

21st DCNA Board Meeting

21st – 23rd October 2014

University of Aruba, Aruba

DAY ONE: 21st October 2014

Board Members present:

Leendert van Driel	Financial expert	LvD	Vice Chair
Kerenza Rannou	STINAPA Bonaire	KR	Alt. Member
Paul Stokkermans	CARMABI, Curaçao	PS	Member
Hannah Madden	STENEPA, St. Eustatius	HM	Member
Frensel Mercelina	NGO representative	FM	Member
Rueben Thompson	NGO representative	RT	Member
Glenn Thodé	Governance expert	GT	Member
Ron Gomes Casseres	Financial expert	RGC	Member

Observers present:

Jaime Saleh	Minister of State
Jaap Leeuwenburg	Advisor to Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix
Johan Afman	STINAPA Bonaire
Henri Roggeri	IUCN National Committee (IUCN NL)
Bert Denneman	Vogelbescherming Netherlands
Amadine Vaslet	SPAW-RAC/Réserve Naturelle St. Martin

Secretariat staff present:

Kalli De Meyer	Executive Director
Nathaniel Miller	Assistant Director
Elise Benedictus	Accounting Officer
Emeray Martha	Administrator

Opening

LVD declared the meeting open. Apologies for absence were received from Kai Wulf (Saba Conservation Foundation) and Tadzio Bervoets (St. Maarten Nature Foundation) who were obliged to attend the International Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change (22nd – 25th October 2014) on Guadeloupe.

Welcome address

Mr. Jaime Saleh welcomed participants to the beautiful island of Aruba and this meeting, which will cover many important topics related to nature conservation in the Dutch Caribbean. Mr. Saleh emphasised the importance of unity between the islands in nature conservation, working together to solve funding and other cross-cutting issues.

Beyond 2016: Leendert van Driel

Board Chair, Leendert van Driel, presented a historical perspective on the creation of the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance beginning with the Trust Fund Study in 1998 and the Dietrich motion in 2004, which resulted in a ten-year subsidy from the Dutch Ministry of the Interior (BZK) allowing both the establishment of DCNA as a regional network and the creation of the Trust Fund.

Status

While the Trust Fund now contains over Euro 11 million, the goal of capitalising the fund with €24 million will not be reached before 2016. This is in large part because the assumption that the Ministry funding could be used to leverage other donations did not prove to be the case. The lack of any additional commitment by the governments within the Dutch Caribbean led to the creation by DCNA of an “Emergency Fund” to cover urgent financial needs.

Challenge

In order for DCNA to ensure a long-term sustainable funding future for the parks and in order for DCNA to continue to be able to provide the high level of support to conservation organisations throughout the Dutch Caribbean an additional approximate Euro 15 - 20 million needs to be found.

Issues

There is an urgent need to persuade governments within the Dutch Caribbean and in the Netherlands to provide the funding needed to fully capitalise the Trust Fund in order to safeguard the future of the regions' parks.

In the absence of additional funds for the Trust Fund the Board should consider post 2016:

- distributing annual revenues generated by the Trust Fund
- distributing a fixed percentage from the Fund annually
- invading the capital (transformating the endowment into a sinking fund)

The lack of a direct funding relationship with other (non-park management) nature conservation organisations in the Dutch Caribbean needs to be addressed.

There needs to be structural improvement in communication between DCNA and the Board members of the park management organisations.

Decision: Actively seek to build the capacity and strengthen the Boards of park management organisations

Decision: Regular meetings need to be established between DCNA Board members and the Board members of the park management organisations.

Action: Both the representative and a Board member of each park management organisations should be invited to attend DCNA Board meetings.

The basic management costs of the parks on each island and the DCNA Secretariat must be established as a first step towards determining the current funding gap.

Action: Workshops will be held with park representatives to determine basic park management tasks and operational costs (Secretariat).

The future role of DCNA post 2016 needs to be determined with stakeholder input

Action: Meetings will be held with island governments, parks and other key stakeholders in the Dutch Caribbean (Ron Gomes Casseres/Glenn Thode).

Action: Meetings will be held with the government and funders in the Netherlands (Leendert van Driel/Jaap Leeuwenburg).

Dutch Ministry of Economics feedback indicated that DCNA is seen as a valuable partner playing an important role in the region.

Nature Foundation feedback indicated:

- Nature Foundation would want to be able to call on DCNA for advice/support
- Nature Foundation expects to get financial support from DCNA, including support for capital investments (such as pier construction)
- Nature Foundation would like to see more contact with DCNA Board members and finds continuity of representation particularly important
- Nature Foundation Board would like to meet Board members from other park management organisations

It was noted that DCNA must become better known in the Dutch Caribbean. Park management organisations should actively embrace DCNA and their in this regional network.

Additional suggestions:

- Foster support of Governors
- Promote TEEB studies on all islands

Secretariat Update

Presentations were given updating Board members on the activities of the Secretariat since the last Board meeting, including fundraising, capacity building and communication achievements.

The update on projects, training and capacity building included:

- Wetland education workshops: were the biggest workshops ever. They were jointly organised and run by Birds Caribbean (Lisa Sorenson) was attended by over 60 islanders
- Bird conservation: Vogelbescherming Nederland approved two projects, which will provide a total of Euro 47,000 for bird conservation work. The focus will be on wetland and terrestrial bird monitoring, data analysis workshop and the development of birding trails.
- Turtle conservation: STCB's excellent turtle conservation work has been extended to Curaçao where a beach monitoring programme is now underway
- Shark conservation: A Special Project proposal was submitted to the Dutch Postcode Lottery requesting Euro 1.4 million in funding for a three year shark conservation programme ("Save our Sharks").

- Management success: online surveys developed to improve data collection. Management success reports are an essential first step to providing park management organisations with draft technical reports for the Ministry of the Interior.
- St Maarten website: is under development
- Online donations: can now be made via DCNA's website to the park management organisations of Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten.

STENAPA Presentation: Hannah Madden

Hannah Madden gave an insightful presentation on the developing relationship between STENAPA and RAVON (a member of the Dutch volunteer network, VOFF) which has led both to the initiation of on the ground conservation to save iguanas and a joint crowd source funding initiative as well as some excellent publicity for STENAPA locally and in the Netherlands.

Sustainable Finance Report (Dr. Barry Spergel)

A presentation on the final draft Sustainable Finance report produced by Dr. Barry Spergel emphasised the urgent need for DCNA to confirm the basic management costs for park management in the Dutch Caribbean.

It was agreed that while the report does not contain anything new and there is no “magic bullet” to provide long term sustainable funding for conservation organisations in the region, it does give a good overview of existing and potential funding sources.

Action: Board requested advice on how best to use the information from this report (Fundraising Committee).

Action: DCNA to request support from the Universities on Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten for collaborative studies on this topic.

Action: Workshops to be held before the end of November 2014 to define park tasks and determine park operating costs (Secretariat).

DCNA will consider what its input should be in the upcoming evaluation of the Caribbean Netherlands situation with regard to the free monies (*vrije uitkering*), which are Euro 800,000 in unrestricted funds currently provided by the Netherlands to the governments of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius for nature conservation.

At its next Board meeting DCNA should discuss options for meeting and discussing funding for nature conservation with FCCA (EWEF)

DAY TWO: 22nd October 2014

Board Members present:

Leendert van Driel	Financial expert	LvD	Vice Chair
Kerenza Rannou	STINAPA Bonaire	KR	Alt. Member
Paul Stokkermans	CARMABI, Curaçao	PS	Member
Hannah Madden	STENAPA, St. Eustatius	HM	Member
Frensel Mercelina	NGO representative	FM	Member
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Observers present:

Jaime Saleh	Minister of State
Jaap Leeuwenburg	Secretary to Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix
Johan Afman	STINAPA Bonaire

Secretariat staff present:

Kalli De Meyer	Executive Director
Nathaniel Miller	Assistant Director
Elise Benedictus	Accounting Officer

Board Meeting Minutes (March 2014)

Hannah Madden requested an inclusion in the minutes stating that STENAPA has always ready for the audit and the auditors have been impressed with STENAPA's book keeping. The issue lies with the Ernst and Young accounting support, which is not as effective as the support provided by Winfield Financial Services.

[Decision: March 2014 Board Meeting Minutes approved with the inclusion of STENAPA comment \(above\)](#)

Review of Actions and Decisions: Leendert van Driel

[Action: BioNews should continue. The next edition will be out the week of October 27, 2014.](#)

[Decision: DCNA should have more detailed donor plan before moving forward with either 501 \(c\) 3 or donor database.](#)

Action: get quotes, references and bank references regarding reputable 3rd parties to assist with tax-free donations in the USA (Secretariat). The board will then decide on how to proceed.

Action: investigate the use of Support Bonaire Inc.'s tax exempt status for DCNA (Secretariat)

The Emilio Wilson Estate Foundation will pursue the protection of the Emilio Wilson Estate without assistance from DCNA at this time.

Decision: DCNA Bylaws should be updated within a year of the finalization of the Articles of Incorporation.

Action: Fundraising expert in the Netherlands to be sought to review DCNA's fundraising strategy (Leendert van Driel).

Action: Vogelbescherming Nederlands to be asked to provide feedback on DCNA's fundraising strategy (Secretariat).

Action: Accounting Procedures Manual to be reviewed post March 2015 (Secretariat)

Action: Board pledges to be reviewed (Secretariat)

Decision: DCNA is not to engage in funding raising activities locally / Parks can request assistance as necessary

Executive Committee Report: Leendert van Driel

There have been numerous conference calls but the meeting Monday on Aruba was the first in person meeting of the Executive Committee since the March 2014 Board Meeting. The Executive Committee reviewed preparations for the Board meeting, actions and decision from previous Board Meeting, Dr Barry Spergel's sustainable finance study and discussed 2016 and beyond.

Finance Committee Report: Paul Stokkermans

There have been numerous meetings between the Secretariat and Treasurer since the last Board Meeting, but no face to face Finance Committee meetings.

2013 Financial Statement was presented to the Board for approval.

Decision: Financial Statement 2013 was approved. Treasurer received discharge

2014 Action Plan and Budget were reviewed and found to be on target.

Action: The following corrections should be made to DCNA's 2015 action plan:

- "liaise with (Dutch) Ministry staff"
- "represent 5 islands.... on request"

2015 Action Plan and Budget were presented to the Board for approval.

Decision: future budgets must include the following:

- Depreciation
- Overview of travel
- Overview of personnel costs
- Deferred income items

Decision: 2015 Action Plan and Budget were approved with changes to the following budget lines:

- Financial Services decrease from €35,000 to €30,000
- Other Park Support will increase to €5,000

Decision: DCNA financial administration, Financial Statement, budgets and reports should be in dollars unless otherwise required by a donor.

Decision: Accounting Procedures Manual must be updated and must include:

- Format for quarterly reporting to the Finance Committee
- Format for annual reporting
- Accounting procedures

Annual audits

An overview was given of the extensive accounting and bookkeeping support being provided to park management organisations, which has included on site support and workshops.

Nevertheless the following 2013 audits remain incomplete:

- Saba Conservation Foundation
- Nature Foundation

STENAPA's 2013 audit has yet to be conducted (planned for November 2014).

Discussion:

- Ernst and Young accountants prefer that their on line system is used by park management organisations. The system is expensive and requires training. With regards to STENAPA and the Nature Foundation, their basic accounting is in order and the problems are with procedures. Adopting an on line accounting system in this case will not help. SCF's bookkeeping was messed up with the introduction of their Point of Sale (POS) system. There are technical problems regarding the synchronisation of the system with SCF's Quick Books accounting system which have been difficult to solve.
- It was noted that making changes to draft Financial Statements is currently time consuming.
- Some members consider auditing organisations the size of SCF, Nature Foundation and STENAPA to be lunacy. The Ministry of BZK recognises that audits are not a requirement of the subsidy to DCNA but they are highly desired. The Ministry feels that this is a good way to build confidence in the park management organisations and to improve their capacity.
- It was noted that at times the auditors themselves can become part of the problem.

Decision: increase the involvement of Park Managers in the audit process (Secretariat)

Audit contract

Decision: Ernst and Young will be contracted to provide auditing services 2014-2016

Action: Finance Committee was charged with negotiating the best possible deal for DCNA which is not to exceed amounts in their quotation namely 2014 - \$ 103,350; 2015/2016 - \$ 100,107 (excluding Parke Nacional Arikok)

Trust Fund Committee: Leendert van Driel

Regular conference calls with the trust fund portfolio managers kept the Trust Fund Committee busy throughout the year. A presentation was given on the Trust Fund

performance with the conclusion that the Trust Fund portfolios are back on track and the total capital as at 31st December 2014 was \$14 million.

Fundraising Committee

An explanation was given on ANBI status. It is now possible to benefit from Amazon.com sales.

Board Membership

Board membership was reviewed and the following changes agreed:

Decision: Hannah Madden's nomination to the Board as the representative of STENAPA, with Irving Brown as the Alternate, was approved unanimously.

Decision: Tadzio Bervoets was re-elected to the Board as the representative of the Nature Foundation

Decision: Rueben Thompson was re-elected to the Board as the NGO representative to the leeward islands

NGO (leeward islands) Board seat.

Echo Foundation applied for the leeward island Board seat. Clarification was requested about Echo's Board membership and the relationship of the Director, Sam Williams, to his Board. Discussion was pm-ed to the next Board meeting pending clarification.

Decision: Frensel Mercelina will continue to hold the Board seat for the leeward islands until such time as a new nomination is approved by the Board

It was noted that Tadzio Bervoets acts at the press secretary to the Prime Minister and that this could become a source of conflict. The Board resolved to assist Tadzio to avoid any potential conflict of interests.

Board officers

As discussed and agreed at previous meetings Leendert van Driel (Chairperson) resigned as Board Chairperson. He was thanked for his hard work in representing and supporting DCNA. Leendert van Driel will remain on the Board and will continue as Chair of the Trust Fund Committee.

Decision: Glenn Thode was unanimously elected as Chairperson to the Board

Decision: Tadzio Bervoets was unanimously elected as Vice Chairperson to the Board (in absentia and subject to approval by the Nature Foundation Board)

Executive Committee is now made up of the following:

- Chairperson: Glenn Thode
- Vice Chair: Tadzio Bervoets
- Treasurer: Paul Stokkermans
- Secretary: Kai Wulf

Articles of Incorporation: Ron Gomes Casseres

The Board approved proposed changes to DCNA's Articles of Incorporation at the last Board meeting (version 6.1). The Articles were reviewed by the Notary on St Maarten who had the following recommendations for modifications:

Article 8 - "they shall serve such terms as specified in Article 9.4" not "9.2.

Article 7.2 - add a clause that allows two people to represent the organization legally. This allows them to sign chamber of commerce changes.

Article 9 - "the board delegates to the Treasurer" should become "the board may delegate to the Treasurer".

Action: DCNA board member pledge must be reviewed (Glenn Thode / Ron van der Veer)

Board agreed that the next step should be to wait for resolution regarding the participation of the Parke Nacional Arikok in DCNA. It was noted that Parke Nacional Arikok has had no input into the proposed revision of DCNA's Articles of Incorporation.

A.O.B

Glenn Thode was congratulated on his new position as Chair of DCNA

Emeray Martha Neuman was congratulated on completion of 7 years of service with DCNA

It was agreed that DCNA should do a better job of communicating the value of DCNA to the parks and conservation organizations on every island.

Action: Board members agreed to share their ideas about the value of DCNA.

Decision: Theme for the next Board meeting will be "shared vision"

Decision: Next Board meeting will be held in March (9th/23rd to be confirmed)

DAY THREE: 23rd October 2014

Board Members present:

Leendert van Driel	Financial expert	LvD	Vice Chair
Kerenza Rannou	STINAPA Bonaire	KR	Alt. Member
Paul Stokkermans	CARMABI, Curaçao	PS	Member
Hannah Madden	STENEPA, St. Eustatius	HM	Member
Frensel Mercelina	NGO representative	FM	Member
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Johan Afman	STINAPA Bonaire
Henri Roggeri	IUCN National Committee (IUCN NL)
Bert Denneman	Vogelbescherming Netherlands
Amadine Vaslet	SPAW-RAC/R�serve Naturelle St. Martin
Desiree Croes	STINAPA Bonaire
Luigi Eybrecht	STINAPA Bonaire

Secretariat staff present:

Kalli De Meyer	Executive Director
Nathaniel Miller	Assistant Director
Elise Benedictus	Accounting Officer
Emeray Martha	Administrator

EU BEST Initiative: Amandine Vaslet

The BEST initiative came into being at the Reunion Conference in 2008. The presentation provided insight into the European Union's BEST III initiative, which is coordinated by a consortium of 10 international partners lead by IUCN, to create a sustainable funding mechanisms that will benefit conservation initiatives in the European Overseas Regions, Countries and Territories. The Caribbean component of BEST III is being lead by Anne

Fontaine (SPAW-RAC director), Romain Renoux (Head of Regional Cooperation, Réserve Naturelle St Martin) and Amandine Vaslet (Project assistant, SPAW-RAC/Réserve Naturelle St Martin).

Through a consultative process ecosystem profiles are being developed in order to identify key biodiversity areas, give an overview of the socio economic context, identify threats affecting biodiversity, assess current funding mechanisms available for nature conservation in the Caribbean as well as funding gaps.

This information will then be used to develop a BEST strategy for future investment in biodiversity conservation in the region.

DCNA is pleased to collaborate with the SPAW RAC on this topic.

Vogelbescherming Nederlands: Bert Denneman

The presentation gave insights into Vogelbescherming and BirdLife International and the work that they do. The focus of their strategic multi-year plan is on rural, coastal, freshwater and urban conservation as well as extinction prevention. Work is based on “intervention logic” where the main focus is on empowering people to make positive change and encouraging ecological sustainability.

Vogelbescherming believes that partnerships are essential to conservation success and will continue to work with DCNA on:

- sustainable financing
- raising support in the Netherlands
- bringing DCNA into the BirdLife partnership
- promoting DCNA as a premier example of a functioning regional network.

DCNA’s application for affiliation with BirdLife International has been delayed due to internal governance issues, but being actively pursued on DCNA’s behalf by the Director of Vogelbescherming, Fred Wouters and others.

IUCN National Committee: Henri Roggeri

The presentation outlined IUCN’s activities, which focus on Red List species, Red List ecosystems, key biodiversity areas and their worldwide database of protected areas.

IUCN NL works with members, NGO partners, scientists, government and companies on sustainable (green) initiatives and nature conservation. Over the next five years they want to see the value of ecosystems and nature capital integrated into Dutch and international policy.

IUCN NL is currently focusing on providing more support to its membership and welcomes DCNA’s input and will continue to invite DCNA to attend member meetings, which are unfortunately always held in the Netherlands.

Jane Goodall Hope and Inspiration Award: Luigi Eybrecht

Luigi Eybrecht, a newly appointed Marine Park Ranger for STINAPA Bonaire and volunteer commander of their Junior Rangers, has just been selected by world renowned primatologist and anthropologist, Dr Jane Goodall, to receive her prestigious Hope and Inspiration Award which will be presented at the World Parks Congress in Sydney this November.

The coordinator of STINAPA’s nature education programme, Desiree Croes introduced the Junior Ranger programme and showed a short video of a recent Junior Ranger exchange with Saba Conservation Foundation. Luigi then gave an overview of the Junior Ranger programme and explained how the programme works.

DCNA Board expressed sincere congratulations to STINAPA Bonaire for two decades of investment in nature education, Desiree Croes for making the Junior Ranger programme happen and of course, Luigi for this fantastic achievement.

Any Other Business

Next Board Meeting will be on Saba the week of March 9th or 23rd (to be confirmed by the Secretariat)

Meeting was closed.