

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	CAB International
Project Title:	Regional Networking and Strategy Development for Invasive Alien Species in CEPF Priority Key Biodiversity Areas
Date of Report:	30 th June 2015
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CEPF Region: Caribbean Islands

Strategic Direction: 3. NGO Capacity Building

Grant Amount: \$83,160

Project Dates: May 1, 2013-Apr 30, 2015

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

1. **Auckland Uniservices Ltd:** Successfully completed a skills register for IAS experts in the region to register. They also updated the document repository to make it easier to find documents on the site. Additionally, they uploaded all the content of their databases that pertained to IAS in the Caribbean onto the CIASNET.ORG site.

2. **GEF funded project:** “Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean (MTIASIC)”. This project offered an opportunity for sharing information about the CEPF-funded initiative but the level of synergy anticipated between the two projects did not materialize. MTIASIC project had 22 regional and many national partners in the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. These four countries, in addition to Antigua and Barbuda, were the beneficiary countries for the CEPF-funded project. Many of these partners were mainly governmental and non– governmental agencies that were also direct beneficiaries from the MTIASIC project. They were already engaged in networking both at the regional and national levels with support of the GEF project. Since the project was scheduled to close in April 2014, it was envisaged that these partners would have participated in national workshops. The outcomes of the five national workshops would have then been fed into a regional workshop that would have coincided with the final close out workshop of the MTIASIC project. This was expected to have greatly contributed to the learning and sharing of experiences in managing invasives in general. Also it would have helped and the regional training event with participants resolving to networking post event. This expectation did not materialize. This MTIASIC project was developed in a consultative manner that took more than three years to complete the project preparation. This culminated with the partners signing a letter of agreement to work with the project. However, no such consultation took place during the development of the CEPF grant. Consequently, there was reluctance to participate especially since no grant funds were earmarked for these partners to benefit in realizing their development objectives.

3. **Island Conservation:** Island Conservation contributed to one webinar on the experience of the removal of the cattle, donkeys and cats on Cabritos Island in the Dominican

Republic in collaboration with another CEPF grantee, Sociedad Ornitológica de la Hispaniola (SOH).

4. **The Nature Conservancy (TNC):** TNC was expected to contribute their work on fire and their management of learning networks; a webinar on reducing the impact of fires on environmentally sensitive areas was planned but project activities were suspended before the webinar took place.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

The above captioned project was developed on the assumption that the stakeholders that were working within the Key Biodiversity Areas in Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia and Jamaica were willing to network with their counterparts in other islands to form a vibrant regional network on IAS. This assumption did not hold true and consequently the project did not advance sufficiently to significantly accomplish any of its major expected conservation outcomes.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Conservation of species and genetic diversity in the 45 priority key biodiversity areas in the Caribbean KBAs through enhanced collaboration via regional networking, and management of Invasive Alien Species.

Actual Progress toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

Information on IAS ranging from prevention strategies and the impact of IAS on biodiversity to prevention, control and management is now available on the Caribbean Invasive Alien Species Network website (<http://www.ciasnet.org/>). This includes recorded videos/webinars and conference proceedings on how to control/manage invasive species that are having or have a potential to threaten biodiversity in the Key Biodiversity areas.

The project was intended to build capacity to manage IAS in the long term. These capacity building exercises were supposed to take place via national and regional workshops in addition to an online learning network. A poor response to the needs assessment survey made it difficult to clearly identify knowledge and attitude gaps in managing IAS and consequently the national and regional workshops were cancelled minimizing the potential for long term impacts.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

1. 100% greater access and collaboration by key stakeholders in the KBAs that have IAS as a priority to national, regional and international experts working in IAS and biodiversity conservation.
2. IAS action plan developed with local stakeholders for priority KBAs in Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaican and Saint Lucia that includes mainstreaming KBAs into national IAS strategies
3. At least a 100% increase in IAS practitioners from target CEPF Caribbean countries are members and active participants in the Caribbean Invasive Species Network (CIASNET)
4. CIASNET.ORG experiences 100% increase in hits, from 35,000 per month at the start of the project to 70,000 per month by the end of the project.
5. At least two new financial sustainability approaches adopted for CIASNET.ORG, to cover at least 50% of its operations post project in place by the end of the project.
6. At least 75% of respondents to complete online a questionnaire on CIASNET.ORG and rate as “satisfactory” or “excellent” the site’s value for networking and Caribbean-based information on IAS at the end of the project
7. Enhance knowledge management of IAS threats and biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean with particular reference to the KBAs resulting in increased access by wider national, regional and international community to information on globally important biodiversity of the KBAs as measured by visits KBA to be created on the CIASNET.ORG website.
8. Capacity of stakeholder groups working in the KBAs in Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and St. Lucia strengthened via national workshops and participation in the learning network to be effective partners to implement national and regional IAS strategies at their respective KBAs.

Actual Progress toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

1. There are very few dedicated IAS practitioners operating in the targeted beneficiary countries. Stakeholders from the key KBAs in Antigua (2), the Dominican Republic (1) Jamaica (1) and Saint Lucia (2) participated in two meetings of the network. and two training webinars. The numbers in the list serve is dynamic with new members join while some existing members also opt out. At the start of the project the numbers were approximately 240 members and by the end for the project it was approximately 350 persons an increase of approximately a 46% increase in the membership of the Carib_IAS list serve partly due to activities related to promoting this project at several regional events. However, this list serve remains a passive one-way flow of information, despite efforts to stimulate discussions. Two meetings of the Caribbean Invasive Alien Species Network (see component 1.2 page 6) did bring stakeholders from several KBAs as well as public sector organizations together and while there were discussions and exchanges of ideas at the time of the meetings, there is no evidence that they led to any direct collaboration among parties.
2. Desk review 80% completed identifying the issues with IAS in the KBAs in Antigua; Bahamas; Dominican Republic, Jamaica and St. Lucia. These plans were intended to be finalized at the national workshops. The project was suspended before this was completed.
3. The Caribbean Invasive Species Network was envisaged as a regional coordinating mechanism to bring scientists, natural resource managers, NGOs, and public and private sector entities concerned with prevention, eradication, control and management of IAS in the Caribbean together to form a vibrant proactive IAS network. The purpose was to

share information and experiences and coordinate actions in managing IAS in fresh water, marine and terrestrial ecosystems. This informal network was supported by the project: "Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean" and its main output was the regional IAS strategy. The network was intended to be largely a virtual one. The Regional IAS strategy and action plan were expected to be formally endorsed by CARICOM to give the regional network its legitimacy prior to the close of the MTIASIC project by April 2014. The process of getting policy adopted by CARICOM is bureaucratic and time consuming. The regional strategy completed by the MTIASIC project was first tabled by Trinidad and Tobago for the CARICOM agenda in 2013 was only discussed in October 2014 and then sent to the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum and the Caribbean Chief Vets Forum for action. Consequently, a regional network was not firmly in place as was expected when the CEPF-funded project started. The nature of the IAS problem demands a regional, coordinated approach that requires cooperation and collaboration among all sectors of Caribbean society. On the other hand, the MTIASIC project did establish functional national IAS coordinating mechanisms in the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and St. Lucia. These coordinating mechanisms have some linkage and strong representation by stakeholders in the KBAs in particular the Dominican Republic and Saint Lucia and Jamaica. However, despite acknowledging the utility of a regional network their participation was not a major priority to them. The project established in collaboration with Auckland Uniservices a "Register of Experts" for experts in IAS management to register on line to facilitate easier access of experienced managers of IAS to be accessed and employed in the management of IAS in the Caribbean. This facility was however poorly subscribed to, minimizing its potential impact.

4. By the end of the project, the average hits on CIASNET.ORG was close to 80,000/month. In 2014, there were 924,786 hits that accessed 319,835 pages. This corresponded to 24,308 unique visitors searching key IAS terms that visited the site and downloaded 109.79 GB of data from the site. This trend continued in the first 6 months of 2015.
5. Due to the premature termination of the project this activity was not done. However, CABI is currently making approaches to the private sector in Trinidad and Tobago to sell ads on the site to contribute to its sustainability. A project for funding is being developed with UNEP/GEF for funding under GEF 6.
6. The online survey was not completed due to poor response to join the regional network, register as an IAS expert online, and the general one way flow of information on the list serve.
7. All data held by the Global Invasive Species Database were uploaded by the site with all the data reorganized using standard search tabs to make the information on IAS in the Caribbean more accessible to stakeholders, nationally, regionally and internationally. As can be seen in 4 above this was well accessed in general.

8. Both the national and regional workshops were cancelled. The national workshops were intended to build capacity and finalized action plans for IAS in key KBAs in the respective countries. However, difficulties were encountered in getting key stakeholders to complete the survey that was intended to determine the various stakeholders' needs. This made developing a meaningful capacity-building workshop difficult. In the few instances where specific capacity needs was identified such as the eradication of the Mongoose in the offshore Islands in Antigua and Barbuda, the main stakeholder the Environmental Awareness Group of Antigua reported that they had a limited staff of three people therefore did not have the available human capacity to develop and implement a mongoose eradication programme without additional human resources being provided by the project that is threatening the Antiguan Racer Snake (*Alosphis antiguae*).
- With the limited human resources, it was difficult to plan and execute new capacity building activities. In another case the SOH capacity was built under the MTIASIC project to eradicate cats, donkeys and cattle in Cabritos but they were lacking funds to conduct the eradication. Fundraising support was raised as a potential activity of the regional network.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: NA
Species Conserved: NA
Corridors Created: NA

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

Challenges in reaching project objectives:

1. Poor Response from Key Stakeholders: the project received a generally poor response to participate in surveys, share information, or to register as experts working on IAS. A proper review needs to be done to determine why this was the case. The following are possible reasons for this:
 - a. No commitment and buy in from key stakeholders prior to project start up as a result of lack of consultation.
 - b. Perception that the project was demanding in terms of stakeholders' time but was delivering little in terms of tangible resources or benefits.
 - c. Key stakeholders are operating at maximum capacity and were unwilling to take on new project initiatives.
 - d. Some CEPF grantees found CEPF too demanding and did not want to participate in another CEPF sponsored initiative.
2. Delays in the completion of the complementary project "Developing an internet – based Networking Portal for Invasive Species Practitioners in the Caribbean. GEM# 62314" Delays in completing the experts register and the improvement of the information resources under that project contributed to an ineffective startup of the CABI project. In addition, the bespoke IT based tools that would have created a learning network on the CIASNET did not materialize.
3. Weak Regional IAS Network: As explained above, the Caribbean Invasive Species Network should have been endorsed by CARICOM providing political legitimacy and the necessary linkages with the policy makers at the national level that is a prerequisite to

mainstreaming IAS regionally and internationally. This is only now firmly on the CARICOM's agenda.

4. Lack of a critical mass of dedicated Invasive Species Practitioners working in the Key Biodiversity Areas: although one dynamic individual can make a difference and effectively mainstream the IAS issue at the KBA level to the regional and international levels, having a minimum critical mass of persons is essential if no champion exists to mainstream the issue of IAS.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

No unexpected impacts identified.

5. **CEPF grantees;** The CEPF grantees were expected to be central to the networking efforts and mainstreaming IAS efforts. However what the project offered was mainly an avenue of dissemination of information, capacity building, and the opportunity to strengthening the networking that started under the MTIASIC project. Generally, the grantees did not complete the survey forms. In follow up discussion some indicated that their information needs were adequate for their current levels of operation and that greater publicity without additional resources being made available to them would generate greater expectations that would not be easily satisfied. Some expressed that they were already stretched thinly both in terms of human and financial resources.

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned: Project Coordination and engagement of key stakeholders.

- 1.1 CABI and Auckland Uniservices baseline information on IAS in the priority KBAs updated.
- 1.2 Quarterly review meetings held by a regional multi-stakeholder committee
- 1.3 Monthly meetings held with Auckland Uniservices to collaborate on database and learning network

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

- 1.1 Information held by the Global Invasive Species Database pertaining to the KBAs uploaded to the information resources. This was approximately 200 documents. CABI uploaded an additional approximately 120 documents.
- 1.2 Two meetings of the regional multi stakeholder committee were held. The first on the 17th of June 2014 agreed on the TOR for the committee agreed to sharing of experiences via webinars. The second meeting was held on August 27th 2014 finalized arrangements for the Webinar on removal of IAS in Cabritos. EAG agreed to do Webinar on their experiences of IAS control in Antigua, in October, 2014. The regional multi stakeholder committee comprised representatives of the Environmental Awareness Group in Antigua; SOH, and Ministry of Environment in the Dominican Republic; Durrel Wildlife Trust, St. Lucia; National Environment and Planning Agency, Jamaica, Island Conservation, and CABI.
- 1.3 Five meetings were held with the Auckland Uniservices in 2013 these dealt mainly with the technical issues to get compatibility issues resolved in upgrading the CIASNET.ORG; uploading the Caribbean information onto the website; and in designing and implementing the skills register

Component 2 Planned: Infrastructure to create an enabling environment for network development established.

2.1 Professional skills database developed by Auckland Uniservices updated.

2.2 Training of CABI staff conducted by Auckland Uniservices updated

2.3 10 Capacity building events held, using online services developed by Auckland Uniservices

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

2.1 Flyers were circulated to the Carib_IASlist_serve; promotion presentations were made at the 19th Regional Meeting of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds in Grenada, July 27-31, 2013 and Closeout Conference of the project: Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean March 31- 4 April, 2014. Despite direct invitations to members of the IAS list serve (approx. 350); participants attending the 4 regional workshops CABI IAS Compendium Training (approximately 70) and the final close out workshop of the MTIASIC project totaling over 500 persons working in the region, few persons – mainly project managers - registered on the database. This is probably a reflection of persons not considering themselves to be experts in the field or that the IAS portfolio is a small part of their work.

2.3 Only two of the 10 planned capacity building events were held. The first webinar was held on the 4th June 2014 on the Invasive Species Compendium – an open access internet resource. 17 persons participated with five key stakeholders from the project countries. The second was on the sharing of experiences of eradicating donkeys from Cabritos. 7 persons attended this event.

Component 3 Planned: Mainstreaming of the IAS issues in the priority KBAs into the national and Regional IAS Network.

3.1 Participation of key stakeholders in priority KBAs in the existing IAS list serve increased by 100%

3.2 Five national workshops targeting CEPF grantees/partners and civil society groups held in the priority countries in year one to strengthen individual groups capacity to manage IAS and effectively network as part of a regional network with an effective voice advocating for mitigating the impact of IAS on biodiversity conservation. This will effectively strengthen the regional IAS Network.

3.3 Action plan developed at a regional workshop

Component 3 Actual at Completion

It was difficult to estimate the actual numbers on the list serve that were stakeholders in the KBAs. It is likely there were none or few. There was also no way of knowing at the end what were the numbers on the list serve that are active in the KBAs. The number of members is dynamic with some people joining and leaving with time. At the start of the project the number was approximately 240 and at the end of 2014 it was approximately 350 and increase of 46%.

From experience the best method of establishing a network is to work on mutually beneficial projects. In this case it was envisaged that the project will engage stakeholders at the KBA and strengthen their capacity to manage IAS while building a regional network. Attempts to establish a skills needs failed. CABI then recommend instead of national workshops national consultants to work directly with the stakeholders. This was rejected by the RIT. All other suggestions and approaches were also rejected.

Component 4 Planned: Promotion of network

4.1 PowerPoint presentations promoting the network at national and regional events (at CABI's cost)

4.2 Interested parties engaged

4.3 Sustainability plan developed to ensure funding stream for maintain network.

Component 4 Actual at Completion:

The project was promoted via the MTIASIC project in the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and St. Lucia. Meetings attended by CABI included: 19th Regional Meeting of the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds, July 27-31, 2013; the closeout workshop of the MTIASIC project March 31-April 4 2014; Policies, Strategies and Best Practices for Managing Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean; and the 7th Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum, Cayman Island Resort, July 29th -1st August 2014.

A social marketing plan was developed to serve as a basis of raising the awareness of IAS impact on the KBAs. The project was suspended before this was implemented.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

Component three which was the component where most of the budget was allocated was not realized due to difficulties in engaging with the key project beneficiaries. All the alternatives proposed by CABI was rejected by the RIT and led to the project ultimately being suspended.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

No tools or products were developed under this project.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

1. Engage the intended project beneficiaries/stakeholders during the project development stage: stakeholders should have been consulted as to their willingness to participate in and contribute to a regional network. A commitment letter should be signed indicating that were willing to participate, who will be the main contact person and what in-kind support in terms of time they were willing to contribute.
2. Existence of strong national networks is a prerequisite in establishing effective regional networks.
3. To establish effective coordination and collaboration among stakeholders concerned with the same issue in multiple islands in the Caribbean it is best to work on tangible projects that are of mutual benefits to all stakeholders.
4. Networking to solve common environmental issues requires a level of volunteerism by professionals as well as members of the community. As was experienced in the MTIASIC project the professionals involved in the management of IAS did it either as part of their official government positions or required an honorarium to work on this issue. This project assumed that these professionals would have volunteered freely.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

In retrospect, CABI should have engaged the Regional Implementing Team (RIT) seeking advice and input and tangible support in making contact with stakeholders in KBAs in a more proactive manner. All alternative suggestions that were proposed by CABI were not approved by the secretariat or the RIT. Such as hiring national consultants to do the work that was supposed to be achieved by the national workshops.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
CAB International			
United States Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS)	C	40,000US in hosting two CPHDF forums in 2013 and 2014. 20,000US in Don't Pack a Pest Campaign	This was not as a direct result of the CEPF project.

**Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:*

- A Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- C Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Sustainability was dependent on the roll out of a social marketing campaign. CABI is reorganizing its staffing in the Caribbean to ensure that at least 10 man hours (commencing in October) per week will be dedicated to maintaining the CIASNET.ORG website and to manage the virtual IAS network for the Caribbean. Also the UNEP and CABI are working to implement a sub-regional IAS project for the OECS countries in the GEF six funding cycle.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(Enter Grant Term)

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	NA			Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	NA			Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	NA			
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	NA			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	NA			

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table

