

***Strengthening conservation partnerships in the Dominican Republic:
New co-management agreement for Padre Miguel Domingo Fuertes Natural Monument***

Port of Spain, 8 November 2024 – In August 2024, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources in the Dominican Republic took a significant step to strengthen the governance of the Padre Miguel Domingo Fuertes Natural Monument (Bahoruco Oriental) by signing a co-management agreement with civil society organisations (CSOs) and academic institutions active in the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA).



Participants in workshop to update the management plan for Padre Miguel Domingo Fuertes Natural Monument (Bahoruco Oriental) convened by FUNDASUR. Credit: FUNDASUR.

The signatories to the agreement form a Co-management Council responsible for overseeing conservation efforts, implementing management strategies and fostering community engagement. Council members include two current CEPF grantees, the Sociedad Ornitológica de la Hispaniola (SOH Conservación) and the Fundación de Apoyo al Suroeste (FUNDASUR), who will serve alongside the Sociedad Ornitológica Sociedad Ecológica de Paraíso (SOEPA) and the Fundación Universitaria Católica Tecnológica de Barahona (FUCATEBA).

SOH Conservación's CEPF-funded project is focused on improving management practices in Bahoruco Oriental by preparing and implementing conservation plans for five trigger species in the KBA, including the Solenodon, Bicknell's Thrush, Cúa, Yellow Ebony, and the Red-legged Frog, and developing a Business Plan to strengthen the ecotourism services in the area. FUNDASUR is updating the management plan for

the protected area and is responsible for the elaboration of the first Annual Operational Plan (AOP) to be executed once the management plan is approved by the environmental authorities.

The 2,964-hectare Padre Miguel Domingo Fuertes Natural Monument is one of the KBAs in the Dominican Republic that have been prioritised under the current Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) investment in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot. This KBA is special because of diverse landscapes, including Hispaniola's only *Magnolia hamori* forest. It supports 26 out of the 34 restricted-range bird species on the island, such as the Vulnerable Grey-headed Quail-Dove and the Hispaniolan Amazon, as well as a variety of endangered frogs, endemic reptiles, and rare orchids. Protecting this area is vital for safeguarding its unique biodiversity.

This co-management agreement for the Padre Miguel Domingo Fuertes Natural Monument brings to eight the number of co-management agreements signed in the Dominican Republic in 2024.

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