

for stakeholders to present and discuss their ideas on topics related to biodiversity conservation and valorisation in European overseas.

The main goal of the event is to provide an overview of the prospects for green and blue development in ORs and OCTs based on the high biodiversity of these (sub)tropical European entities. In this sense, the project has a two-fold purpose: i) conserve the high biodiversity for future generations; and ii) ensure biodiversity becomes an added-value asset for sustainable development.

The specific objectives of the conference are to:

- Present the NetBiome-CSA project to participants as well as its progress to date;
- Present case studies on the socio-economic valuation of biodiversity in ORs and OCTs;
- Present and discuss the most pressing challenges to biodiversity conservation and management in ORs and OCTs identified through an iterative exercise with a wide stakeholder base;
- Create multidisciplinary workgroups focused on addressing those challenges;
- Obtain guidance from international experts on innovative ideas for boosting sustainable development derived from high biodiversity.

Participants will include a wide range of entities related to tropical and subtropical biodiversity, covering all the levels of the quadruple helix and including experts and representatives of international institutions and organizations.

6. COORDINATING EFFORTS

6.1. BEST III INITIATIVE

The Regional Fund for Science (an autonomous service of the Regional Government of the Azores) is coordinating the Macaronesian Hub of the BEST (a voluntary network for Biodiversity protection and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas) Team. This is a partnership set up in a successful bid coordinated by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) to the call for tender from the European Commission in the context of the BEST Preparatory Action. The contract was signed on December 2013 and will run for 4 years.

The call "Measures towards sustaining the BEST preparatory action to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services in EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories" already included NetBiome-CSA as a desirable member of the Steering Committee of the BEST Team. Having the coordinator of NetBiome-CSA as one of the BEST III consortium partners will increase the links between both projects, creating synergies that are critically needed in the field of biodiversity research and conservation on Europe's overseas entities.

6.2. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE, GUADELOUPE, 22 TO 25 OCTOBER 2014

The Regional Council of Guadeloupe, the French Ministries of Overseas Entities and of

Environment, the European Commission, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), will organize the "International Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change: from Strategies to Action" to be held in Guadeloupe from 22 to 25 October 2014.

This high-level meeting follows one held in July 2008 in the island of La Réunion, under the French Presidency of the European Union. It aims to assess, six years after its adoption, the implementation of the "Message from Reunion Island"^[1] and define a new roadmap and priorities for action.

The coordinator of NetBiome-CSA is involved in the preparation of this International Conference from the beginning through a participation to the Conference's Steering Committee, ensuring that both initiatives are complementary and that the maximum synergies can be created. As a practical first step, the Fall Coordination Meeting of the NetBiome-CSA consortium has even been relocated to Guadeloupe, to allow the partner's participation on both events. The framing of NetBiome-CSA's workgroup activities in the context of the technical workshops planned in the Guadeloupe Conference is also being envisaged.

[1] Message from the Conference "The European Union and its Overseas Entities: Strategies to counter Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss", Reunion Island, 7-11 July 2008



CONTACT US

PROJECT COORDINATOR JOSÉ M.N. AZEVEDO
 Fundo Regional para a Ciência (FRC), Azores, Portugal
 Rua do Mercado, 21, 9500-326 Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal
 Tel. (+ 351) 295 401 117 . Fax. (+ 351) 296 288 686
 Jose.MN.Azevedo@azores.gov.pt

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1. BACKGROUND

The EU overseas entities are well-known hotspots of terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity. They support unique ecosystems that are home to an estimated one-third of the globally threatened species, including many endemic species. While ecotourism and fisheries activities illustrate an example of the critical role of biodiversity in supporting sustainable development in the regions, the EU appreciates the importance of upholding access to maintained fisheries grounds, marine and terrestrial genetic resources, mineral exploration and a foothold in the high seas in three oceans. However, diverse direct human pressures, natural hazards and/or climate change contribute to the progressing decline of their extraordinarily rich biodiversity.

NetBiome-CSA starts from an existing biodiversity research partnership based on Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), focused on financing high quality research. The project takes on the challenge of mobilizing further stakeholders at all the levels of the quadruple helix (knowledge institutions, enterprises, government and civil society) in order to identify, and then to address, perceived priority challenges. The aim is to conciliate conservation and sustainable management of tropical biodiversity with the sustainable

FACTS AND FIGURES

PROJECT NAME: Strengthening European research cooperation for smart and sustainable management of tropical and subtropical biodiversity in outermost regions and overseas countries and territories

PROJECT ACRONYM: NetBiome-CSA
FUNDING SCHEME (FP7): Coordination and support action, FP7ENV-2013

SPECIFIC TOPIC: Mobilising environmental knowledge for policy and society Subtopic g) Research partnerships to sustainably manage the biodiversity in EU Outermost Regions (OR) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT)

EU FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION: € 999,615
DURATION: 36 months

START DATE: May 2013

NUMBER OF PARTNERS: 13

NUMBER OF REGIONS AND TERRITORIES: 7 [from tropical and subtropical areas]

COORDINATOR: FRC, Azores, Portugal

development of Europe's regions and territories, based on the benefits from high biodiversity. In doing so, NetBiome-CSA will facilitate improved knowledge transfer and uptake, provide appropriate tools and models to manage information and data for policy makers and raise awareness of natural resources, including raw materials.

Through a participative process the objective is to mobilise stakeholders, their knowledge and resources for initiatives such as policy and priority analysis, multi-stakeholder dialogues, exchange of good practices, training and issuing of recommendations. The project activities will contribute to:

- promote proper research and innovation governance;
- provide the basis for increased research efforts and excellence;
- strengthen links between science, policy and business;
- foster evidence-based policy and improve knowledge, good practice and technology transfer;
- improve the uptake in both directions, i) research results by biodiversity actors and stakeholders, and ii) knowledge on biodiversity's actors and stakeholders (including traditional knowledge) by scientists;
- develop innovative biodiversity management tools;
- improve visibility of ORs and OCTs, their specificities and originalities, and the uptake of their good practices and expertise;
- develop international cooperation and export EU expertise to third countries from ORs and OCTs, acting as EU active frontiers;
- give a tropical dimension to Europe and confer upon Europe a particular responsibility towards its ORs and OCTs;
- establish a sustainable platform which acts as an European focal point for tropical and subtropical biodiversity.

2. STATE OF THE ART

The NetBiome-CSA is now at its cruise speed with its first deliverables already submitted and the work running as planned.

The Advisory Board and the Stakeholders Panel has been set-up. The stakeholder's database contains the information of 134 institutions (key actors, projects) that were asked to contribute to the project by answering an online questionnaire. The goal was to identify some of the key challenges

in the field of biodiversity management in support of sustainable development in ORs and OCTs.

Some of the information gathered through the questionnaire is being used to identify and map the challenges, and continued with the process of consulting the Stakeholder Panel to select the 4 challenges that will guide most of the work for the next months. The first round of answers has already been received; the next round is currently ongoing. This process is a bottom-up approach, integrating viewpoints from the various geographical contexts and areas from the quadruple helix. In parallel, existing evidence on the socio-economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services in ORs and OCTs has been collected.

The results of both tasks - proposed challenges and identified valuation studies in ORs and OCTs - will be presented at the first NetBiome-CSA International Conference (see 5.). Furthermore, the proposed challenges will be discussed and approved during the referred conference to address them in detail and explore future opportunities.

3. EXTERNAL SUPPORT

The NetBiome-CSA integrates external advice from various sources and with multiple objectives. These different experts are formally collaborating with NetBiome-CSA's work especially through the participation on the Advisory Board (AB) and the Stakeholders Panel (SP).

ADVISORY BOARD

The AB role is to provide advice and shape the research agenda of NetBiome-CSA, ensuring that international decision makers' views and needs are taken into account throughout the duration of the project. This procedure will guarantee an effective two-way communication and also assist the dissemination of the results generated by the research effort.

The AB is composed of five independent external experts from the international science and policy context:

- António Domingos Abreu- Environmental Consultant for the Government of Angola and the African Development Bank;
- Carole Martinez- IUCN Program Coordinator for EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories;



- Colin Hindmarch- Independent Ecological Consultant;
- Richard Farman- Director of the "Aquarium des Lagons de Nouvelle Calédonie";
- Stephen Hawkins- Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Professor of Natural Sciences of the University of Southampton and Director of the Marine Biological Association (MBA) of the UK.

STAKEHOLDERS PANEL

The SP is at present composed of 52 members from different branches of the quadruple helix coming from participating partner regions, third countries or regional neighbours, including representatives of relevant organizations at European, national and local level in the field of tropical and subtropical biodiversity.

The main tasks of the SP are to:

- Help with the identification and mapping of the most pressing R&D challenges for biodiversity management in support of sustainable development in ORs and OCTs;
- Review the first draft of the policy briefs and research recommendations that will be among the main deliverables of the project;
- Identify good practices for the preservation of tropical and subtropical biodiversity in their local contexts and contribute to their discussion.

4. ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

In order to achieve the main aim of the project (strengthen research partnerships and cooperation for smart and sustainable management of tropical and subtropical biodiversity in ORs and OCTs) a bottom-up

process was initiated to identify 4 common pressing challenges in conciliating sustainable development with conservation of tropical Biodiversity and what is needed to be done to improve the policy landscape; and strengthen research and innovation activities, and collaborations.

These challenges are being identified by means of 3 levels/sources of information:

- A top-down analysis: a literature review and analyses of existing strategic frameworks was conducted.
- A bottom-up survey: the answers to a questionnaire that was broadly sent in September 2013 to biodiversity stakeholders of the European overseas and neighboring third countries, were analyzed and linked to the literature analysis.
- An expert consultation: Stakeholder Panel's legitimacy and expertise is presently being consulted through an iterative process to fine-tune and sort out previously analyzed information (level i and ii). The findings were organized in a unique matrix, including a common language glossary and an inclusive preliminary strategic filter. This iterative consultation process aims to identify the 4 common challenges to be discussed during the conference, and addressed by the NetBiome-CSA consortium through the workgroup activities.

The final decision on the challenges will be discussed and agreed during a session organized as part of the upcoming International Conference (see 5.). Specific workgroups will be constituted to address each of the challenges through networking activities during dedicated workshop sessions.

The first workshop will be organized as a continuation of the conference, during a full day, combining Interdisciplinary challenge-specific workgroups and gathering key experts from various disciplines, regions and sectors. Under the responsibility of a facilitator a sound analysis of each challenge will be conducted to define the context and specific objectives, as well as problems (research gaps and strategies, knowledge and best practice transfer, policy formulation and implementation), with the aim of producing specific recommendations for different target audiences.

By the end of the project, this participatory process (multistakeholder and transregional dialogue) carried out for each challenge during the successive workshop activities (such as email exchange, online meetings, online review of documents), will produce policy briefs with recommendations for researchers and policy makers at local, regional, national and European level.

5. NETBIOME-CSA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: "Boosting sustainable development from high biodiversity: Prospects for green and blue growth in Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)"

The NetBiome-CSA project is organising its first International Conference on the 27th of May 2014 in Gran Canaria Island, hosted by the Oceanic Platform of the Canary Islands (PLOCAN). The International Conference is one of the several activities organised by the project that will take place on the last week of May 2014, and will be an excellent opportunity