Caribbean Sargassum Phenomenon: Complexities of Communicating

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In 2011, pelagic sargassum seaweed (Sargassum spp.) made its first appearance on Caribbean shores. Recently, huge quantities have accumulated in the Atlantic, which are transported by ocean currents into the Caribbean [1]. These accumulations of stranded seaweed release pungent, toxic gases as they decompose, causing biodiversity losses and reducing the aesthetic quality of island beaches and nearshore waters.

The Caribbean needs to increase the capacity for management of sargassum strandings, a fact that has been acknowledged at high political levels. Communication of marine science is integral for effective policy and informed decisions. The actual use of science for policy-making has been infrequent in the Caribbean [2]. McConney and Oxenford examine the lessons learned from communication on sargassum influxes in the Caribbean since 2011.

What's Next

Using an analytical framework for investigating the five-stage policy cycle, they reviewed information exchanged in the Eastern Caribbean. The results of this analysis showed evidence of science communication in all stages of the policy cycle, however, it was found to be uncoordinated and chaotic. Improvements in the marine science-policy interface are necessary for the effective management of the sargassum problem.

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OPEN SOURCE CLOSED SOURCE

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