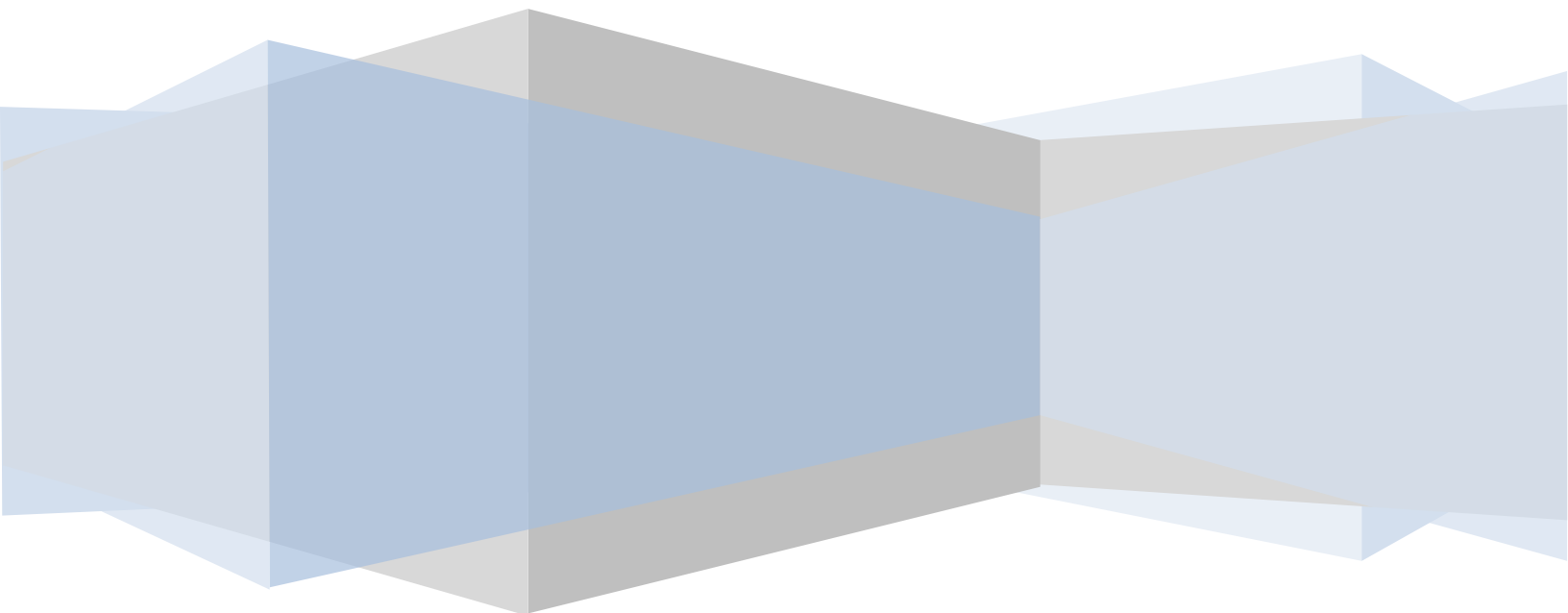


GEF/RFP Caribbean - Report on Civil Society Seminar

Prepared by Brian James - RFP Caribbean representative



6th September 2011

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The Caribbean Forest Conservation Association (CFCA) held a Regional Focal Point (RFP) Civil Society Seminar on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on the 13th August 2011 at the Caroni Visitors Centre, Caroni, Trinidad. The objectives of the seminar were to communicate to Civil Society Organizations the working operations of the GEF and benefits that can be derived by being a member of the GEF.

In attendance were the Minister of Housing & Environment (MoE), SGP National Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative, the Environmental Management Authority Representative, the Head of the Forestry Division, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and members from CFCA.

The Seminar was a great success with twenty four CSOs in attendance, representing a wide cross section of environmental NGOs and CBOs. The attendees at the seminar expressed their thankfulness to CFCA and the RFP in sharing with them opportunities that are available which can benefit them through the GEF mechanism.

The seminar took a formal format with speeches from the Minister of Housing and the Environment and presentations from representatives from SGP, UNDP, EMA and the GEF RFP Caribbean.

At the question and answers session, we gathered that CSOs wish for the creation of initiatives that will directly impact the “grassroot” organizations. Coming out of this session three main points were articulated:

1. For the establishment of a **GEF Caravan** that would engage CSOs at the community level. The caravan will visit communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago and conduct meetings with Community groups on areas of assistance, assist with project idea development and proposal development for accessing funding through the GEF.
2. Establishing an **Environmental Incubator** to assist CSOs with capacity building in proposal writing, education, training and development, mentorship, research and development of project ideas and support of technical resources in analysis and solutions to environmental problems and challenges.
3. **Capacity building** of NGOs and CBOs in the specific area of proposal writing as this area represents the greatest need.

The views expressed by participants can help guide our local GEF outreach programme for CFCA next planning cycle. In light of the successes achieved from this seminar, the CFCA plan to host similar events in the future to sensitize civil society organization of the work of the GEF.

In reaching out to communities, we hope we will have the support of the government as we move to engage local CSO's in their development and the work of the GEF towards sustainable environmental governance and management.

We wish to especially thank the Minister of Housing and the Environment Dr. Roodal Moonilal, SGP National Coordinator Dr. Nesha Beharry Borg, UNDP Representative Ms. Rosemary Lall, David Ramjohn EMA Representative and Mr. Kenny Singh – Ag. Conservator of Forests for making the venue (Caroni Visitors Centre) available for hosting the event and his members of staff in the preparation of the venue, the membership of the CFCA especially the executives and all those NGOs and CSOs who attended and made the seminar a huge success.

Pictures of the GEF Civil Society Seminar held on the 13th August 2011



The panel sitting at the head table during the questions and answers session; from left to right- Ermath Harrington (RFP Rep), Brian James(RFP Rep), Louis Guy- President CFCA, Rosemary Lall- UNDP Representative, Dr. Nesha Beharry- Borg - SGP National Coordinator and David Ramjohn- EMA Representative.



Dr. Roodal Moonilal - Minister of Housing and the Environment, Trinidad and Tobago addressing the audience at the seminar.

Sincerely,
CARIBBEAN FOREST CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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