



Restoration of Key Biodiversity Areas of St. Maarten

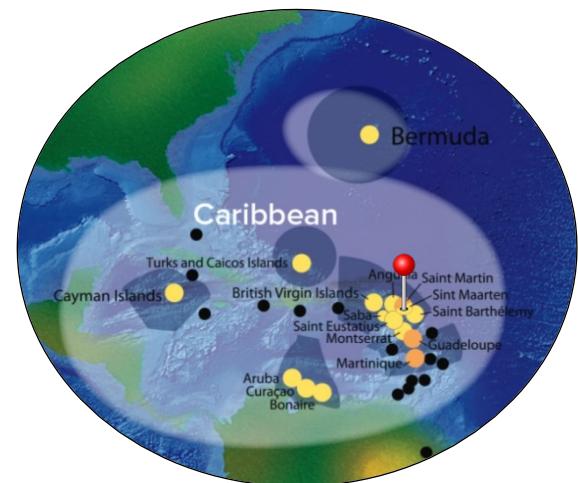
Targeted territory: Sint Maarten

Total project budget: 49,945 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 49,945 Euros

Duration: July 2017 – March 2018 (9 months)

Lead organisation: Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC)



Background:

Sint Maarten is the most densely populated island in the Caribbean. Increasing human pressures, as a result of the development of the tourist industry, have accelerated the loss of biodiversity in recent decades. Few undeveloped sites remain, and many of those that do require restoration in order to maximize their biodiversity and ecological value. Environmental appreciation is increasing as citizens realize the significance of what has been lost, therefore it is a pertinent time to capitalize upon this growing awareness, build pride in natural heritage and formalise agreements with landowners to restore and preserve these sites.

Description of the Project:

The project will restore coastal and terrestrial biodiversity by planting native tree species at three ecologically degraded sites: Little Key (coastal mangrove wetland), Emilio Wilson Estate (montane dry forest) and Seaside Nature Park (coastal terrestrial scrub). Once planted the saplings will be monitored and cared for, with long-term management of the sites formalized through written agreements with the appropriate stakeholders.

A citizen-science initiative to involve student volunteers in the restoration work such as site preparation, planting, mulching, watering, and monitoring survivorship of terrestrial restoration areas will help to develop local capacity and encourage support. In addition a short interpretive nature trail will be established at Emilio Wilson Estate.

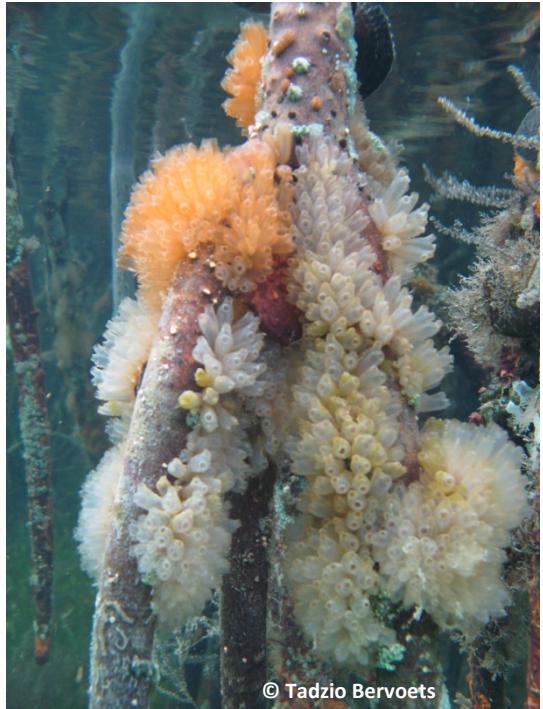


Intended results:

- Increased levels of biodiversity of native plant species and carbon sequestration at the three restoration sites.
- Increased local capacity for native plant restoration.
- Increased support in the territory for the establishment of protected areas and protection of biodiversity.



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