

***Collaborative Social Auditing for Biodiversity Conservation Diploma Course  
successfully completed in the Dominican Republic***

**Port of Spain, 28 June 2023** – One of the innovative elements of the current CEPF investment in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot is testing the application of collaborative social accountability tools and methods to biodiversity conservation. While this approach has been used extensively to support the delivery of social services, its use in the area of conservation and provision of environmental services is relatively new. Collaborative social accountability is a process where citizens and civil society actors engage with state actors in joint, iterative problem-solving to improve service delivery, governance and accountability in the conservation of the hotspot's biodiversity.

This work is being led by the Collaborative Social Accountability Team (CSAT), comprised of the Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC) and Integrated Health Outreach (IHO) in Antigua and Barbuda, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Saint Lucia and by the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) at the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in The Bahamas and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. One of the first major activities of the CSAT was the development and delivery of a university-recognised diploma course on collaborative social responsibility and the role it can play in biodiversity conservation for civil society organisations, governmental agencies and the private sector in the Dominican Republic. The course took place between November 2022 and March 2023 and culminated with a formal graduation ceremony on 1 April 2023.



*Diploma Course Graduation Ceremony. © INTEC*

Thirty-three civil society and government participants took part in the course, 20 of whom met the requirements for the award of a diploma by the end of the programme. The course focused on collaborative social responsibility and good governance, empowerment for biodiversity conservation and protected areas management, regulatory frameworks and cultural media, environmental intersectionality, as well as empowerment through sustainable tourism. Participants can now use this

knowledge to improve their work, bring about social change and contribute to strengthening the protection and conservation of biodiversity throughout the country.

In addressing the graduates at the 1 April 2023 graduation ceremony in Santo Domingo, Ms. Rosaura Pimentel, Coordinator of the INTEC Climate Change and Resilience Observatory, highlighted the importance of the training process in allowing participants to make a meaningful contribution to biodiversity protection through accountability mechanisms.

An initiative to create a "Collaborative Social Audit Network for Community Action and Development for the Conservation of Biodiversity" was also launched at the graduation ceremony. This network will strengthen local capacity to apply collaborative social audit tools for the protection and conservation of the country's Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

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Click on the link below to browse our interactive map on current CEPF grants in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot:

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