



With assistance from the USAID, the Protecting the Eastern Caribbean Region's Biodiversity (PERB) Project commenced in October 2007. This project is due to be completed by July, 2009 and is just one of several initiatives being implemented by the OECS under a broader biodiversity programme that, in the main, provides incremental support to national efforts aimed at the conservation of biological resources within the participating countries by removing barriers to their effective management. The following article details one of several activities taking place under the PERB Project:

Team to Develop Biodiversity Curriculum Tool for the OECS

In May of 2008, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) awarded a contract to EKOS Communications, Inc. to produce secondary learning modules that include biodiversity themes.

The EKOS team consists of several leading Caribbean authorities in curriculum design, including Dr. Joyce Glasgow, professor emeritus within the Faculty of Education at the University of West Indies. She is supported by Ms. Joan Ryan, Public Relations Officer for the Central Water and Sewage Authority and Mr. Kenroy Johnson, Principal of Georgetown Secondary School – both from St. Vincent. Dr. Maria Protz, a rural development education consultant based in Jamaica, also contributed to the project. From Canada, project team members include Sue Staniforth, an internationally acclaimed environmental educator, and Rick Searle, president of EKOS Communications, Inc. With more than 30 years of experience in environmental education and communication, he serves as the project team leader.



The members of the EKOS team met with representatives of the OECS in mid-June. In addition to clarifying details on the scope of the project, the project team conducted a brief examination of the seventeen Environmental Building Blocks produced for the OECS during the late 1980s to mid-1990s. It was hoped that these building blocks could simply be upgraded to meet the needs of older students. The team also met with a representative of the Caribbean Examination Council to gain their support for the upgraded modules.

From late June to late July, the project team conducted extensive analysis of the existing building blocks to assess the feasibility of upgrading them for use in secondary schools. On August 1st, the project team submitted an interim report presenting an in-depth assessment that revealed that the existing building blocks could not be upgraded. Instead, the team recommended the creation of 4 new units which would incorporate relevant elements from the old materials. Unlike the existing building blocks, the new units would be tied to CXC curriculum (specifically geography, biology, integrated sciences and agricultural sciences).

The OECS accepted the project team's recommendations in mid-August. As a consequence, work has now commenced on the first two units. Time and budgetary restrictions will mean that only these two units will be completed February 14, 2009; however, detailed outlines will be provided for the remaining two units. Additionally, the project team has begun to pull together a small advisory committee of recognized Caribbean education curriculum experts to review and provide feedback on the drafts of the new units. Selection and appointment of the advisory committee members are expected to be completed by mid-October.

The project is slated for completion by February 27, 2009.