



# Improving community-based conservation and protection of marine and coastal biodiversity in Haiti

CASE STUDY #7: Innovation and best practices in marine and coastal governance and management by civil society in the Caribbean

## Introduction

Level of community engagement and socio-economic characteristics are two of the factors that contribute to the success of marine protected areas (MPAs) along with ecological considerations, MPA design, governance, and enforcement. The four organisations featured in this case study are active in two of Haiti's nine MPAs, where they work on the human dimensions of MPA management as part of strategies to improve social and ecological outcomes.

Pêche Artisanale et Développement Intégré (PADI) supports coastal and marine management in and around the Pointe Abacou MPA in the municipality of Saint Jean du Sud on Haiti's southern peninsula. PADI works with Haitian fishers, their associations and communities to improve socio-economic conditions. The Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM) co-manages the Three Bays MPA in northeast Haiti. The Three Bays MPA was declared in 2014 and is Haiti's second-largest MPA, covering more than 75,000 hectares. FoProBiM's role as co-manager includes on-the-ground engagement with local communities in support of sustainable livelihoods. Kowoperativ Apikòl Twa Bè (KOOA-3B) and Kowoperativ Ekotouris Twa Bè (KOOPEK-3B) are among the community enterprises in and around the Three Bays MPA that focus on income generation through sustainable activities that reduce fishing pressure and offer an alternative to mangrove harvesting. KOOA-3B is a cooperative of eight honey-producing associations, and KOOPEK-3B, founded by artisanal fishers, operates a marine-based ecotourism venture. All four groups received small grants under the Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF) facility between December 2019 and December 2020 to carry out activities to increase support for MPA management and strengthen sustainable livelihoods.

## The projects and their results

### **Building community commitment in Pointe Abacou**

Community support boosts MPA success, but it is not a given and, in most cases, must be cultivated. To this end, PADI used coral reef restoration in Pointe Abacou as the centrepiece of a public outreach and awareness-raising campaign to build local support for the protected area and its management and develop an appreciation of marine and coastal ecosystem services. With the active

This case study showcases the results of four small and microgrants in Haiti under the Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF) facility. The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) established the CarSIF facility to address priority needs and actions for marine and coastal resources governance and management in the Caribbean. The CarSIF small grants awarded between 2019 and 2020 are a key component of the regional project 'Powering Innovations in Civil Society and Enterprises for Sustainability in the Caribbean (PISCES).

PISCES is funded by the European Union EuropeAid programme and implemented over three years from 2017 to 2020. PISCES is being implemented by CANARI, in partnership with the Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM), the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO), the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), and the Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM), the Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT) and Sustainable Grenadines Inc (SusGren). PISCES targeted ten countries: Antigua and Barbuda; The Bahamas; Dominica; Grenada; Haiti; Jamaica; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and Trinidad and Tobago.

involvement of students from two local schools, fishers and fish vendors, PADI established twenty coral gardens under the project. The gardens produced corals for transplanting to two degraded reef sites. Three of the gardens succumbed to turbulent seas, but the remaining 17 continue to produce nursery stocks for future out planting. One hundred and fifty students and 50 fishers, fish vendors and lime producers were targeted in a sensitisation campaign rolled out in the fishing villages of Boyer, Crabier and Pointe Abacou. The project was well-received by students and teachers in the participating schools, and by the end of the project, schools in the zone that were not part of the initiative were clamouring for a similar programme. PADI is continuing its sensitisation efforts with the school children, who are now known as “coral ambassadors”.



*Students and residents of the target communities around the Pointe Abacou MPA now have a better understanding of coral reef systems and their importance © PADI*

### **Strengthening sustainable livelihoods in Three Bays through training and physical assets**

Community support for MPAs is not just about understanding the value of the protected area. In our Caribbean context, where residents of coastal communities depend directly on marine and coastal resources a part of their livelihood strategies, there is a genuine demand for income-generating opportunities when a protected area results in the modification or elimination of some economic activities or offers new prospects.

North-eastern Haiti, where the Three Bays MPA is located, has high levels of unemployment. It also has a rich cultural history and is home to several historical sites and fortifications that attract Haitian and international



*Kayaking activities during KOOPEK-3B's one-day fair held in December 2020 to promote ecotourism in the region. © KOOPEK-3B*

visitors, including Fort Dauphin on the Fort-Liberté Bay. The artisanal fishers who came together to establish KOOPEK-3B wanted to capitalise on the area's history and natural beauty while preventing overfishing and increasing the income of some of the fisherfolk in the Three Bays MPA. KOOPEK-3B's kayaking tour allows visitors to explore mangrove ecosystems and tiny islands in Fort Liberté Bay and observe historic sites from the unique vantage point of the sea. With support from CarSIF, KOOPEK-3B built changing rooms for patrons and constructed a fence around the base station. Two members of the group enrolled in English language courses, and five were trained in marketing and gender awareness. At the end of the project in December 2020, KOOPEK-3B held a one-

day fair to promote ecotourism in the region, introduce community members to the kayaking tour and showcase the physical improvements to the site. The group hopes awareness of the improvements among local people will encourage domestic tourism as they await the resumption of international tourism when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

Apiculture is another livelihood strategy that has attracted residents of Three Bays communities. The members of the eight beekeeping associations that make up KOOPA-3B turned to honey production as an alternative to harvesting mangroves in the three bays of the MPA – Fort Liberté, Caracol and Limondade. KOOPA-3B used its CarSIF grant to improve operations by constructing eight 256-litre reservoirs in the vicinity of each association's hives to ensure that the bees have a sustained water source in dry periods. Approximately 240 hives are served by these reservoirs. KOOPA-3B also developed a marketing plan and set up a Facebook page that they completed after the CarSIF project ended. Two members learned how to develop strategies to scale up the cooperative's operations.

Through a complementary project, FoProBiM provided technical training for 47 members of two of the associations that fall under the KOOPA-3B umbrella. This training was tailor-made to fill knowledge gaps that had become evident in the three years of the groups' beekeeping activity. FoProBiM also sourced beekeeping kits for the associations along with 45 hives stocked with queen bees. Barbed wire-lined bamboo fencing was constructed to prevent theft of the hives and other equipment and entry of animals. Hive stands were installed to offer protection from ants and other insects. The training and equipment provided under the project are expected to help the associations increase production levels so that they can take advantage of opportunities in the domestic market identified by FoProBiM as well as the growing international market for organic honey.



*FoProBiM works with local communities to support apiculture within the Three Bays Marine Protected Area. © FoProBiM*

## Good practice

Good practice modelled in these grants include the following:

**Connecting people with nature to build support for conservation:** Hands-on engagement was instrumental in creating enthusiasm for coral reefs and coral reef restoration in Pointe Abacou. By combining theoretical learning with practical, outdoor, experience-based learning, PADI brought coral reefs and the restoration process alive for the youth and marine resource users targeted by the project. Among the target resource users were lime producers who harvest coral. People who develop a sense of place are more likely to want to protect it and oppose its degradation. In Three Bays, KOOPEK-3B also sought to connect people and nature, but through recreation. When people experience and benefit from nature, they are more likely to appreciate and care for it.

**Climate-proofing operations:** Like other forms of animal husbandry, beekeeping must adapt to changing climate conditions in the Caribbean. Among the ways that climate change indirectly impacts bees is by affecting their food source and water supply. A reduced water supply leads to lower honey production, thereby making beekeeping less profitable. In the worst-case scenario, a colony that struggles to find sufficient water will often not survive. By ensuring that their bees have ready access to water under dry conditions, the KOOPA-3B beekeepers have taken practical, climate-smart action towards protecting their investment.

**Partnerships to build community enterprises:** Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises account for more than 80 per cent of total employment in Haiti. These businesses are vital to the economy, but their growth is often constrained by limited access to capital and gaps in the skills and knowledge entrepreneurs need in order to grow their ventures. This is especially true of community enterprises in rural areas. The small inputs provided through the CarSIF microgrants to KOOPEK-3B and KOOPA-3B can make a big difference in their operations. However, the accompaniment and support from a partnership with a larger and more established organisation, like FoProBiM, is also critical. The engagement between FoProBiM and the groups is not a one-off. It occurs as part of a system that includes follow up, monitoring and coaching. Following on from its support for the beekeeping enterprise, for example, FoProBiM, KOOPA-3B and the two associations have agreed to annual check-ups to ensure the apiaries are as productive as possible. However, FoProBiM is also managing expectations and being careful not to create dependency.

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