

# Dominican Republic Project Profile “MITIGATING THE THREAT OF ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE INSULAR CARIBBEAN”

## **1. BACKGROUND**

In 2004 the Caribbean Invasive Species Working Group (CISWG) recommended to the countries members take the following measures to address threats of invasive alien species:

- To Coordinate and implement regional efforts;
- To implement a prevention public campaign;
- To Establish a bio-surveillance to integrate a system of pests information;
- Elaborate plans of early detection and rapid response; and
- Create a Regional Group to examine potential impact of recent species introduction with a high.

In order to comply with these recommendations five countries (Bahamas; Dominican Republic; Jamaica; Santa Lucia; Trinidad y Tobago) have been integrated in a coordinated effort in the Caribbean region to jointly address threats posed by invasive alien species.

## **2. PROJECT SUMMARY**

In the Dominican Republic this Project has as its main objective to increase the approach to tackling Invasive Alien Species (IAS) through strengthening existing national measures, and through the promotion of a cooperation framework to develop strategies for the entire Caribbean region. It also seeks to develop a National Invasive Species Strategy (NISS), which provides guidelines and mechanisms to address threats posed by invasive species in all systems (i. e. Aquatic, Marine and Terrestrial). Similarly it also seeks to create awareness about the negative impact of invasive alien species on endemic species.

Project member countries must develop efforts to eradicate and execute their own activities to raise awareness invasive species, which is done through twelve pilot Project, on Prevention, Early Detection and Rapid Response; Management and eradication of most problematic IAS.

All the Pilot Project emphasizes capacity building among government officials and other professionals as well as awareness of Invasive Alien Species among a broad base of stakeholders, including the general public. In the Dominican Republic the Pilot Project seeks the protection of endangered species; in the Alto Velo case will seek to preserve an endemic lizard (*Anolis altavelensis*) as well as colonies of seabirds (boobies) that annually nest on the island, both species are seriously threatened by the presence of cats and rats.



Figure 1. Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) invasive specie in Alto Velo (P. Taveras)

There is also a threat to native flora of the island, due to the presence of neem (*Azadirachta indica*) a highly invasive exotic species (Show in Figure 1). Baseline studies revealed the presence of a shrub of high invasive potential (*Calotropis procera*) which will include as a target specie to be eradicated (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. *Calotropis procera*, invasive specie in Alto Velo (P.Taveras)

The biodiversity of the island also is threatened by the presence of one of the hundred worst invasive species in the world, the goat (*Capra hircus*) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Goats (*Capra hircus*) in Alto Velo (P. Taveras)

All these species have become targets species to be eradicated, in order to preserve biodiversity within the island that is part of the Jaragua National Park.

The second pilot Project seeks the protection of the Iguana ricordi (*Cyclura ricordi*) which occurs in the Cabritos Island and is severely threaten by the presence of donkeys and cows.



Figura 4. Donkeys (*Equus asinus*) in Isla Cabritos (C.Rijo).

These invasive animals mainly affect the iguana nesting places, as well as

those of American crocodile (*Crocodilus accutus*). Therefore this pilot Project seeks to protect these places and increases the native iguana population. Thus, when the Project is finished the Dominican Republic will have developed enough experience to address the threat posed by Invasive Alien Species and will have contributed to greater public awareness of the issue of IAS on native biodiversity it would have also trained citizens to conduct effective surveillance to prevent the reintroduction of invasive species on sites where they have been eradicated. The country will also have a strategy for policies, information and guidelines on best practices on IAS management, eradication and control. This strategy will be a global resource that could be shared with other country, via the website of the Ministry of Environment and the links established with other global websites.

### **3. COMPONENTS**

The Project has the follow components:

1. Develop a National Invasive Species Strategy (NISS).
2. To establish a Caribbean framework of Cooperation and Strategy in the Caribbean Region.
3. Information and Knowledge Generation, Management and Dissemination.
4. Prevention introduction of IAS in terrestrial, freshwater and marine system.
5. Early detection Rapid Response and Control of IAS impacts in terrestrial, marine and freshwater system.

#### **Component 1**

Currently, Dominican Republic is in the process of preparing the advertisement to recruit a consultant that will be responsible for preparing the National Strategy for Invasive Alien Species with clear terms of reference. This activity will be implemented in a participatory manner.

#### **Component 2**

Dominican Republic has designed to Ms. Natalia Ruiz and Catalina Jacquez to work in the regional strategy on freshwater and marine system and, the National Project Coordinator to work the terrestrial system aspect. Work will continue in St Lucia from 11 to 14 October, 2010.

#### **Component 3**

This component is undertaken by the Vice ministry of Environmental Education, and currently the Communication Education Public Awareness Plans is under preparation and will be implemented including formal and non formal methodologies.

#### **Component 4**

This component is being lead by the Vice ministry of Marine Affairs, who currently are monitoring who are currently monitoring the places where lionfish and *Claria* have sighted, with the collaboration of other governmental Agencies (e.g. National

Aquarium, National Council for Fishery and Aquaculture), and several NGOs as FUNDEMAR and Reef Check International.

## **Component 5**

This component is being implemented by the Vice ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity.

We have designed methodologies for baseline studies for the two pilot projects, and eradication methodologies. The baseline studies have been initiated in Alto Velo.

### **Activities of the Project to be completed in next five months**

- To complete Critical Situation Analysis, summarizing baseline referred to invasive species and public awareness on IAS in the Dominican Republic..
- Two workshops with the consultant and the National Steering Committee to discuss a draft NISS.
- Complete Base line studies at the pilot sites.
- Complete the Communication Education and Public Awareness.
- Publication Awareness brochures on IAS.

### **In Dominican Republic the project is being executed by:**

#### **Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources**

Presidente González No. 15 La Cumbre Building

Naco, Santo Domingo,

Dominican Republic

Tel: (809) 567-4300

Website: <http://www.ambiente.gob.do/>

#### **Contact:**

National IAS Coordinator

#### **Carlos Rijo**

Viceministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity

Ave. Máximo Gómez esq. Paseo de los Reyes Católicos

Tel: (809)472-4204 ext. 232

e-mail [carlos.rijo@ambiente.gob.do](mailto:carlos.rijo@ambiente.gob.do)

