



CANARI POLICY BRIEF

No.22

Effective support for Caribbean civil society for biodiversity conservation and rural development: Results and recommendations from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund 2010 – 2016

2016

Civil Society and Governance

Introduction

The Caribbean islands are one of the world's greatest centres of biodiversity, but are also under extreme pressure from many threats, including invasive species, climate change, and habitat destruction and fragmentation due to unsustainable human development, agricultural encroachment and overexploitation of natural resources. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a global programme that provides grants to civil society to protect critical ecosystems. CEPF's first investment in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot between October 2010 and July 2016 responded to these threats and produced a broad range of conservation results in eight countries and at the regional level. Specific priorities for funding and targeted results were identified in the CEPF Caribbean Islands Ecosystem Profile. In its role as the CEPF Caribbean Regional Implementation Team (RIT), the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) provided strategic leadership that helped civil society and local partners implement a portfolio of grants that collectively achieved significant impacts for biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable rural livelihoods.

Key messages

- Caribbean civil society is particularly well positioned to achieve on-the-ground results in biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable rural livelihoods.
- It is critical for donors and other partners to continue supporting civil society's efforts in biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean islands via a coordinated regional programmatic approach.

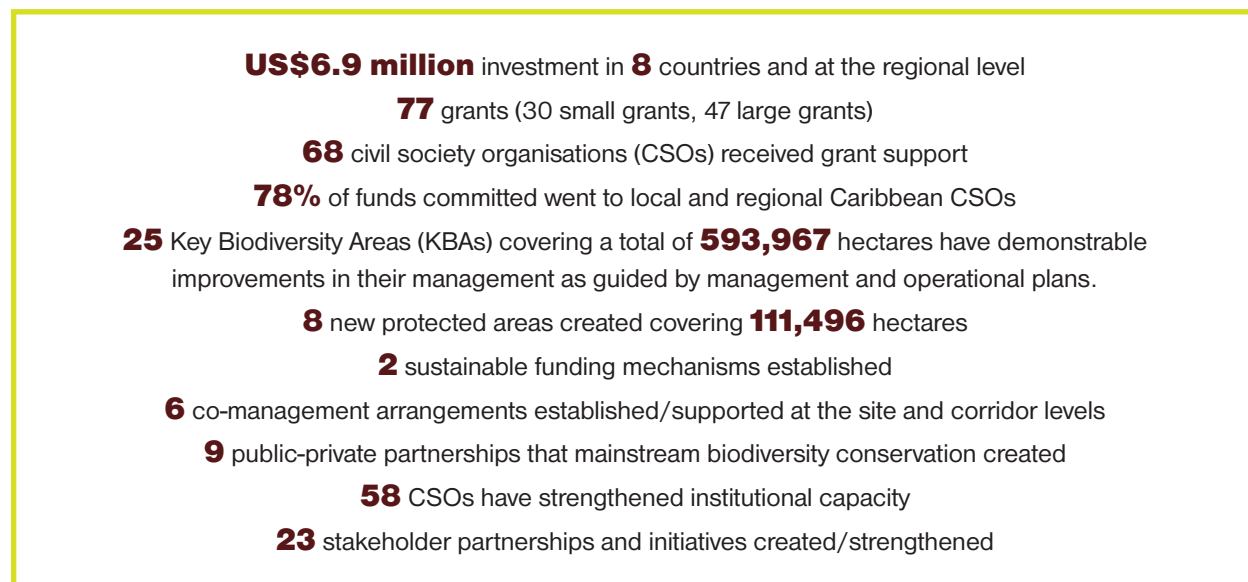


Figure 1: The CEPF Caribbean islands portfolio in numbers

Figure 2: CEPF Caribbean islands grant-making per country and region

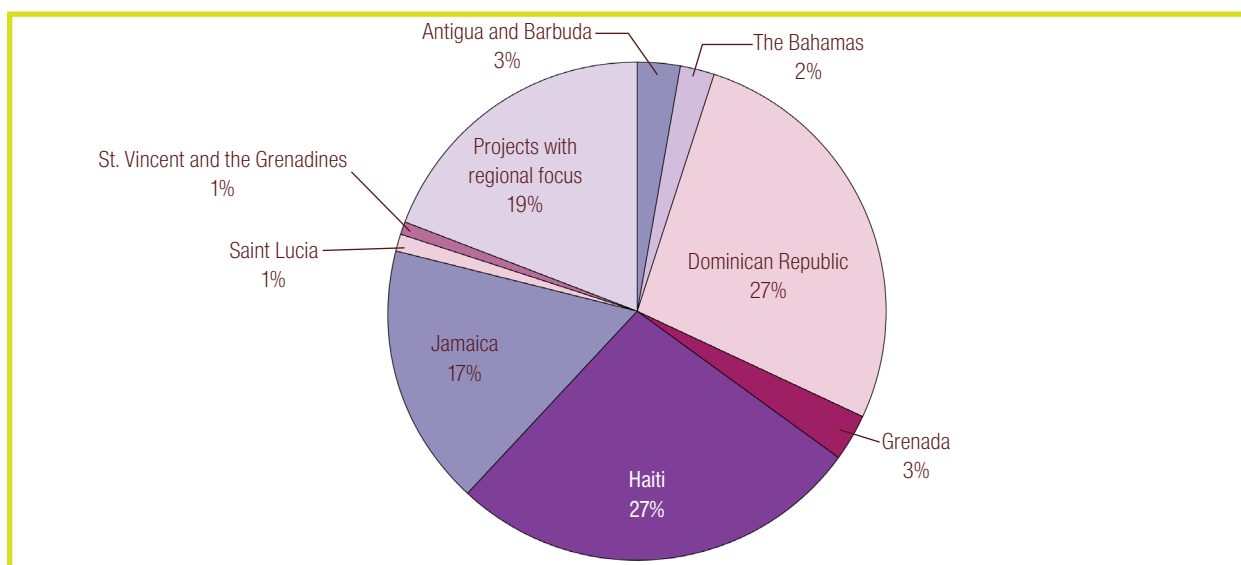
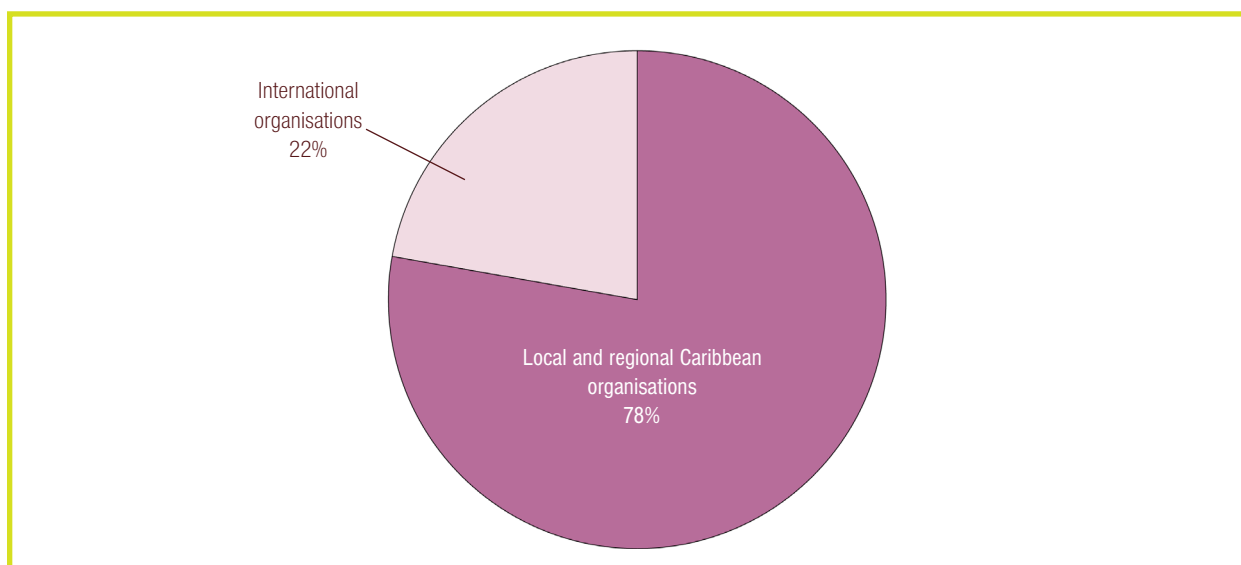


Figure 3: CEPF Caribbean islands funding granted per organisation type



Key results¹

Improved management and protection of 25 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) covering 593,967 hectares in eight countries

through the development, approval and implementation of participatory protected area management plans that engaged communities and resource users. Plans and implementation actions addressed community livelihoods, ecotourism, infrastructure and capacity building.

CEPF grantees strengthened the organisational and technical conservation capacities of community groups and park rangers. Stakeholder committees were established to ensure the active and effective participation of resource users and communities in decision-making, in collaboration with protected area agencies.

Local community awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation was raised and their capacity built to meaningfully engage in conservation actions

¹ For a detailed report on the achievements of CEPF's portfolio targets from 2010 to 2016, see <http://www.canari.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/CEPF-CAR-Final-Logframe-Report-June-2016-1.pdf>

and national dialogues. For example, in Jamaica, CSOs worked with community groups to counter a proposed port development project and potential mining concessions. In both the Portland Bight Protected Area and the Cockpit Country, community members were active and visible spokespersons about local issues and concerns.

Improved management of KBAs in Jamaica

The Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM), which works in Jamaica's largest protected area, the Portland Bight Protected Area (PBPA), developed sub-area management plans for two key biodiversity areas within the PBPA – Hellshire Hills (14,700 hectares) and Portland Ridge and Bight (43,000 hectares). The plans include a climate change risk assessment and adaptation strategy. These are the first such plans in Jamaica to explicitly integrate climate change adaptation in protected area management planning. C-CAM worked closely with local partners to establish the PBPA management committee and consolidate institutional arrangements for co-management, including new modalities for inter-agency collaboration and community participation.

Creation of eight new protected areas covering 111,496 hectares in The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and Haiti including terrestrial and marine national parks, municipal reserves and a private protected area. The Dominican Republic's first private protected area was declared and the procedures required to implement the existing legal framework for the declaration of private protected areas were developed and disseminated.

Integrated climate change adaptation in protected area planning and implementation actions for the first time in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. A climate change risk assessment was prepared for the Portland Bight and Hellshire Hills sub-area management plans in Jamaica. Similarly, a climate change adaptation action plan and strategy was included in the management plan for Dominican Republic's La Humeadora National Park. CSOs in the Dominican Republic also developed a capacity building action plan to access climate finance in order to conserve critical ecosystems in the context of climate change.

Development of innovative financing mechanisms for biodiversity conservation, including the sale of the Caribbean's first forest carbon offsets in a payment for ecosystem

Bi-national efforts to create Haiti's first municipal protected area

Communities in the south eastern border town of Anse-à-Pitres, Haiti, worked with the International Iguana Foundation (IIF), Grupo Jaragua (a Dominican Republic CSO) and the municipal government to establish the country's first municipal protected area, *Parc Cacique Henri*, to legally protect 3,000 hectares of dry forest where a small sub-population of the Critically Endangered Ricord's Iguana (*Cyclura ricordii*) is found. Endemic to Hispaniola with only four known sub-populations throughout the Dominican Republic and Haiti, the Ricord's Iguana is threatened by hunting, nest-poaching, and habitat degradation from deforestation for charcoal production and livestock grazing.

The IIF project built the capacity of young, local conservationists to support species and site management and prepared a management plan for the reserve. It also raised the awareness of the need for conservation among key stakeholder groups, including landowners, community groups, charcoal producers, local authorities, herdsman, and women's groups. Learning from the project was captured in a set of recommended procedures for declaring municipal reserves in Haiti.



Evanita Sanon, a member of the local habitat monitoring team in Anse-à-Pitres, Haiti and Jose Luis Castillo from Grupo Jaragua in the Dominican Republic measure a Cyclura ricordii hatchling in the municipal reserve. (Source: International Iguana Foundation/ photo by Dr. Masani Accimé)

services (PES) scheme which allows smallholders and cocoa farmers in the Dominican Republic to improve production while reforesting their plots with native species. An economic valuation of water resources to support a participatory PES system involving Santo Domingo's water authority was also completed, laying the foundation for another innovative financing scheme.

Dominican Republic establishes first private reserve & sells Caribbean's first forest carbon credits

The Dominican Republic established its first private reserve, *Reserva Privada Zorzal*, when a consortium of private investors from the Dominican Republic and the USA purchased 469 hectares of land which broadened the conservation corridor to increase ecological connectivity between two existing scientific reserves, Loma Quita Espuela and Loma Guaconejo. \$650,000 in private capital was invested in the reserve in the first year.

The initiative was developed by a Dominican CSO, *Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano (CAD)*, which took advantage of previously unused environmental legislation that allows for the creation of private reserves. CAD worked with communities, other CSOs, the government, academia and private investors to create the business plan, land use plan, biological inventory, and management plan for *Reserva Privada Zorzal*, which were subsequently adopted by the Ministry of Environment. These model documents and the process used were disseminated for use by other conservation-minded investors and landowners who want to register their land as a private reserve in the future.

CAD also developed a sustainable funding mechanism for the reserve through a forest carbon offset programme with chocolate making companies in the United States and Canada. The first of its kind in the Caribbean, the sale of forest carbon credits generated approximately \$14,000 in revenue in year one (2014), and is expected to yield at least \$100,000 within 10 years with farmers and communities receiving direct economic benefits.



Reserva Privada Zorzal – the Dominican Republic's first private protected area. (Source: Charles Kerchner)

Strengthened capacity of 58 local and regional Caribbean CSOs through strengthening organisational capacity via development of strategic plans, fundraising plans and financial manuals, upgraded websites and financial



CEPF grantees from the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines during a capacity building workshop on financial management.

(Source: CANARI)

systems. Capacity was built in a range of areas including: project design and proposal development, monitoring and evaluation, effective environmental communications and engagement of the private sector. Technical skills were built in sustainable tourism, field data collection and monitoring, and invasive species eradication and management.

Improved management of invasive alien species (IAS) through building the capacity of national CSOs in Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Dominican Republic and Saint Lucia to effectively eradicate, manage and control IAS on their islands. In partnership with international CSOs, national CSOs developed operational and biosecurity plans and successfully eradicated IAS from 19 offshore islands. Supporting local leadership in IAS control helps ensure long-term sustainability of efforts, cost-effectiveness, and local community buy-in.

Civil society in four Caribbean countries led efforts to protect offshore islands from invasive species

From 2012 to 2014, the Environmental Awareness Group from Antigua and Barbuda and the Saint Lucia National Trust worked together for the first time to improve their technical skills and knowledge of the management of invasive species. Their efforts resulted in the eradication and prevented re-invasion of invasive mammals from 17 offshore islands across both countries. This was done with technical guidance by Fauna & Flora International, an international CSO.

Another international CSO, Island Conservation, worked closely with The Bahamas National Trust and Grupo Jaragua to build their capacity to respectively manage and eradicate invasive species on Booby Cay in The Bahamas and Alto Velo, a small island in the Jaragua National Park in the Dominican Republic.



Lance Peterson and Saphira Hunt, two field monitors from the Saint Lucia National Trust, checking a bait station on Maria Island. (Source: CANARI)

Strengthening sustainable livelihoods in communities living in and around KBAs in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines through developing and promoting crop diversity, fruit and vegetable processing, ecotourism and beekeeping. Offering viable economic alternatives is key to reducing human pressure on critical ecosystems especially in SIDS where the socio-economic needs of families who depend on natural resources for their survival must be taken into account.



Growing certain tree species on coffee farms in Jamaica and protecting nearby forests can help control pests, thereby increasing crop production and farm income. (Source: Wendy Willis)

Improved livelihoods for local communities in Haiti

The *Unité 2 de la Forêt des Pins* National Park, one of the last large (over 14,000 hectares), biodiversity-rich forests in Haiti, has suffered from rampant deforestation. Between 2011 to 2015, a local NGO, *L'Organisation des Paysans pour le Développement de l'Unité 2 de la Forêt des Pins* (OPDFM), implemented the park's zoning plan, with assistance from the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development, and in collaboration with local authorities, international groups, and local communities.

OPDFM restored 227 hectares of cleared plots with native trees and protected 100 hectares of the local broadleaf forest. An ethnobotanical study identified and inventoried more than 110 species of medicinal plants and a garden of heirloom plants was created. Two hundred families were trained in economic alternatives to deforestation and more than 50 families now earn an income from non-timber forest products. In addition, 100 people now earn an income from activities related to forest restoration and the protection of the Rak Bwa forest.

Built alliances, supported regional networking and consolidated multi-sectoral partnerships for biodiversity which crossed political jurisdictions and language barriers. For example, conservationists in Hispaniola collaborated on developing actions to integrate amphibian conservation into management planning. A new regional network of nine environmental CSOs, *Nature Caribé*, was created. CSOs in the Dominican Republic fostered strategic alliances with local cement and mining private sector companies for conservation actions in Sierra de



*Thought to be extinct, the Tiburón Stream Frog (*Eleutherodactylus semipalmatus*) was rediscovered in 2012 in Grand Bois in the Massif de la Hotte key biodiversity area, Haiti, by biologist Dr. Blair Hedges and a local team from Société Audubon Haiti (SAH). With support from CEPF and through collaboration with local and international NGOs, universities, community groups and the Haitian government, Grand Bois National Park was declared a protected area in 2015. (Source: Carlos C. Martínez Rivera)*

Bahoruco. A multi-stakeholder conservation alliance comprising local stakeholders and the Environment Ministry was created for Bahoruco Oriental.

Mainstreamed biodiversity and ecosystem services into seven development plans, projects and policies focusing on water resources management, reforestation and forest carbon in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica. For example, an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the Cumberland Forest Reserve in St. Vincent was developed, factoring in climate change impacts on key watershed assets including biodiversity.

Recommendations

Support Caribbean CSOs in the implementation of plans and strategies developed

CEPF grantees developed action plans and strategies for protected area management incorporating climate resilience and sustainable rural livelihoods that require additional support for successful implementation.

Strengthen partnerships across civil society and with the private sector and other managers and users of natural resources

CEPF's support gave a strong impetus to civil society to create strategic partnerships including with the public and private sectors. Consolidation of these partnerships will ensure long-term conservation goals are met.

Other CANARI publications that may be of interest to you: CANARI. 2016. Effective grant-making to Caribbean civil society: Lessons and innovation from CANARI's experience as an intermediary organisation. CANARI Policy Brief No. 23. Laventille: CANARI

Encourage further knowledge sharing and regional collaboration to scale up impact

Extending the lessons learned and best practices of CEPF's first investment in the region and involving more countries such as Cuba and the overseas countries and territories will maximise learning and conservation impact at a truly regional level. Coordination with other national and regional initiatives will ensure a strategic and coordinated regional programmatic response to supporting civil society's work in biodiversity conservation, climate change and sustainable rural livelihoods.

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for over 20 years. Our mission is to promote and facilitate equitable participation and effective collaboration in the management of natural resources critical to development in the Caribbean islands, so that people will have a better quality of life and natural resources will be conserved, through action learning and research, capacity building and fostering partnerships.

For more information please contact:

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
Fernandes Business Centre
Building 7, Eastern Main Road,
Laventille, Trinidad. W.I.
Tel: (868) 626-6062 • Fax: (868) 626-1788
E-mail: info@canari.org • Website: www.canari.org