

OECS to Provide New Job Opportunities for North East Communities of Antigua

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(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St Lucia) The OECS Secretariat will on Wednesday (October 14th

) launch a new community project aimed at creating income generating activities for persons living near the North East Marine Management Area (NEMMA), on the north coast of Antigua.

The ceremony to launch the project is scheduled to take place at 10:00 a.m. at the Parham Fisheries Complex in the capital, St John's, and is expected to attract an estimated 100 persons representing government officials, private sector agencies, hoteliers and a number of community persons and stakeholders who benefit from or have interest in the protected area.

Officials at the OECS Secretariat are eager about the prospects of the project, which they emphasise will not only enhance existing livelihoods for low-income persons living in the vicinity of NEMMA, but ultimately, to contribute to the management of resources and creation of opportunities for social and economic development.

The project is valued at EC\$172,920.00. Staff members of the Department of Fisheries together with community persons and other stakeholders completed the project, earlier this year, in which they identified a series of potential livelihood opportunities that could be supported. These include art and craft production, tour guiding, seamoss cultivation, and boat building and maintenance. In order to facilitate community persons interested in the benefits of the project, a number of grants will also be made available for the purchase of goods and material to support their livelihood choices.

Following the launch, a team of technical officers from the OECS Secretariat will conduct a two-day training workshop for persons who have been selected to implement the community project. The October 15th -16th workshop will focus on providing skills in financial management,

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partnership building, community mobilization and other pertinent management areas.

The training will serve as a vehicle through which potential beneficiaries are identified and selected for the opportunities offered by the project.

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The community sustainable livelihoods initiative is being implemented under the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods (OPAAL) project and is the **third** such project to be launched by OPAAL. The first two livelihoods projects were launched in Union Island, St Vincent in March 2008 and Portsmouth, Dominica in June 2009.

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