



Discussion Paper for the development of the CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy - Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Sectors

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Synopsis

For effective biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, biodiversity has to be mainstreamed across all sectors. Mainstreaming refers to the integration or inclusion of actions that will promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in various economic areas. These can include tourism, housing, agriculture, forestry and mineral extraction. In the agricultural context for example, agricultural policies can promote more biodiversity-friendly pest management options. Alternatively, subsidies or incentives which impair biodiversity can be discontinued. With regards to housing and infrastructure context, mainstreaming suggests a greater emphasis on Environmental Impact Assessments including the use of tools which incorporate biodiversity considerations into EIAs. Tools such as these have been developed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity. **Aichi Target 3** of the Global Biodiversity Strategy notes that: By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimise or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio-economic conditions.

Mainstreaming can also involve better collaboration between Ministries of Works and Ministries of Environment, for example roadside maintenance that does not promote soil erosion, water pollution and subsequent death of aquatic species. Collaboration within Ministries may be needed as well, for example the integration of biodiversity matters into water resources or climate change policies. Mainstreaming also applies to the incorporation of biodiversity concerns into national budgets, cross-sectoral plans and policies including, national development and poverty reduction plans.

Mainstreaming biodiversity concerns across sectors is difficult as non-environmental professionals often do not see the link between biodiversity and their areas of works or any benefits in incorporating biodiversity concerns. The strongest argument which may be used to convince these individuals and agencies is often economic valuation of ecosystem services.

Beyond the national level, regional policies, subsidies and incentive programme need to be rationalised based on the need to protect biodiversity. Regional CARICOM agencies like the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) and the Caribbean Agricultural Development Institute (CARDI) develop regional policy and initiatives pertaining to agricultural subsidies and incentives. Similarly, the OECS Commission administers the OECS Regional Agricultural Strategy. Collaboration and joint work programming among these agencies can lead to better integration of biodiversity issues across regional work programmes, policies and projects.

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 showcase, state or highlight on mainstreaming biodiversity 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 facilitate joint work programming amongst relevant regional agencies to develop policies, programmes standards and technical guidelines which meet economic needs but at the same time protect biodiversity?
- How could the CBS promote the development of biodiversity friendly national level incentives and subsidies and discourage those that harm biodiversity?
- How can the CBS facilitate joint work programming amongst relevant regional agencies to develop policies, programmes standards and technical guidelines which meet economic needs but at the same time protect biodiversity?

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

Bibliography

Caribbean Community. 2017. *Draft Synthesis Report for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) strategy for the implementation of the biodiversity cluster of MEAs.*

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