



Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 02-Feb-2021 | Report No: PIDA29499



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Caribbean	Project ID P173464	Project Name CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND – CARIBBEAN HOTSPOT PROJECT	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Estimated Appraisal Date 04-Feb-2021	Estimated Board Date 28-May-2021	Practice Area (Lead) Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Conservation International	Implementing Agency Conservation International	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The project development objective (PDO) is to improve the capacity of civil society organizations to reduce threats to globally important biodiversity in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot.

Components

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	13.90
Total Financing	13.90
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	13.90
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Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund	13.90
Environmental and Social Risk Classification	
Substantial	
Decision	
The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate	

B. Introduction and Context

- 1. The Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot is an archipelago of biodiversity-rich tropical islands that comprises 30 nations and territories and stretches across nearly 4 million km² of ocean.** The Caribbean Islands Hotspot is one of 36 biodiversity hotspots in the world. The island geography and complex geology of the Caribbean has created unique habitats and high species diversity. The region has exceptionally high plant diversity: of the more than 10,000 species found there, 72% are thought to be found on only one island. The islands are also very rich in reptiles, with more than 600 species making their home among them; 82% of these reptile species are endemic. Over 95% of the hotspot’s 200 amphibian species are unique to the region.
- 2. This Hotspot is one of the most severely threatened areas in the world.** There are 992 globally threatened species in the region due to overexploitation of living resources, habitat destruction and fragmentation due to agriculture, tourism, and urban development driven by population growth. Only 10% of the islands’ original vegetation is in a pristine state. Many root causes underlie these direct threats, including poor land-use planning, inadequate financial resources, lack of awareness and political support, weak and ineffective legislation, limited availability of information, and inefficient or inadequate institutional capacity.
- 3. The economies of these nations and the rural poor are heavily reliant on this unique biodiversity asset.** Nature-based tourism contributes 20% to 60% of the GDP of most countries in the region. This sector has been especially hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic which has brought tourism to a halt, resulting in loss of income, employment and tax receipts, hitting the most vulnerable social sectors in the region hardest. In addition, with most of their populations and key infrastructure in low-lying coastal areas, the small and open economies of the Caribbean Islands are vulnerable to external shocks such as natural disasters.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

- 4. Civil society plays a crucial role in conservation in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot.** With higher pressures on natural ecosystems and reduced funding to government agencies charged with their management, the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in strengthening the protection and management of biodiversity in the Caribbean Islands is more important than ever. CSOs support management through direct conservation action, and many have championed policy and legislative improvements in the hotspot and been drivers of change. In some Caribbean countries, these



organizations complement the limited capacity of governments and contribute significantly to the achievement of the global agendas.

5. **CSOs are crucial in contributing to the effective conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity, but their capacity to implement conservation actions is constrained by administrative, financial, and technical limitations.** This hinders their ability to contribute to conservation impact due to isolation, lack of coordination and weak dissemination of good practice. Although some stronger non-profits have advanced governance and management systems in place to contribute to their effectiveness and sustainability, the overall picture is of a sector that could benefit from further strengthening in targeted areas to support sustainability of their investments. Many of the region’s conservation groups are small and under-capacitated, and some are quite isolated, especially in the smaller islands of the Lesser Antilles and in Haiti. Many have a small number of staff, and insufficient funds to hire the staff complement needed to maintain a fully functional organization.
6. **The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) was created in 2000 in response to threatened ecosystems and limited CSO capacity to implement conservation actions.** CEPF was established to mitigate biodiversity threats and strengthen the capacity of CSOs to conserve critical ecosystems under the institutional capacity of Conservation International (CI). The mandate of CEPF is to enable civil society to protect the world’s biodiversity hotspots: biologically rich ecosystems that are essential to humanity yet highly threatened. CEPF protects biodiversity, builds local conservation leadership and nurtures sustainable development by supporting conservation strategies and providing grants to CSOs (i.e., nongovernmental, community-based, cooperative, academic organizations) to implement those strategies. Providing small grants to CSOs can be a factor to generate localized biodiversity conservation impact on the ground.
7. **Despite the recent progress, significant gaps remain in the Caribbean government’s ability to achieve its national biodiversity commitments and CSOs can help them overcome critical technical issues.** Policy and legislative frameworks often lack environmental impact and strategic environmental assessments and financing mechanisms. Access to and use of scientific data for decision-making is still limited and enforcement of existing regulations is insufficient. Lack of information and knowledge contributes to poor understanding of the economic value of ecosystem services, and financial support is insufficient for protected area management CSOs active in the region that have the technical potential to provide support on a broad array of technical issues. What is lacking is the funding to further strengthen its capabilities and scale efforts across geographies and emerging technical issues.

C. Relevance to Higher Level Objectives

8. **The proposed Project directly promotes the World Bank Group’s Twin Goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity, contributes to the WBG’s OECS Regional Partnership Strategy (RPS) FY2015–2019 Framework** by contributing to the competitiveness and resilience areas of engagement. At the global level, the Project is well-positioned to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Convention of Biological Diversity. This Project will directly contribute toward the achievement of SDG 15, dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, which



will be an indispensable building block supporting additional SDGs such as to end poverty (SDG 1) and climate action (SDG 13) in the sustainable development platform.

9. **The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Biodiversity Strategy (CBS) provides a framework for regional level assistance to Members of CARICOM in their implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020).** The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (**SPAW Protocol**) was adopted in 1990 in the Caribbean region, and entered into force in 2000. The Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, and St Lucia are all signatories. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2016) is also one of the key framework agreements relevant to the management and conservation of biodiversity hotspots. The Dominican Republic, Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, and St. Lucia are signatories of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2016) and have ratified it. Commitments included under the Escazú Agreement and CARICOM's Biodiversity Strategy (CBS) are also included in national sector plans and strategies and country governments have taken some steps to establish mechanisms to monitor progress against these sector plans and strategies.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

10. Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The project development objective (PDO) is to improve the capacity of civil society organizations to reduce threats to globally important biodiversity in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot.

11. PDO Level Indicators

- A) Targeted civil society organizations with increased capacity to reduce threats to biodiversity.
- B) Targeted civil society organizations with increased organizational capacity.
- C) Civil society organizations with sufficient capacity to participate in conservation-related networks.
- D) Priority KBAs with reduced threat(s) to biodiversity.

D. Project Description

Project Components

12. **Component 1: Increased Share of Land and Sea in and around Priority KBAs under Improved Management (US\$8.8M):** Component 1 will support a grant mechanism that focuses on building capacity of CSOs to reduce threats to globally important biodiversity in seven Caribbean Island countries. At the site scale, grant-making will support conservation actions in and around 32 priority KBAs, covering a combined area of 1,171,033 hectares. Calls for proposals will be issued in a manner to attract project ideas that will generate cumulative impacts in a clearly defined geographical area. For all grants that aim to strengthen the management of a protected area, the CSO will be asked to monitor impact by means of the Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT).



- 13. Component 2: Increased Capacity of CSOs in Conservation (US\$2.0M):** This component will further strengthen the capacity of local, national and regional civil society in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through targeted capacity development activities (such as classroom-based trainings in proposal design, project cycle management, gender mainstreaming, and managing environmental and social risks, hands-on mentoring, and development of online training materials) and dedicated knowledge exchanges. The project will design and implement the capacity building activities for targeted CSOs in a participatory way. The RIT will share the draft materials and proposed formats for their CSO review and will adjust the content and methodology based on the feedback received.
- 14. Component 3: Increased Capacity of RIT in Leadership and Coordination of CSO Conservation Actions (US\$0.7M).** This component will strengthen the role and widen the responsibilities of the RIT (CANARI) in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot vis-à-vis the CEPF Secretariat. The RIT is central because it provides strategic leadership and local knowledge to build a broad constituency of CSOs working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile. It will finance an RIT needs assessment based on which a technical assistance program for the Caribbean Islands RIT is to be developed to improve its capacity to manage the grant portfolio in conservation and biodiversity, and to provide technical backstopping to all sub-grantees.
- 15. Component 4: Strengthened CSO Partnerships for Conservation (US\$1.0M).** This component will apply social accountability methodologies and tools to facilitate partnerships for conservation. These partnerships will bring together central and local-level public sector institutions, CSOs, local communities and, where relevant, private sector actors, to co-create analyses of conservation problems and develop joint solutions. This recognizes that successful, sustained conservation actions depend upon good coordination among multiple actors, which leverage complementary skills, experience, networks and authority.
- 16. Component 5: Project Management, including M&E (US\$1.4M).** All activities related to administration and supervision of the project, communication, procurement and financial management as well as monitoring and reporting will be covered under this component. The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will be the CEPF Secretariat, under Conservation International. Under this component, communication on the project, including gathering lessons learned from the implementation will be financed.

Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts



E. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

17. The CEPF implementation arrangements are designed to build on lessons learned during the first phase, to enable continued expeditious, efficient support to diverse civil society groups, and to establish a clear and effective chain of accountability for results.
18. **Executor:** Conservation International (CI) will continue to administer and execute the project, through the CEPF Secretariat, on behalf of the CEPF donors as detailed in component 5. The project will be implemented as a Recipient Executed Trust Fund (RETF). CI will be responsible for overall implementation, including fiduciary, project M&E and implementation of the project components. The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will be the CEPF Secretariat, which is hosted by CI on behalf of the CEPF donor partnership with key staff to provide overall coordination of the project. The PIU will report to and be directly supervised by a Task Team at the WB.
19. **Regional Implementation Team (RIT):** Implementation of project activities within the Caribbean Islands Hotspot will be supported by the RIT, which will help to engage and strengthen CSOs through provision of training, technical support and small grants. The RIT will be hosted at CANARI a highly experienced institution working with CSOs in the Caribbean based in Trinidad. The RIT will report to the CEPF Secretariat and receive financial and technical support to bolster its capacity.
20. **Collaborative Social Accountability (CSAT):** Implementation of the project will also be supported by the CSAT, hosted at the INTEC, an experienced institution in the region. The CSAT will lead implementation of Component 4 in the Dominican Republic, Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica and Saint Lucia, while closely collaborating and sharing experience with the RIT, which will lead in the remaining project countries.
21. **Regional Advisory Committee (RAC):** It will be constituted by the RIT to provide independent advice to the CEPF Secretariat and RIT on the selection of sub-grant applications for award, as well as the strategic development of the project. The decisions of the RAC will be considered recommendations and non-binding to CEPF Secretariat or PIU. They will serve on a voluntary basis and will comprise persons appointed in their individual capacity representing CSOs, academia, government agencies, donors and technical assistance agencies present in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot. The RAC will provide a shortlist of selected projects eligible for funding based on independent review that will be submitted to CEPF and RIT for final decision.
22. **Donor Council (DC):** It is the governance body for CEPF and gives guidance to the implementation in the Caribbean Islands and in other biodiversity hotspots around the world. During the project, the DC will play an advisory role, ensuring that CEPF activities in the Caribbean Islands are well coordinated with those in other biodiversity hotspots, and facilitating exchange of lessons learned and good practice across CEPF's global portfolio. One level below the DC is the DC Working Group which serves as a resource to CEPF for consultation on CEPF operational matters and challenges. Neither Donor Council nor the Donor Council's Working group play a direct role in project execution. The decisions made by the DC will not supersede World Bank's guidelines and procedures for project execution, such as those related to procurement and financial management, among others.



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APPROVAL

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