



Environment Division's Communication Strategy [Plan] for Effective Environmental Management

*A plan for promoting the importance of Biodiversity, Climate Change
and Sustainable Land Management in Antigua and Barbuda
2013 - 2018*

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Foreword

The need for effective environmental management is a critical agenda item on the international and by extension the national arenas. Antigua and Barbuda, as a party to a number of multilateral environmental agreements with various national obligations regarding the environment, is perfecting existing and new steps while implementing these requirements effectively. The Environment Division, established in 1997, was developed as part of this effort to effectively manage the environment while meeting the country's obligations to all multilateral environmental agreements and pursue the implementation of their objectives. In pursuit of these objectives specifically of the UN Conventions of Biological Diversity, Climate Change, and Desertification, the Environment Division, in recognizing the importance of efficient communication, has designed this Communication strategy to pool together the resources and work programs of the respective Conventions for mass dissemination. This five year strategy will in each year highlight the priorities of the Division in relation to the aforementioned Conventions in a systematic manner.

Given the limited size of the Environment Division and the allocated budget, since its inception, efforts towards implementation of all MEAs are strategically addressed through a variety of environmental projects. Of critical importance to this current undertaking is the GEF full size Sustainable Island Resource Management Mechanism (SIRMM) Project. The SIRMM is the largest multisectoral project executed by the Division and is currently being executed as part of the GEF 4 Cycle. This Project has yielded many national outputs and through collaboration with other environmental projects, has stimulated wide consideration for environmental conservation and sustainable development. As a follow up on the success of this process the Communication strategy emphasizes the outcomes of the SIRMM project as it addresses many components of biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management.

Central to the communication Plan is the use of the Botanical Gardens as an inspirational space for learning and recreation. The Botanical Gardens is located in the outskirts of the City of St. John's, making it easily accessed by various members of the public. The office of the Division will be relocated to the Gardens, which will assist with ease of the anticipated necessary renovations.

The communication strategy anticipates a permanent exhibit of the various Conventions and projects including national outputs. This exhibit will be within the Botanical Gardens which will be enhanced to facilitate improved access and displays of green technology, exhibition stalls of projects and environmental issues. Moreover, this design will facilitate an afterschool program, and enable members of the private sector, including tourists, to explore and possibly host educational workshops.



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1 Introduction

Antigua and Barbuda is party to a number of multilateral environmental agreements with various national obligations. In pursuit of the objectives of these environmental agreements, particularly the UN Conventions of Biological Diversity, Climate Change, and Desertification, the Environment Division has designed this Communication strategy to pool together the resources and work programs of the respective Conventions for mass dissemination. The strategy will be implemented over a 5-year period and will include yearly reviews in accordance with the priorities of the Division in relation to the aforementioned Conventions in a systematic manner.

The Environment Division continues to execute and implement a number of environmental projects with a strategic aim of meeting the objectives of the various Conventions as well as other regional and bilateral obligations. This Communication strategy will convey the priorities of the government as well as outputs and impacts of these environmental projects, funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and other funding agencies in collaboration with the government. An example of the outputs that will be highlighted in the strategy is The GEF full size Sustainable Island Resource Management Mechanism (SIRMM) Project. This is the largest multisectoral project executed by the Division during GEF 4 Cycle. This Project has yielded many national outputs and through collaboration with other environmental projects, has stimulated much consideration for environmental conservation and sustainable development. To ensure the sustainability of these successes, the strategy is designed to establish a long term in situ display of information and pilots that represent each of the Conventions, their objectives and national outputs.

The centerpiece of this strategy is the establishment of the Botanical Gardens as a place where members of the public may leisurely observe demonstrations of green technology and information related to the Conventions as well as national efforts of implementation. The Botanical Gardens which was established under the Botanical Gardens Act many years ago (June 27th 1900) is located in the outskirts of the City of St. John's and is easily accessible, particularly by tourists from the cruise ships. Additionally, there are numerous schools and commercial entities in proximity to the area. The area is ideally suited for short trips without the need for transportation. Where transportation is required, parties may charter a government bus or fuel efficient vehicles that utilize electric or ethanol based fuels.

The Botanical Gardens occupies just over 5 acres of land, and is governed by the 1989 amended Botanical Gardens Act which gives administration of the area to the Ministry of Agriculture and its Minister. As part of this Communication plan, the Gardens will be enhanced and managed as an exhibition area that provides an inspirational space for learning and recreation as highlighted in *Figure 1*. The current landscape of the site is

such that there will be a need for renovation in order to implement the plan in its entirety.

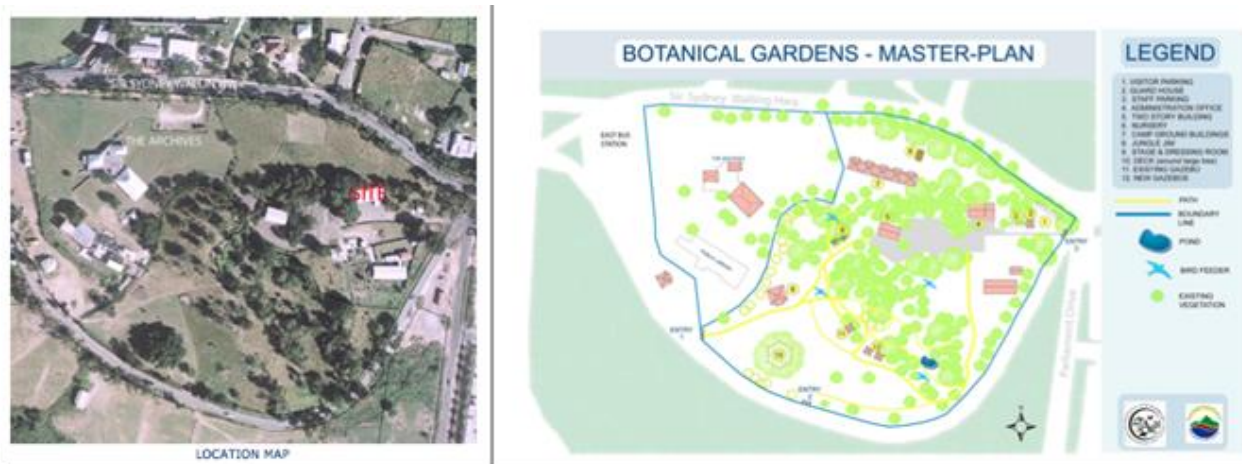


Figure 1: Site Plan of Botanical Gardens



Figure 2: A Collage of images to illustrate the type of modifications to secure Botanical Gardens

1.1 Purpose

The approach in developing the strategy was adopted as a means to effectively utilize the current capacity of the Environment Division, maximize resource utilization and reduce the risk of media fatigue of a relatively small population. The Environment Division which was established as a small unit currently hold 6 technical officers each with many and varied responsibilities. The technical staff is supported by a small administrative and clerical staff who assist in the daily operations of the Division in addition to assisting with the execution of projects. It is envisaged that this Plan will



provide a systematic approach to conveying key messages on biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable land management to the population of Antigua and Barbuda as well as regionally and internationally.

This strategy also incorporates the suggestions from the various conventions on the issues of gender and families in the education and management of biodiversity and other environmental issues.

1.2 Objectives

The main focus of the Plan is to create visible landmarks that will educate and garner support for implementing activities towards environmental conservation and sustainable development. This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- To increase public awareness of the environment and in particular on the environmental conventions, their objectives and national outputs;
- To create permanent exhibitions for outputs addressing Biodiversity, Climate Change adaptation and Mitigation technology as well as sustainable land management;
- To create a focal access point for members of the public to observe issues related to Environmental Management, including those with limited mobility;
- To be used as a guide in developing the work program for the EcoZone Summer Camp and the Environment Division's After School Program;
- To illustrate stakeholder engagement activities
- To guide, as necessary, the various means of communication to enhance visibility of the Government and the outputs of project activities in the media as it relates to an awareness of proper environmental management.
- To monitor and evaluate performance of the plan.
- To guide the staff of the Environment Division on communicating to the public, the 3 key principles of Environmental management



1.3 Target Audience

The Communication Plan is designed to facilitate the flow of information to specific target audiences in a sustained way. This plan provides the foundation for a sustained educational program that will be delivered from the Botanical Gardens based on targeted audiences. Educating all members of the public is critical when gathering support for implementing activities towards environmental conservation and sustainable development. To this end, the Environment Division has targeted the following groups:

- *Students of all ages* - the Division has engaged the participation of both primary and high school students through its Environmental Cadet Program in a wide range of environmental activities and will continue to do so.
- *Teachers & Educators* – Through the Cadet Program, teachers are guided to important principles of proper environmental management.
- *Persons with limited mobility*– The Plan highlights the enhancement of the Gardens to accommodate their entry and participation in observing environmental management issues
- *Professional adults*- the City of St. John's, which houses a large portion of the financial industry and business entities is a large target audience. The goal is to bring awareness of best practices, new technologies to these professionals and provide information on the Conventions for good decision-making and strategic policy guidance; the Gardens will be available for workshops and meetings for a fee.
- *Visiting Tourists* – Antigua and Barbuda prides itself as a tourist destination and the Communication Plan endeavours to complement and enhance the national tourism product and highlights the value of our biodiversity and ecosystems to this market.
- *Other members of the public* – through the use of various mediums the three principles of environmental management will be disseminated.



2 Messages & Activities

The Environment Division focuses on three principles for effective environmental management which aligns with the three main UN environmental Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification. The Communication Plan is critical to the successful management, implementation and strengthening of the Sustainable Island Resource Management Mechanism (SIRMM) as a primary method of preserving biodiversity and conserving valuable natural resource assets in Antigua and Barbuda. In light of this, the Plan incorporates a strong promotion of the SIRMM Outcomes to gain public and political support, which is vital for behavioural change in adapting to climate change.

The SIRMM Project played a catalytic role in developing and implementing a comprehensive cross-sectoral ecosystem approach and a strategy for Sustainable Island Resource Management (SIRM) that provides for ecosystem functionality and biodiversity conservation. This was achieved within a landscape that enhances sustainable livelihood options, sustainable land management through the development and enactment of a National Land Use Plan and the provision of opportunities for sustained economic development. SIRM also entailed elements of capacity building by providing training on technology, namely GIS, that critical for policy makers in environmental management. Environmental challenges and possible solutions were brought to the forefront through a series of video documentaries, public service announcements (PSAs), posters and leaflets, field trips and media commentary.

Inspired by this, the Plan will focus on building public confidence in the SIRM approach and its role in environmental and sustainable development. SIRM created an enabling environment for an ecosystem based approach through stakeholder engagement activities and demonstration activities of efficient environmental management. The Environment Division focuses on three principles for environmental management, namely conservation of biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable land management. As such, the Botanical Gardens will be used to exemplify these principles through exhibition stalls as well as hosting activities.

2.1 Strategy and Approach

The main strategy for the plan is to inform, sensitize and build support for the SIRMM outputs that addresses the conservation of national biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation and sustainable land management through the use of a coordinated set of communication initiatives. Pivotal to this strategy is the nurturing of a long-term relationship with key audiences in order to develop trust and gain credibility



for environmental management leading to behavioural change among users and support for developments at the Botanical Gardens.

The national GEF projects and enabling activities has focused on, particularly through its demonstration projects, the need for developing and enhancing sustainable livelihoods. The Environment Division intends to publicize, host classes and use the aforementioned displays to demonstrate ways that individuals can provide for themselves and their families. The presentation of information during classes will be most conducive to encourage the participation of both parents and children. To assist with this endeavour, the Division will be partnering with faith based/ community based organizations to design and implement such activities for community residents.

Activities of the Communication Plan will concentrate on wide dissemination of information through a combination of media based communication channels.
After School Program (see above)

2.2 Educational Program

The Communication Plan will seek to increase awareness of all school children on the principles of environmental management. The Environment Division aims to capture at least 50% of all school children. The Gardens will provide a repository of information for School Based Assessments (SBA) and will provide the tools and hands on assistance for the students and their teachers through collaboration with the Ministry of Education. This particular outlet will be maintained through the centralized use of the Botanical gardens as an outpost for further learning.

2.2.1 Afterschool Program

Another key component of generating a relationship with the public that builds confidence in the SIRM approach will be through the Environment Division's After-School Program. The After-School Program will, in effect, do two things:

- Provide a safe haven for children in the afternoon where they can learn about the environment in a fun and interactive manner, and
- Provide parents and guardians with a safe environment for their children while they are still at work

Most schools on island close at either 1:30pm or 3pm, and so there are many children who are displaced for several hours before their parents are able to collect them. This therefore presents the Environment Division with a unique opportunity to provide a



service to parents while ensuring that the present generation learns about environmental issues.

The Environment Division's After School Program will use the Botanical Gardens to demonstrate several projects highlighting biodiversity. All the activities will take place within the Gardens in the form of 'living classrooms'. With this format it will eliminate the traditional 'chalk and talk' which is used throughout schools on the island. Instead, it will cause children to interact directly with their environment, and see the continual benefits of their learning.

The After School Program houses the potential for a variety of project modules. The following details the possibilities that exist:

- **Living exhibits of Clean, Healthy Waterways:** This project will teach students about watersheds and the importance of building and maintaining clean and healthy waterways. Students will set up a living exhibit of a clean, healthy waterway. The students will learn the kinds of plants that can live in waterways, as well as the plants that can actually help to purify the water.
- **Pond ecosystems:** This project will teach students about the importance of ponds, as well as the kinds of species that can be found living in ponds. They will also be taught how ponds play an important role in watersheds and how destroying or removing ponds create environmental hazards.
- **Identifying the different kinds of plants within the Botanical Gardens:** This project will teach about the different kinds of plants within the Gardens. Students will be taught which ones are native to the island. Additionally, the students will learn how plants interact with one another.
- **Designing and Replanting Project:** Certain areas of the Botanical Gardens will be assigned to this project. The students will be taught how to design and landscape an area using native plants and rocks.
- **Ecotours:** Students will learn how to set up actual tours for locals and tourists using the Botanical Gardens as the site. These students will assist in creating trails leading to various ponds and living exhibits, all the while pointing out the various plants and trees adorning the Gardens. The students will work with actual tour operators to learn how the business works. This project is intended to encourage entrepreneurship in young minds.



2.3 Other Elements of the Strategy

- **AWARENESS RAISING:** Improve and increase awareness on the key objectives and national outcomes as it relates to the Conventions of Biodiversity and Climate Change and Desertification. This will also include other environmental and sustainable development related activities throughout Antigua & Barbuda and particularly within government agencies, the private sector, community and non-government organizations, through meetings and consultations to be organized in the Botanical Gardens within the Conference center.
- **BEHAVIOUR CHANGE:** Launch a massive public education campaign aimed at increasing the number of visitors to the Gardens and raise awareness to the Afterschool program. While in the gardens, facilitators will provide educational programs that will seek to change behaviours. This approach will be much more impacting than a 30 second advertisement on Biodiversity. This approach will help to facilitate maximum impact and behaviour change,
- **CORPORATE IMAGING:** The Environment Division will be merged with the Forestry Unit and persons within the general public will be able to acknowledge the logo that identifies this new unit within the Botanical Gardens at all times and what it represents.
- **NETWORKING AND PROMOTIONS:** Sensitize all relevant stakeholders about the project, and the preferred messages and formats for promoting the Gardens; Develop strategic relationships with organizations and individuals, who can support communication and exhibits.
- **KEY MESSAGES:** Develop and deliver key messages to target audiences using the most cost-effective vehicles, paying close attention to the scheduling, placement and settings of messages.
- **CONSISTENT MESSAGING:** Ensure consistent communications, paying close attention to scripts written for dissemination and/or broadcast, incorporating key messages to targeted audiences to provide them with timely news and information about ongoing environmental projects;
- **ENHANCEMENT OF PROJECT VISIBILITY:** Promote Enabling activities across Antigua and Barbuda by heavily marketing the success of the Gardens and the availability of viewing new exhibits.
- **STRATEGIC POSITIONING:** Build strategic relationships with the top level management at various ministries for effective advocacy through constant collaborations on environmental issues and activities requiring multisectoral management and monitor.



- **MEDIA OUTREACH/ADVOCACY:** Develop a sustained relationship with the media in Antigua and Barbuda, particularly the government information machinery of the GIS and ABS who are known to have a high interest in material for local programmes. These media operatives, along with other private media entities, will help maximize opportunities to reach the widest possible audience. Concurrently, the Division would be sure to provide opportunities for public participation and feedback;
- **SCHOOL'S OUTREACH:** Currently, the Environment Division runs an Environmental Cadet Program which exists in twenty-six primary and secondary schools. It is an extra-curricular program that also encourages children to engage in activities that have a positive impact on the environment. This program will be greatly augmented by the launching of the Environment Division's After School Programme. The After School Programme will help to reinforce many of the issues previously learnt in the Environmental Cadet Programme. Further, it will give other students who have no such programme in their schools an opportunity to become environmentally aware and active.
- The Environment Division will specially organise activities for teachers and students in order to attract interest in and garner support for the Gardens, and increase the number of visitors seeing exhibits.
- **PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION:** Utilization of the Antigua and Barbuda Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism to disseminate information.

2.3.1 B. Awareness Specific Activities;

The communications plan will be implemented over a period of five years beginning in 2013 - 2018,

2.4 Communication Products and Interventions:

- Preparation of the Site for Exhibits. This includes securing the perimeter fence of the Botanical Gardens, completion of the exhibition of stalls, offices, construction of public bathrooms;
- Create and display billboards in strategic places around Antigua and Barbuda,
- Design and production of flyers, brochures, and promotional stickers;
- Design and implementation of uniform dress code for the staff of the Gardens;
- Create a video, with the assistance of the government run media group, on park and the plans beyond the completion of the Project as a promotional tool for certain target audiences



- Periodic articles to national, regional and international magazines, newspapers and specially identified websites
- Production and distribution of television and radio PSA's , including a catchy and powerful jingle promoting the Gardens and inviting visitors from specific target audiences;
- Meetings and consultations with government agencies, environmental agencies, developers, farmers, fisheries and other stakeholders in the Conference Room in the Gardens.

3 Management

To achieve the objectives of the Communication Plan and in order to undertake the series of initiatives that will endeavour to meet various targets of the Conventions, all relevant Authorities must work together to achieve the objectives. It is particularly important to build the objectives of the Plan into the long-term strategic objectives of the overall Ministry's Work-program, so that all the necessary support is provided.

The plan is designed for implementation through the Environment Education Unit. Other levels of management including the senior staff of the Environment Division are expected to expedite and monitor the implementation of the Communication plan. Outputs will be documented in monthly reports and efforts will be made to establish a financially sustainable way for the Government to continue to fund the public awareness campaign within the Botanical Gardens after its unveiling.

Plan may be established as laid out in Table 1.

Table 4.1 – Implementation plan matrix with Budget Table 1 – Implementation plan matrix with Budget

Outputs	Medium	Focus Areas	Strategy	Budget USD	Collaborators	Schedule
Educational Program	<p>Afterschool Program</p> <p>Environmental Cadet Program</p> <p>Public Education and Outreach (on site at the Botanical Gardens and in the wider public arena)</p>	<p>Demonstration of Living exhibits of Clean, Healthy Waterways and other habitats in the Botanical Gardens</p> <p>Pond ecosystems, terrestrial ecosystems, marine ecosystems</p> <p>Identifying the different kinds of plants within the Botanical Gardens (these will be representative of Antigua and Barbuda)</p> <p>Garden Designing and Replanting Project</p> <p>Public Education on Environmental Concerns</p>	<p>Eco-tours (through living exhibits and the entire garden, students will also be trained as tour guides)</p> <p>Site visits and educational outreach sessions at schools</p> <p>School Environmental Competitions</p> <p>Discussion Forums on the local television and radio stations</p> <p>Weekly newspaper articles on various environmental issues</p> <p>Hosting of workshops and conferences at the Botanical Gardens</p> <p>Educational Briefing</p>	120,000.00 USD	All staff of the Environment and Forestry Division Central Board of Health; Students & Teachers; Representatives of the Ministry of Education	To begin once the offices of the Environment Division moves to the Botanical Gardens



Outputs	Medium	Focus Areas	Strategy	Budget USD	Collaborators	Schedule
			<p>Discussions for Policy Developers presentations at various cabinet sessions, organization of Ministers meetings on the environment, Minister's educational eco-tours)</p> <p>Development of an environmental program for potential integration into the primary school science curriculum</p> <p>Establishment of an environmental library in the Offices of the Environment Division</p> <p>Development of an Environmental Passport and an Environmental Table Top Atlas for Antigua and Barbuda</p> <p>Design Afterschool program to focus on Environmental Education and fun environmental learning</p>			

Outputs	Medium	Focus Areas	Strategy	Budget USD	Collaborators	Schedule
			activities. Incorporate field classroom, in conjunction with the Environment Cadet Program			
Public Awareness	Media Houses - Print, Radio, Television Environmental Groups Community Groups and NGOs Government Agencies	Objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Desertification and Drought, Convention on Climate Change, CITIES Convention and all other relevant environment and marine Multilateral, Bilateral and Regional agreements Environmental Projects under implementation Environmental Legislations (as well as supporting legislations that deal indirectly with the environment) The Role of the Environment Division	Production of Documentaries Weekly publications Production of a Jingle or a few jingles on various environmental issues Weekly panel Discussions Development of resource materials Roving Environmental Reports in the streets of Antigua and Barbuda Interactions with regional and international organizations and media houses to learn and	23,000.00	Media Unit Government information center; Private radio stations; Community groups;	April 2013 and continuous thereafter



Outputs	Medium	Focus Areas	Strategy	Budget USD	Collaborators	Schedule
			<p>introduce new technologies to promote public awareness.</p> <p>Production of promotional video on Project for marketing in international tourism trade shows or for use in small media presentations. This video may also be available for best practice distribution</p>			
Branding	General Public	<p>Staff Development</p> <p>Public Recognition</p>	<p>Development Training for Staff</p> <p>Use of an effective Environment Division Logo and catchy tag line</p> <p>Integration of the Logo into all Environment Division Activities, infrastructure and vehicles</p> <p>Uniforms for all staff</p> <p>Launching of the ED logo</p>	\$35,000.00	Private consultant; Ministry Staff;	April - October 2013

Outputs	Medium	Focus Areas	Strategy	Budget USD	Collaborators	Schedule
			<p>and strategic plan publicly</p> <p>Production of promotional items that will appeal to students and the general public</p> <p>Sustainable transportation Program developed and implemented throughout the gardens</p>			
International networking and promotions	<p>The Biosafety and Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism</p> <p>The GEF Antigua website</p> <p>The Environment Division's Website</p> <p>International Meetings attended by Staff members</p>	<p>Information on the Clearing house mechanism and the relevant conventions</p> <p>Information on the Gardens</p> <p>Information on the Environmental Management Program implemented in Antigua and Barbuda</p> <p>Grant funding for continuation of the communication plan</p>	<p>This will be done in conjunction with the international negotiations and to feature this model of management of enabling projects to other SIDS.</p> <p>This section will include the continuous update with current information of the Biosafety clearing house, the Biodiversity clearing house and the general environmental websites.</p> <p>National competitions that</p>	15,000.00	Life of the project.	Beginning October 2013



Outputs	Medium	Focus Areas	Strategy	Budget USD	Collaborators	Schedule
			require research of the information on the websites			

Total: 194,532USD.

4 Evaluation & Monitoring

Communication audits will be done periodically to assess the effectiveness of this strategy with both staff and members of the public. This may be achieved through online or hard copy surveys as well as through media quizzes.

Further assessment of the Plan may be conducted by an independent person or persons to ensure that the strategy has met its objectives.