



Cayman Islands  
Department of  
Environment

# SDU News

## Sustainable Development Unit Newsletter

### Issue I— Greening Tourism and Government - a CEPTS Progress Update

#### What is the SDU?

The Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) at the DOE was set up in July 2006 to spearhead the formation of a **national policy-level strategy for sustainable development**. This was in reaction to the expanding advisory nature of the DOE on environmental best practices and obligations under various Multilateral Environmental Agreements that **require integration of physical, economic, social and environmental development planning policies**. To date the SDU has worked on a National Sustainable Development Framework, draft National Conservation Law, the draft Grand Cayman Development Plan, revised National Tourism Management Policy, Go East Initiative, National Assessment of Living Conditions study and Public Health Review, the Enhancing Climate Change Adaptation in the Caribbean (ECACC) project, implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, and continues to advise on planning and coastal works applications.



Sustainable development – integrating economic, social and environmental considerations.

#### Cayman Islands Environmental Project for the Tourism Sector (CEPTS) - An Overview

The Cayman Islands Environmental Project for the Tourism Sector (CEPTS) was launched in February 2008 as a **joint initiative run by the Departments of Tourism and Environment**. This project aims to **install sustainable practices in the operation of hotels and tourist attractions** in the Cayman Islands by encouraging the efficient use of resources such as energy and water, reducing waste generation and minimizing environmental impacts of hazardous materials use. Pilot properties participating in the project will put in place **Environmental Management Systems (EMS)** to achieve these aims and monitor operations to ensure the objectives enshrined in the EMS are met.



The added benefit for these establishments is that putting EMS in place also makes good economic sense—the more efficiently resources are used and waste reduced, the more cost savings will result. Once these systems are installed the hotels also have the

option to be **Green Globe certified** as a testament to their sustainability efforts. The Green Globe environmental certification system is internationally recognized and the program is based on the Agenda 21 principles for sustainable



The project launch in February 2008

development. To become certified the property must first create an environmental and social sustainability policy, then record the level of impact from their activities and benchmark this against indicators provided by Green Globe to measure their performance, with a view to ultimately achieving industry best practice in the 10 Green Globe Key Performance Areas.

#### CEPTS Progress at the Pilot Sites

Following the **Environmental Management Best Practices and Green Globe 21 training workshop for pilot properties** held by DOT and DOE in May 2008, the pilot properties were well prepared for their **environmental audits** conducted over the summer. From June to July, environmental consultants visited the 7 properties to carry out these initial audits in order to **assess their baseline performance** against over 700 industry best practices. This information was then utilised to create an **environmental management plan**. In October, onsite environmental management program implementation for Grand Cayman properties commenced.

Little Cayman properties were also due to begin in December 2008.

In addition to the pilot accommodations, tourist attractions are also involved in the project. **The Botanic Park** was scheduled to undergo an **environmental assessment and awareness session** in December, with a view to also implementing an EMS program. Next February will see Green Globe 21 benchmarking take place, and the properties aim to become certified in June 2009. Destination certification for Little Cayman will also be explored this year.



## CEPTS Takes Root at the DoE

As a **pilot for introducing environmental management systems into Government agencies**, the Departments of Tourism and Environment are also participating in the project by putting in place their own EMS programs.

Here at the DOE we have already started to make some small changes to try and meet some of our green objectives. As part of its **Earth Day** activities back in April this year, the Department decided to **plant native trees** by the car park.

The trees will offer much needed shade and an opportunity for the Department to do its bit in **reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** by adding a small contribution to the carbon sink that trees represent. As the trees are native species, they are **adapted to flourish in the Cayman climate** and are drought and salt tolerant. They therefore **need less watering**, allowing us to conserve this resource. The White Fiddlewood and Whitewood trees were purchased from the **Native Tree Nursery** set up in the Botanic Park, which is now open to the general public. The nursery aims to make these trees available to Cayman residents to plant in their own yards and for companies to use in their landscaping.



Water drums are fitted outside the DOE building under existing downspouts for rain water to be collected in the drums.

The DOE has written a **draft Environmental Policy Statement** as the first step in the process to creating a EMS program for the Department. A start has also been made in **identifying environmental impacts from the**



White Fiddlewood (*Citharexylum fruticosum*) and Whitewood (*Tabebuia heterophylla*) trees are planted by the car park at the DOE back in April 2008.



Screen calibration

**Water drums were also installed to capture rainwater** to be used for landscaping purposes around the site, washing DOE vehicles etc. **Old barrels were reused** and fitted into decorative bins and downspout lengths were adjusted to accommodate the barrels at two corners of the DOE building. The newly collected water was put to good use in the **initial irrigation of the recently planted trees**.

Efforts were made in the DOE office to **conserve energy**, by arranging for the new LCD television in the conference room to be **calibrated properly**, to ensure it was using electricity as efficiently as possible.

**Department's operations**, and in putting together **suggested actions for reducing these impacts** in the form of an actions and objectives database. An **EMS overview seminar** for Supervisors and Managers was given to the DOE project team by the environmental consultants involved in the CEPTS. Afterward they completed an **initial environmental audit** of the DOE office building and workshop. This visit also gave the project team an opportunity to get some questions regarding the EMS answered. We are currently awaiting feedback on the audit, and look forward to finalizing our Environmental Policy and action plans in early 2009.

## Contact Info

For further information regarding the work being undertaken by the SDU, please contact us at [doe@gov.ky](mailto:doe@gov.ky) or by phone on 949-8469.