

# Media Release

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## **EC\$14.7M Investment for Environmental Protection under the Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network (ECMMAN) Project**

***Castries, St. Lucia, January 20<sup>th</sup> 2014*** - The governments and people of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States recognize the important role that the marine environment plays in the economic prosperity of our countries.

To this end, a consortium of partners have joined together to tackle the real challenges faced by our island nations. Funding for this work has been provided by the International Climate Initiative (ICI) via The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Without dedicated focus and action at the community level, a legacy of dead reefs, coastal erosion, and fewer fish will remain for future generations. Poor solid waste disposal practices, overfishing, overuse of popular tourism sites, the threats posed from natural disasters and warming ocean temperatures are some of the factors that have exacerbated the problem.

This four year project (2013 – 2017) will invest over EC\$14.7 million, to improve fisheries and conserve and restore marine resources, while providing for sustainable job opportunities in coastal communities.

With actions in the 6 OECS countries of St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada, the project will focus on:

1. Establishing new and strengthening existing marine management areas;
2. Supporting fisher organizations and providing support for new livelihood opportunities;
3. Improving access to data and information regarding management of marine resources; and
4. Instituting sustainable funding mechanisms to support marine management as part of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative.

The responsible government agencies are the Environment Division – Antigua and Barbuda; the Department of Natural Resources – St. Kitts and Nevis; the Fisheries Division – Dominica; the Fisheries Division – Saint Lucia; the National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority – St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and the Fisheries Division – Grenada.

The six regional project implementing partners are:

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) will work on the designation of new marine protected areas (MPAs), strengthening of existing MPAs, development of a data platform for storage and management of MPA data and the mobilization of additional financial resources.
- OECS Secretariat, Social and Sustainable Development Division, will run the livelihood program that will fund projects via individual grants.
- UNEP SPAW-RAC acting through the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers (CaMPAM) network will assist with the strengthening of marine protected areas via a small grants program.
- CARIBSAVE will assist by conducting detailed livelihood assessments and monitoring programs.
- Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat acting through the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO) will strengthen fisher organizations through capacity building initiatives.

## **Media Release**

- PCI Media Impact will handle aspects of the public awareness, education and outreach components of the project.

The project launch will include an opening ceremony followed by the first project steering committee working session. Presenting during the opening ceremony will be:

- Dr. Darius Gabriel, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Production, Fisheries and Rural Development on behalf of Honorable Minister Moses Jn. Baptiste;
- Mr. Ullrich Kinne, Geschäftsträger Ständiger Vertreter/Deputy Head of Mission, Deutsche Botschaft/German Embassy;
- Mr. Francis Burnette, Officer in Charge of the OECS Secretariat Social and Sustainable Development Division;and
- Ms. Ruth Blyther, Program Director of TNC's Eastern Caribbean Program.

Thursday January 23, 2014 marks the launch of the Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas (ECMMAN) project. This event takes place in Castries, Saint Lucia.

\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\*

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