

CHM INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CHM-IAC) MEETING - CARIBBEAN REPORT

Montreal, June 13-14, 2014

*Collated by Suzanne Davis, Ph.D. Natural History Museum of Jamaica, Institute of Jamaica/
Caribbean Representative on the CHM-IAC*

National CHM experiences since the Regional Workshop for Caribbean CHMs in 2013

Belize: We have had discussions on formalizing the University of Belize as the CHM and our database manager has researched into platforms to use for databasing info for the CHM. Expected by the end of this year (pending CHM designation): a website to link current networks and national databases.

Grenada: Grenada has continued to work on its CHM through the NBSAP project. We are currently obtaining technical support from the Netherlands. Persons received training from the Netherlands and assistance will be provided with the design of the website page. We have also held discussions with local National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) and they have agreed to host the CHM for Grenada.

Our CHM is active and functioning however we need to continue updating and creating the awareness required for the proper functioning of the CHM.

Jamaica: has added to the existing content on its website and published its e-newsletter, *Biodiversity News*, with a new layout. The CHM Steering Committee is active. There is a need to sensitize users and potential users of the CHM on how to utilize our services. Nevertheless, we have grown over the past ~15 years and have met many of the CHM Action objectives in the NBSAP.

St. Lucia: has hired a consultant to upgrade its national clearing house mechanism and is in the process of completing this upgrade. It is hoped that when the upgrade is completed that the website will be hosted on the government web portal and support services will be provided by the Public Sector Modernization Section of the Ministry of the Public Service, responsible for information and communication technology.

We need persons to dedicate time to providing content maintenance to the support services provider. We also need help in regularizing our databases and strengthening them. St. Lucia will also need all the help that it can get in publicizing its website so that St. Lucians can recognize the value of its local biodiversity and its importance to their lives and how they can optimize the benefits from it.

Trinidad and Tobago: No additional content has been added to the national CHM website. The Mexican Government has provided Trinidad and Tobago with technical assistance through the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) to develop a national biodiversity information system to be incorporated into the national CHM. A database on hunting returns is currently under development which shall be posted to the CHM once completed. Staff of the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (Forestry Division and

the Environmental Policy and Planning Division) are currently undertaking GIS Training at the University of the West Indies.

Support to 5th National Report and NBSAP implementation

Belize: That process is about to start here and I believe that the University through the Environmental Research Institute, will be contacted to provide updates for the data we house and the information we have available. The process for revising the NBSAP should be commencing later this year.

Grenada: We are populating the CHM, however, we have not done much work on the NBSAP since we are currently working on the draft of the 5NR.

Jamaica: No revised NBSAP as yet. We have indicated that our CHM will play an information supporting role in the project document for both Jamaica's NBSAP and 5NR. Jamaica's project for 5NR and NBSAP has been approved but there has been a delay as we await receipt of the funding from the GEF.

St. Lucia: St. Lucia does have a very advanced draft NBSAP which does make mention of the CHM and its role in NBSAP implementation.

CHM information supports from the work of preparation of the 5NR and the NBSAP Revision will be added to the website. However, we did not undertake the optional scenario analysis.

Trinidad and Tobago: The national CHM was not used in the preparation of the 5NR. It is intended however that once prepared and approved the 5NR would be made available to the public through the national CHM.

The process of revising the NBSAP has not been initiated as Trinidad and Tobago is yet to receive grant funding from the GEF.

Capacity-building for national CHM programmes

Belize: Share lessons learnt from other CHMs in other developing country regions or best practices from other countries that can work for the Caribbean.

Grenada: The CBD Secretariat can better support implementation of the CHM programme by funding regional training that will advance the CHM on a national basis and they should allocate resources to assist with the strengthening / development of CHMs in the region.

Accessibility and availability of data is a great challenge. Other challenges that exist include financial and human resources and the possibility should be explored at making the CHM a regional initiative instead of country specific. Also the CHM, ABS CH and the BCH should all be linked at the National and Regional level to ensure it is maintenance as the repository for biodiversity.

Jamaica: More priority needs to be placed on the staffing and funding of programmes for our CHM.

One of the things we would appreciate the CBD Secretariat assisting with is the development of standardized educational resource material package (e.g. video demo of resources online CBD website and potential uses; case studies of successfully implemented CHMs). This may be useful in sensitizing different stakeholders about the CBD CHM and our national CHM through workshops.

[N.B. Caribbean CHMs were asked if they agreed with the above suggestion about educational material and sensitization. See responses from Belize and St. Lucia. In the section on 'National CHM experiences' Grenada mentioned the need to create awareness.]

Belize: Yes such packages would definitely help the process of developing our CHM, as per my comments above.

St. Lucia: The Secretariat can assist countries by continuing to provide support to national CHMs after their website is upgraded so that the CHM will be able to assist optimally in implementing the NBSAP. Assistance with further workshops in strengthening capacity in CHM maintenance would be invaluable as well as case studies of best practices and Jamaica's submission on this question.

Trinidad and Tobago: The Secretariat can provide technical support and training to improve the development of the CHM.

The major challenge has been accessibility of data and information especially the transformation into a digital format. The lack of reliable data and information has hampered the usefulness of the CHM for use by the majority of national stakeholders. Local NGOs however, have expressed their support and appreciation for the CHM since it provides easily accessible information on policy, legislation and local biodiversity in one place. Such service was not previously available anywhere else in the country.

Acknowledgment

Many thanks to CHM colleagues in the Governments of Belize, Grenada, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago (i.e. Leandra Cho-Ricketts, Simone Lewis, Anita James, and David Persaud) who made this report possible.