predicted climate scenarios for the region as they are often better competitors under extreme conditions e.g. droughts and floods.

Invasive alien species management is the subject of **Target 9** of the Convention on Biodiversity Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020). **Target 9 states that:** By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

In the Caribbean, apart from national level efforts, there has been regional leadership with regards to invasive species management. For example, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) has developed an Invasive Species Strategic Plan (2016-2025) which among other things highlights the need for funding and a lead coordinating agency. The Regional Activity Centre for Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Caribbean (SPAW RAC) and its partners have executed significant work on specific invasive species like the Lionfish. Efforts include information sharing, capacity building and networking through a regional contact list, web portal, and training workshops on collection and handling. There is also a regional lionfish committee and regional lionfish strategy. The region has also seen large multi-country GEF projects such as the "Mitigating the Threat of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean" which developed a regional invasive species management strategy. A key output from this project was the Caribbean Invasive Alien Species Network (CIASNET) and associated regional database on invasive alien species.

Invasive species management remains a key issue for the region. In an online survey conducted during the development of the 2017 draft Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund Ecosystem Profile, invasive species management was identified as one of the highest priority threats to the region's biodiversity. The draft profile further highlighted the need to "eradicate, control or prevent further spread of invasive plants and animals that are affecting globally threatened species populations" in the Caribbean region's key biodiversity areas. The draft Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund Profile further notes that regional invasive species management requires a well-planned and coordinated response including formal and informal networking, information sharing and capacity building among CSOs, scientists and Governments.

Taking into consideration the issues outlined above as well as other issues you may be aware of, stakeholders are asked to consider:

What should the CBS to showcase, state or highlight on the topic of invasive species management to best address:

- your organisation's needs
- your country's needs – where national capacity and resources could benefit from additional regional support
- regional needs

Stakeholders are also asked to consider:

- How can the CBS support scientific research and also support research and documentation of local knowledge on invasive species?
- How can the CBS promote, share and update the information in relevant regional, national and international invasive species databases?
- How can the CBS support regional funding to update or develop new regional projects and programmes to continue to address this issue?
- How can the CBS encourage invasive species management approaches that are implemented with active engagement of stakeholders to scale up impacts?

Finally: any additional issues, ideas or points you would like to highlight for inclusion or consideration in the development of the Strategy?

Bibliography

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