



The OECS Secretariat will next Monday (June 15th) launch a community project valued at US\$133,662.20 in the north of Dominica. The launch ceremony will take place at the Cabrits National Park (CNP) Garrison from 3:00 p.m. and will be addressed by local Ministers of government and the OECS Secretariat.

The project to be launched is expected to provide a number of income generating opportunities for community persons who live in the vicinity of the Cabrits National Park. As a long-term goal, the project aims to assist in poverty reduction by providing skills and job opportunities that seek to maintain the integrity of the park as a Protected Area.

Staff members of the Department of Forestry together with community persons and other stakeholders from the Portsmouth area developed the project, in December 2008, in which they identified a series of potential livelihood opportunities that could be supported. These include art and craft production, tour guiding, food catering and boat and engine 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.

Several government officials, private sector representatives and community stakeholders have been invited to the launch ceremony.

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 June 16-17th workshop will also be held in Portsmouth, and will focus on providing skills in financial management, 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.

The community sustainable livelihoods initiative is being implemented under the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods (OPAAL) project and is the second such project to be launched by OPAAL. The first livelihoods project was launched in Union Island, St Vincent in March 2008.