



News Release

For Immediate Release
Office of the Executive Director
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Vital Regional Land Management Project Gets Underway

The Saint Lucia-based, Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) has announced the start of a US\$400,000 Project entitled: Preventing Land Degradation in Small Island Ecosystems in the Caribbean.

The Project aims to: (a) build local and regional capacity to support sustainable land management; and (b) develop pilot demonstration activities on sustainable land management at the community level.

The countries taking part in the project include: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The project, which is being financed through a Grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), is being managed by CEHI in collaboration with the Office of Sustainable Development and Environment of the OAS, based in Washington, D.C. This phase of the Project is focused on the development of a full-sized Project Proposal which will be submitted to the GEF and the application for further GEF support is expected to be in the amount of US\$6M. The development of the full-sized project will be done through extensive regional and national stakeholder consultations, including among communities and the preparation of national reports.

An interim Project Coordinator, Mr. Cletus Springer, an International Development Consultant has assumed duties at the offices of CEHI in Saint Lucia. Mr. Springer is a former Permanent Secretary in the Ministries of Planning, Development and Environment and Tourism respectively in Saint Lucia's Public Service. He will be assisted by Dr. Christopher Cox, CEHI's Senior Programme Officer.

Executive Director of CEHI, Vincent Sweeney sees the Project as offering an excellent opportunity for the Participating Countries to address the problems of land degradation, in particular deforestation and loss of ecosystem goods and services particularly endemic species.

"This project will promote the improvement of land management practices, institutional arrangements, policies and incentives that can preserve the functioning of fragile and unique ecosystems." Mr. Sweeney added.

He continued:

"While there is a considerable amount of work to be done over the one (1) year life of this project, I am confident that with the full participation and involvement of the relevant partners at the national level and regional level, a full project will emerge that will enable the Participating countries to access additional funds (projected at US\$6 Million) from the GEF to improve their land management practices in a sustainable manner."

Further information is available through the Project Management Unit, Caribbean Environmental Health Institute, Box 1111, Castries Tel. 758-452-2501; Email: cehi@candw.lc

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