

In this issue:

-Message from RPC ...pg. 1
-IWeco Objective ...pg. 2
-Meet the PCU ...pg. 3
-Project Components ...pg. 6



-Saint Lucia National Project ...pgs. 1, 2, 5
-IWeco National Projects ...pg. 5
-Map of Participating Countries ...pg. 8



-Second Project Steering Committee Meeting ...pg. 7
-Collaboration for innovative approaches in 5 IWeco countries OECS ...pg. 6



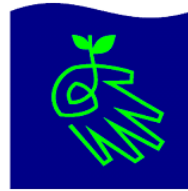
-Learning for Action with IWeco ...pg. 4
-Protecting the home of a threatened species - The Saint Vincent Parrot ...pg. 8

Sustainable Development Goals being addressed



Volume 1, Issue 1

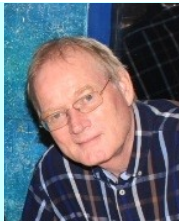
September 2018



IWeco:link

Quarterly newsletter of the GEF-funded Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States Project

Message from the Regional Project Coordinator



Greetings!

Although I have been in regular, and sometimes frequent, contact with some of you in recent months, the time has now come to reach out to all of you through the IWeco Project's first quarterly newsletter.

This comes as Project Cooperation Agreements have been signed by 7 of the 8 countries (Antigua & Barbuda, Cuba, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago) which are implementing National Sub-Projects. These aim to apply the project approach to management of water, land and ecosystem management at specific sites.

We hope that the remaining country, the Dominican Republic, will finalize its National Project Document and related budget and also sign the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in the coming months. Signing enables initial disbursement of funds and marks the transition from project preparation to execution in each case. These countries can now execute their respective projects to the benefit of local communities and the environment, and to apply the learning more widely afterwards.

The progress shown so far by Saint Lucia, the first country to sign and begin execution in November 2017, is heartening; hence we feature them in this first issue.

We cannot do this work without the support and expertise of a range of partners at local, national, regional and international levels. This will be very evident as you read about many ongoing activities. The participating countries themselves are our foremost partners because without their commitment the Project would fail. For this reason, the support pledged by the responsible Ministers of four Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries for IWeco at the 5th Meeting of its Council of Ministers of Environmental Sustainability (COMES 5), in Montserrat in July is particularly encouraging.

For regional support, IWeco has contracted a few lead partners: PCI Media Impact to promote awareness raising, education and information exchange; the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to support countries and the region with monitoring & research. Additionally, the OECS is partner within the contract with CARPHA and is ready to support its participating member states with policy and legislative initiatives. In future issues, their roles and the various initiatives will be introduced further to you.

The Project Coordination Unit (PCU), based in Kingston, is available to provide support to all participating countries. Finally, the full team is on board and we introduce ourselves to you in this issue.

With best regards,

Jan Betlem,
IWeco Regional Project Coordinator



Strengthening the fragile ecosystem within the Upper Soufriere Watershed

The Soufriere Watershed, site of Saint Lucia's IWeco Project, with an estimated area of 17.2 sq. km, is located within the west central part of Saint Lucia and is characterised by very rugged, steep terrain. It is drained by the Soufriere River, which originates in the upper reaches of Mingy, the area that is the focus of on-the-ground interventions under IWeco. The watershed has three water intakes and a catchment that serves Fond St. Jacques and the other communities in the upper reaches of the watershed, as well as Choiseul, in the neighbouring watershed. The adjacent coastal area has a relatively small valley floor.

More than 90% of the land in the watershed is privately owned and over time has become more and more fragmented, presenting challenges for management and sustainable development. Between the 125 and 250m elevations, the landscape is forest intensive mixed agriculture with production of short term and tree crops. Root crops, especially dasheen (*Colocasia esculenta*), are

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Caribbean Public Health Agency

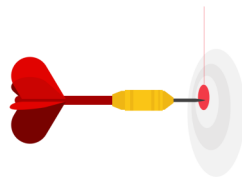
CARPHA

pci media impact
tell a story, change the world.

SGP The GEF Small Grants Programme

IWEco Project Objective

To contribute to the preservation of **Caribbean ecosystems** that are of global significance and the sustainability of livelihoods through the application of existing proven technologies and approaches that are appropriate for **small island developing states** through improved fresh and coastal **water resources management, land management and sustainable forest management** that also seek to enhance resilience of socio-ecological systems to the impacts of **climate change**.



(Continued from page 1)

grown above 250m elevation and many of the existing farms are scattered within the natural and/or scrub forest.

The coastal/marine area is one of steep submarine shelf, which has been designated as the Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA) and forms the marine component of the world-renowned World Heritage Site (WHC), Piton Management Area, PMA. The reefs within this area are some of the healthiest and most diverse on the island but are under increasingly under threat because of high incidence of sediment and nutrient loading, solid and liquid waste.

Indeed, degradation of coastal water quality, rapid depletion of nearshore resources, poor land use practices and poor resource management, along with growing conflicts among stakeholders, are ongoing issues in the Soufriere watershed, an area that has traditionally been the eco-tourism Mecca of Saint Lucia. In addition to the abundance of natural assets, Soufriere, and in particular the Fond St. Jacques area, was traditionally referred to as the breadbasket of the island because the volcanic soils and abundant rainfall provide a good fertile environment for the cultivation of short-term food and tree crops, especially cocoa.

The IWEco Saint Lucia Project aims to mitigate the poor biophysical conditions within the Soufriere region through targeted innovative, climate-change resilient approaches; strengthening the monitoring indicator framework, capacity building; and knowledge sharing.



John Calixte, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, addresses Inception Workshop

The Project officially started on 30th November 2017 and is being implemented over a three-year period, ending in October 2020. The lead partner organization is the Department of Forestry within the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Cooperatives. The Project Coordinator is Arethea Darcheville and she is supported by existing staff within the Department of Forestry. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) made up of representatives of the various partner agencies and bodies meets once a quarter.

The Project's Inception Workshop took place in January 2018 in Fond St. Jacques, Soufriere. More than 60 participants were given an overview of the projects. Stakeholders were encouraged to take ownership of the project and lessons learnt from past initiatives undertaken in the upper reaches of the Soufriere Watershed were shared. Alfred Prospere, Deputy Chief Forest Officer and Chair of the PSC stressed the importance of the



Inception Workshop participants

project to Fond St. Jacques and environs, noting the devastation which occurred after the passage of Hurricane Tomas in 2010.

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) is a priority in this watershed and slope rehabilitation work is expected to account for almost three quarters of the IWEco project. This will include work on approximately fifty farmer's plots in Migny. Capacity building activities target a number of stakeholders including farmers and extension officers on sustainable water, land and ecosystems management interventions, increasing awareness of legislation and regulations, field-trips highlighting good and bad practices, and learning to use computers for data entry etc.

Enhancing alternative livelihood opportunities and socio-economic co-benefits for the targeted communities from improved ecosystem services functioning is another project priority. The Fond St. Jacques Development Committee, with the assistance of the Department of Forestry, is leading this activity and partnering with the Credit Union, GEF Small Grant Programme, Rain Forest Foods, Jacquot Valley Foods, Calabash Mountain Villa. They will present a proposal for an Agro Tourism Sustainable Landscape Zone to the GEF Small Grant Programme, which has funds available under IWEco for this Project component.

Work to develop a set of project specific process, stress-reduction and environmental and socioeconomic indicators to be used to monitor progress will await the results of the regional framework to be developed by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) which is leading the development of a regional environmental indicators compendium for Caribbean SIDS.

Knowledge exchange and replication of best practices will be facilitated by development of a common framework for knowledge capture and dissemination.

Activities completed since the Project's inception include:

- A diagnostic assessment, including review of the results framework to determine how realistic some of the targets are, given that the project was originally designed five years ago.
- Revision of the Project's results framework to make the targets more realistic in a one-day session with technical staff in the Forestry Department.
- A meeting with farmers whose lands have been deemed to require restoration to introduce the Project, describe the current state of the slopes in the Upper Soufriere Watershed and negative consequences (the devastating effects of Hurricane Tomas in 2010 were cited) as well as proposals for restoration. Alternative proposals were also received from the farmers.
- Development of a Community Campaign Plan for the period March – October 2018.
- A photo and art competition at the only school in the upper watershed, the Fond St. Jacques Combined School.
- Development of a Communication and Visibility Plan



Young persons hired under IWEco undergo training to conduct farm assessments.



A farmer from the upper Soufriere Watershed makes his point

Jan Betlem, Regional Project Coordinator

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Jan studied Forestry and Nature Conservation, becoming the youngest 'Special Constable' for nature protection laws in his native country, the Netherlands. He then worked with a research project in Suriname, studying human interference in the tropical rainforest. While working in Senegal as a Forestry Expert with the Dutch Foreign Service to assist with large scale reforestation of arid lands in the Sahel, he completed his Master's research on landscape ecology surveys. After several more years working on reforestation efforts in Mali he was promoted to Chief Technical Advisor.

In the early '90s Jan was recruited by the International Union for Conservation of Nature to lead a dedicated team to set up a National Park on Mount Elgon, a more than 1000 square kilometre area on the slopes of a volcano in Eastern Uganda.

He returned to the Dutch Foreign Service to work in Zanzibar on collection, disposal and sound destruction of chemical waste, beach erosion and environmental awareness for a society opening up to international tourism. The project was later extended to mainland Tanzania where Jan managed a 'flying squad' of inspectors from the Department of Environment to take stock of hazardous chemicals all over the country. By the early 2000s, Jan was known on Dutch television as the 'Toxic Waste Hunter' due to his work with relevant UN agencies in many countries in chemical waste management.

In 2006 he joined the UNEP GEF Division and set up a programme for the collection and destruction of DDT and to introduce alternatives. Five years later he became Head of the Quality Assurance Section (QAS) in the Corporate Division of UNEP, and in 2015, Head of Monitoring and Quality Assurance in the Strategic Planning Division.

This very experienced and keen conservationist became the Regional Project Coordinator of the IW Eco Project in October 2017.

Nicole O. Caesar, Technical Specialist

nicole.caesar@un.org

Nicole is a graduate of the University of the West Indies (Cave Hill Campus) and University of South Florida (USF); earning a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, a Master's in Marine Science - Tropical Coral Reef Conservation, and a Doctorate in Environmental Science and Policy - Sustainable Freshwater Management.

A native of Barbados, Nicole's professional experience includes working as a Coastal Research Analyst with the United States Geological Survey, Science Outreach Officer and Programme Associate at USF's College of Marine Sciences Office of Educational Outreach. Before joining IW Eco she was Director of the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources in the Ministry of Tourism, Environment, Heritage and Culture - Turks & Caicos Islands.

Nicole will use her multidisciplinary training and professional interest in sustainable development, integrated coastal zone management and environmental educational outreach to provide project monitoring and oversight to the SIDs partners in the IW Eco Project.



The Team (left to right): Donna Sue Spencer, Nicole O. Caesar, Jan Betlem, Donna Henry-Hernandez, and Shamene Parker

Meet the IW Eco Project Coordination Unit!

Donna Henry-Hernandez, Programme Management Assistant

donna.hernandez@un.org

Donna brings a wealth of experience in project support having worked with UN Environment in Kingston for several years - first in programme support, and then on two previous Global Environment Facility-funded (GEF) Projects - REPCar (2008 - 2012) and the Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CRew, from 2012 - 2017).

IW Eco is the fourth GEF project to be co-executed by UN Environment's Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit and, as such, depends upon her to keep arrangements between the many project partners and UNEP running smoothly. Her knowledge of Spanish and French and her training in Translation Studies at Masters Level make her invaluable to the Team in meeting the needs of all participating countries, two of which are Spanish-speaking.

Donna Sue Spencer, Communications Specialist

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Donna Sue previously served on two GEF - International Waters projects, the CRew Project (2012 - 2017) and prior to that, the Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) Project (2006 - 2011). She was the Chief Information Officer at the Institute of Marine Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago, from 1998 - 2006.

Her experience in information and knowledge management and communications is considerable - including communications strategy; channelling the results of research to a variety of users; stakeholder involvement; the design, implementation and dissemination of information products; public and community education, and media and public relations. She has a B.A. in Environmental Studies and Sociology from the University of London, a M.Sc. in Environmental Science from George Washington University and is certified in Management - Management Information Systems.

She believes that effective communication, advocacy, the promotion of innovation and information exchange are key to bringing about positive change in how we manage the environment.

Shamene Parker, Programme Management Assistant

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Shamene is a trained Urban Planner who holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Technology, Jamaica. She has more than eight years' experience in Office and Project Administration with BDO Jamaica and the University of Technology, Jamaica.

Her expertise lies in logistics planning for meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences. Her responsibilities include assisting with documentation, coordination and record-keeping. Shamene's organisational skills and ability to effectively work collaboratively with project stakeholders makes her fit for this role on the team.

[#CaringForOurFuture](#)



Jamaican participants work on their national campaign at the Regional Communications Workshop, Saint Lucia, 30 October to 3 November 2017

A Public Awareness and Public Education (PA/PE) Partnership was formed by IWEco in October 2017 to make a wide range of skills, expertise and resources available to both the PCU and the PCs in the development of their public education and outreach tools. This is possible through a combination of direct funding from the GEF and co-financing from the partners.

Participating countries are expected to benefit from the application of innovative tools and methods for expanding buy-in and driving behavioral change around the implementation of their national sub-projects. The harmonization of media and outreach products at regional level in support of project objectives is expected to follow.

The Partnership is coordinated by PCI Media Impact (www.pcimedia.org). Other members are the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (www.canari.org), PANOS (panoscaribbean.org) and Caribbean SEA (www.caribbean-sea.org).

The PA/PE Partnership prepared and facilitated a **Regional Communications and Engagement Strategies Capacity Building Workshop** in Saint Lucia from 30 October – 3 November 2017. In an effort to accelerate country communications campaigns, country representatives were introduced to a grant program and encouraged to develop a campaign plan, starting with a national project launch, and apply for funding. A Grant Proposal Package was subsequently shared with all country representatives to assist with the preparation of their grant proposals. Assistance was offered from all PA/PE Partners to facilitate completion of their grant proposals by the deadline as well as to provide guidance through campaign implementation. A webinar on the Grant Proposal Process was held in mid-January 2018, to answer questions from country representatives.

Four countries - Cuba, Saint Lucia, Trinidad, and Grenada – were able to complete their campaign proposals and have them approved. The other countries either could not complete their proposals due to project revisions, or needed more time to develop them. All national projects have substantial funding allocations for knowledge management and communications activities and will continue to benefit from the experience of the PA/PE Partnership as they roll their activities out.

Cuba's campaign was launched during the week of IWEco's Second Steering Committee Meeting (see pg. 7). Saint Lucia launched their campaign on Sunday April 8, 2018 and Trinidad and Tobago launched its campaign on May 20, 2018.

Learning for Action with IWEco

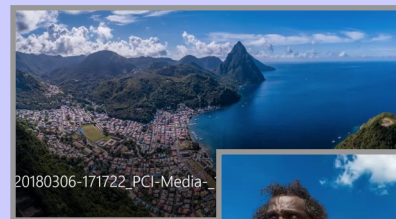
Webinars

In the period November 2017 to September 2018, nine webinars, meant to build communications capacity amongst participating countries and partners, were organized by the PA/PE Partnership. The topics covered included:

- Monitoring and Evaluation
- The Grant Proposal Process
- Communication and Youth Engagement
- Photography and Visual Storytelling
- Introduction to Participatory 3D Modeling
- Introduction to Participatory Video
- Mobile App Use for Citizen Science Data Collection
- Oral Testimonies
- Social Media

The entire series will be shared via the Project website in early 2019. In the meantime take a look at:

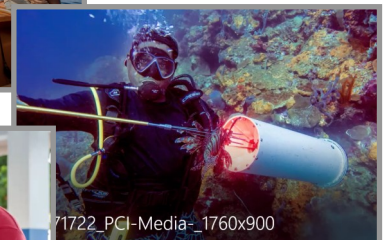
Photography and Visual Storytelling with Chris Willan



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- An interactive summer camp for children from Fond St. Jacques and environs to increase their understanding and appreciation of the environment and nature.
- Preliminary assessments of the upper watershed and recorded GPS coordinates of the sites that require slope rehabilitation.
- Substantially completed assessments of over 55 farms to inform the restoration plan.
- Contracting and training of 13 workers from the targeted communities to engage in farm assessment, tree planting and nursery operation.
- Establishment of a community plant nursery.
- Commencement of tree planting on critical areas along the river banks.
- An International Coastal Clean-up activity within the Soufriere Watershed along with Caribbean SEA and the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN).

According to the Project Manager, in this initial period of implementation it has been important to spend time getting to know the community and helping them to understand the ways in which the Project can benefit them and their environment; this is necessary for buy-in and if initiatives are to be sustainable. For more information, she may be contacted at aretha.darcheville@govt.lc



Local drumming group performing at IWEco Launch



Summer camp participants with representatives of IWEco and other partner agencies

Main partners in IWEco Saint Lucia:

Government

- Department of Forestry
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Fisheries
- Agriculture Extension Unit (Farmers)
- Sustainable Development and the Environment Unit
- Department of Physical Planning
- Ministry of Tourism
- Fond St. Jacques Primary School
- Soufriere Comprehensive Secondary School
- Crown Lands Department
- Ministry of Social Transformation

Statutory Bodies

- Soufriere Marine Management Association
- Soufriere Regional Development Foundation Limited
- Piton Management Area
- Soufriere Town Council
- Water and Sewage Authority
- St. Lucia National Trust
- St. Lucia Tourism Authority
- St. Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority

Donors

- GEF
- UN Environment
- GEP- Small Grants Fund
- GIZ

Projects

- CARILED
- BNTF

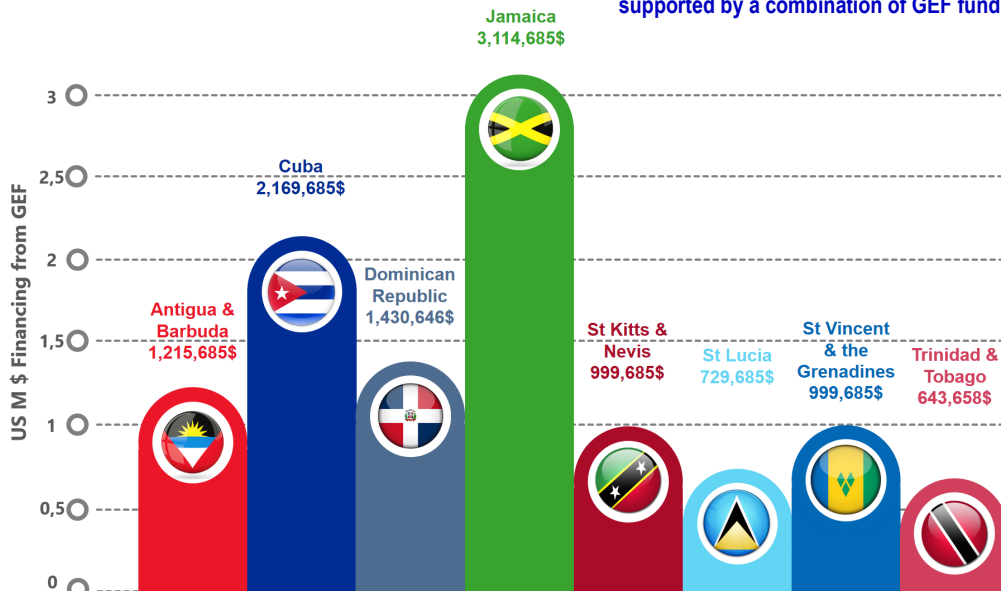
NGOS

- Caribbean SEA

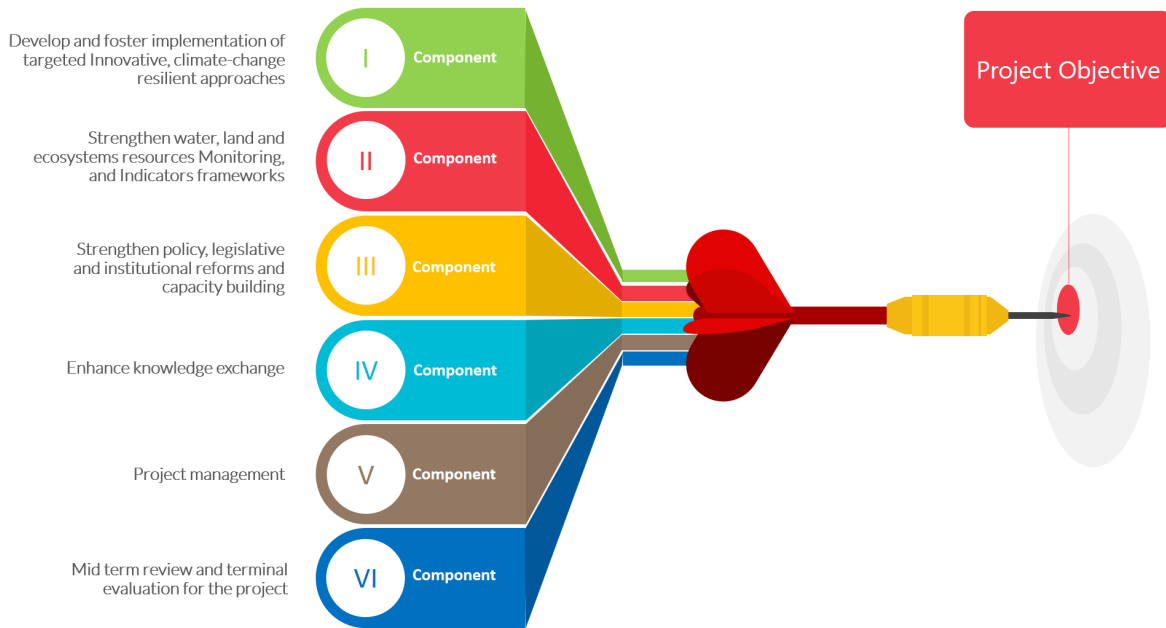
Community Based Agencies

- Belle Vue Farmers' Cooperative
- Fond St. Jacques Development Committee
- Fond St. Jacques Credit Cooperative Society
- Churches

IWEco has National Projects in eight participating countries supported by a combination of GEF funding and co-financing.



IWEco has six components:



Collaboration for innovative approaches with 5 OECS Countries

Five countries participating in IWEco: Antigua & Barbuda, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, and, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, are members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

The OECS held the 5th Meeting of its Council of Ministers of Environmental Sustainability (COMES 5), in Montserrat from 10 – 11 July 2018, under the theme “Building Resilience on the Frontlines of Climate Change”. The meeting which was attended by Ministers and senior technical officers from most of the member states, was chaired by Montserrat’s Minister of Agriculture, Trade, Lands, Housing and the Environment, Hon. David Osborne.

On 11th July 2018, in a brief signing ceremony immediately preceding the OECS COMES 5 press conference, the Regional Coordinator of the Cartagena Convention, the Secretariat of which is IWEco’s lead-Executing Agency, Dr. Lorna Inniss, invited Ministers representing the countries participating in IWEco to sign a ‘Statement of Intention’ to foster and sustain collaboration with the Project Coordination Unit, the Project Executing Agencies and Partners, including the OECS, towards successful implementation of the project in their respective countries.

Each of the Ministers spoke, highlighting the potential benefits of the Project for their countries. They expressed their joint commitment to ensuring its timely and efficient implementation.

Four of the countries (Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines) have national sub-projects that will develop and implement targeted, innovative, climate resilient approaches to land, water and ecosystem management. Direct funding from the GEF for these four projects amounts to approximately US \$4 million.

Dr. Inniss afterwards noted that since the particularly destructive hurricane season of 2017, perhaps even as a consequence of it, the trend in the region towards consolidating several related areas of responsibility into single ministries seems to have grown. Grenada, for instance, now has a Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries, Disaster Management and Information; Dominica now has a Ministry of Environment, Climate Resilience, Disaster Management and Urban Renewal.

This more integrated approach is welcomed by IWEco which looks forward to successful implementation of these innovative initiatives, so essential to greater preparedness and resilience, in its smallest participating countries.





Second Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting

Points the Way Forward for IWEco!

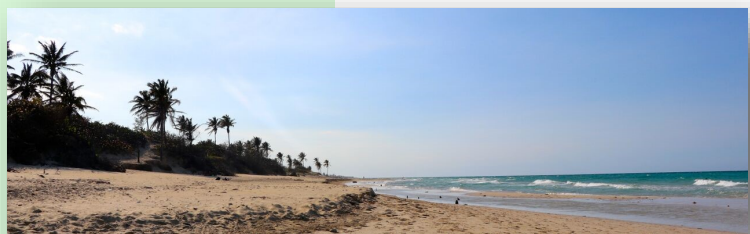
PSC2 took place in Havana, Cuba from 26th February to 1st March 2018.

Following the Project's Inception Workshop and First Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting in September 2016, project management arrangements were put in place in 2017, eight of the participating countries worked to develop their national projects and at the regional level, partnerships were being formalized in five areas: Governance; Public Awareness/Education; Research; Private Sector, and; Resource Mobilization. These make a wide range of resources and expertise available to participating countries both during and beyond the project and help the region build capacity.

Eight of IWEco's ten participating countries and most project partners were represented. Participants reviewed Project objectives; provided and received updates on the status of national projects and regional support initiatives; considered and approved the proposed draft work plan and budget for the year 2018, and; identified opportunities for collaboration with other regional programmes, projects and activities.

In addition to approving the 2018 Work Plan and Budget, following are the main decisions of RPSC 2:

- All participating countries that are a part of the IWEco project and all other related projects should ratify the three Protocols (LBS, SPAW and Oil Spills) of the Cartagena Convention by the end of the project.
- National Intersectoral/Inter-ministerial Committees are to be created and/or optimized for each country as an important government mechanism for national project implementation.
- Agreement, in principle, to an extension of the IWEco project until June 2023 due to the late start of national projects; this, to be reviewed during the next Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting, RPSC 3, early in 2019.
- Adaptive management and flexibility should be encouraged to ensure that Small Grant Project interventions support overall objectives of IWEco at local community level offering opportunities for learning, replication and upscaling.
- Consistency in the branding and outreach of the IWEco project (through website, social media, etc.) and mechanisms established for communications among all partners/countries that build upon the communication elements already developed.
- Existing fora/mechanisms, including Governance, Research and Communications Partnership meetings, should be used to ensure relevant technical discussions occur rather than hosting or establishing separate IWEco Regional Technical Advisory Group (RTAG) meetings.
- Direct collaboration with the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) Project (<https://clmeplus.org/>) towards achieving the objectives of both projects.



Jan Betlem, RPC, presents on Project status



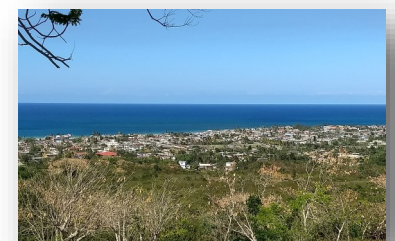
Dr. C. Odalys Giocochea of CITMA, makes closing remarks



The Cuban national project took the lead in creating IWEco's main message



Children from La Colmenita, sing about the value of coral reefs



Peñas Altas in the Guanabo Watershed

Playa de Guanabo



The St Vincent Amazon Parrot
(*Amazona guildingii*),
painting by Chris Cox

Protecting the home of a threatened species

- The Saint Vincent Parrot

The St Vincent Amazon (*Amazona guildingii*) is the only parrot which inhabits the island of St Vincent. The plumage of this beautiful parrot is so variable that no two birds appear alike.

Endemic to the island's heavily forested mountains, this large, multi-coloured and noisy parrot is increasingly threatened by hunting, trapping for the cage-bird trade and deforestation. Expansion of agriculture (banana cultivation), charcoal production and natural events like hurricanes contribute to habitat loss.

IWEco's National project in Saint Vincent & the Grenadines will address land degradation in the Georgetown Watershed, a major habitat for the parrot which is considered Vulnerable. It is also on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and listed on Appendix I and II of CITES. A census of the St. Vincent Amazon will be carried out during the early stages of the Project.

IWEco will also carry out thinning in Blue Mahoe and Mahogany forest plantations located at Perseverance which is expected to improve stability of the existing forest plantation as well as diversity through natural regrowth of indigenous forest tree species, thereby increasing the Parrot's living area significantly.

IWEco thanks the Saint Lucia IWEco Project team, the PA/PE Partnership, Marco Ferrario and Christopher Cox for their contributions to this issue.

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Website coming soon!



*integrating water, land and ecosystems management
in caribbean small island developing states*

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