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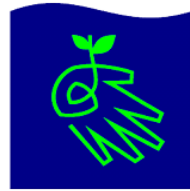
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Sustainable Development Goals being addressed



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IWeco:link

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

www.iweco.org



Entrance to the Negril Great Morass via the South Negril River—site of the Jamaica National sub-Project, where EV will be applied.

Economic Valuation of Ecosystem Services for Decision Making

Ecosystem services are crucial for the well-being of people, but their contribution to economic systems is difficult to quantify in monetary terms. Since some of them are not traded in commercial markets, they are often given too little or no weight in decision making. Thus, final decisions may favor outcomes which do have a commercial value, making unsustainable use of ecosystems more profitable in the short term while having considerable economic long-term costs.

Economic valuation (EV) is a tool for valuing ecosystems and their services in monetary terms. It quantifies the benefits provided by ecosystems and the impact of ecosystem changes on the wellbeing of people. EV is a valuable tool for public education and awareness raising, for policy appraisal and to assist decision-making. At the same time, it can help bridge the gap between science and policymaking by communicating the importance of ecosystems in terms of their economic value to a variety of sectors.

While the GEF IW portfolio historically has made use of economic valuation studies (in the Guinea Current and Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem projects, for example), the tool has not been applied in a systematic or widespread manner, as economic valuations are resource-intensive, and expert's knowledge is generally needed to conduct an analysis "from scratch".

Many projects can provide neither the resources nor the data necessary to conduct full EV analyses. In the scope of the GEF IW:LEARN, and the relevant guidance (available at:

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IWeco's RSPCM 4 and Mid-Term Review - A time for Reflection and Correction

IWeco's Fourth Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting (RSPCM 4) took place virtually on 1st and 2nd July 2020, and considered, among other things, the results of the Mid-Term Review. See pages 2—3.



Caribbean Public Health Agency

CARPHA

SGP The GEF Small Grants Programme



IWEco's Fourth Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting (RPSCM 4) took place virtually, 1st–2nd July 2020, with excellent participation from participating countries, implementing and executing agencies and project personnel.

IWEco and Partners need to be both creative and adaptable

The Honourable Daryl Vaz, Jamaica's Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation with responsibility for Water and Housing, opened the meeting, reminding participants of the challenges of COVID-19 currently being faced by all countries, and of the relevance of projects like IWEco as creative solutions are sought going forward. The Project's tag-line *#CaringForOurFuture*, he noted, is particularly relevant and a successful project would lead to greater resilience.

These were themes repeated by those representing IWEco's partner agencies, including Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary General (Human and Social Development), CARICOM Secretariat, Isabelle Vanderbeck, GEF Task Manager, UNEP; Ana Maria Nunez, Regional Technical Specialist for Waters, Oceans, Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Nature, Climate and Energy, UNDP; Christopher Corbin, Programme Officer, UNEP Cartagena Convention; Shermaine Clauzel, Acting Head of the Environmental Health and Sustainable Development Department, CARPHA, and: Joan John-Norville, Programme Coordinator, Biodiversity & Ecosystem Management, OECS.

Speakers reminded of the importance of continued engagement and renewed, or ongoing, commitment, of the need for complementarity and collaboration, and of community-based action for sustainability, as exemplified by the Small Grant Programme lead-projects in IWEco. It was agreed that there is no project without the countries and that as such, national committees and representatives have an important role to play if the Project is to be successful.

Overview of Project Activities and Challenges

Jan Betlem, Regional Project Coordinator, provided an overview of activities in the past year, and of the budget, including the status of Project expenditure to end-December 2019. In addition to sharing project achievements, he outlined the many challenges facing Project implementation, including extremely slow execution of

activities on the ground in most countries at mid-term; the slow pace of communication between countries/partners/PCU; insufficient progress on research and governance partnerships; insufficient promotion of, and commitment to, Project objectives at country level at mid-term, and, the impact of COVID-19 on the society as a whole. Finally, he stressed that project implementation time is running out.

An Introduction to Economic Valuation

Day 2 began with an introduction to Environmental Economic Valuation which was facilitated by GEF IW:Learn and UNIDO. This brief introduction to environmental economic valuation – valuing ecosystems and their services in monetary terms – focused on why it makes sense and how it can be done. (IWEco subsequently held a separate and more detailed online training on 15th September 2020. See more details on page 4).

Project Mid-Term - a time for Reflection and Correction

RPSC 4 featured presentation of the results and recommendations of the Project's Mid-Term Review which was conducted from January to July 2020, and covered the period September 2016 - December 2019. It was presented by the two independent evaluators, Dr. Sherry Heileman and Mr. Jan Voordouw.

In essence, it found that while IWEco is gaining traction, there is a high risk that it cannot be completed satisfactorily without some drastic adaptive management measures and a one-year extension until August 2023 for technical completion. Achievement of long-term impact and sustainability of results is heavily dependent on continued political, technical, and financial commitment, as well as uptake of the results by the Governments and regional institutions.

Among the Project's strengths are the engagement of diverse partners and stakeholders, high local stakeholder buy-in and ownership, and extensive public awareness/public education efforts. Factors negatively affecting performance include the excessive lag between project design and start-up and institutional changes at the regional and national levels in the interim (e.g., institutional restructuring, reduction in institutional capacities and stakeholder buy-in, and shifts in national priorities). Asynchronous start

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of the sub-projects, the regional components, and the UNDP Small Grants Programme initiatives resulted in limited cross-fertilization and integration among them. COVID-19 severely disrupted activities in 2020.

The MTR made a total of 20 recommendations for consideration by the RPSC 4, which agreed in principle to adopt the recommendations for implementation by the PCU, CAR/RCU and co-executing partners. The PCU would, along with project partners, assess and prioritise the outputs and activities in components 1-4 in consultation with executing partners (focusing on high-impact output and activities). In addition approval was given for a maximum 12-month project extension until August 2023, latest, to enable the completion of activities. An implementation plan would have to be prepared and that would contribute to determining the length of the extension. The next, and fifth, IWeco RPSC Meeting was approved to take place tentatively in May 2021.

Saving Jamaica's West Indian Whistling-Duck



West Indian Whistling Ducks in the Royal Palm Reserve (left, foreground)

Restoration of important elements of biodiversity of the Negril Great Morass, one of the largest natural coastland ecosystems in the Caribbean region, supporting internationally significant species and high species endemism, is the aim of IWeco's National sub-Project in Jamaica. This includes the Negril Royal Palm Reserve which provides refuge, breeding, feeding and nesting for a number of shore and wading birds including the rare, endangered and Caribbean endemic West Indian Whistling Duck (WIWD), *Dendrocygna arborea*.

Jamaica's West Indian Whistling-Duck population is the second largest throughout its limited, Caribbean, range. The Negril Great Morass is one of the most prominent habitats for the WIWD and other shore and

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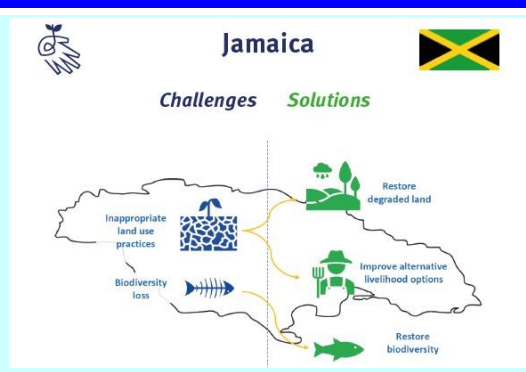
IWeco Project Mid-Term Key lessons learned



The Mid-Term Evaluators noted several key lessons learned thus far in the IWeco Project:

- Flexibility in project design and execution modalities** is important to adapt to changing contexts and circumstances, as experienced at the national and regional levels. A timely start and early assessment and mitigation of institutional reputational risk are essential.
- Continuous engagement with executing partners**, including face-to-face interaction, is critical, especially when trust and stakeholder buy-in have been reduced. At times, high level intervention by the implementing and executing agencies and 'behind the scene' diplomacy at a personal level are needed to resolve difficult situations.
- Engaging local communities and the private sector in project execution is an effective strategy to help achieve project objectives and to promote sustainability.** However, it is important to demonstrate tangible benefits early (e.g. livelihoods, revenue generation).
- Executing project interventions on private property is risky** since action taken by proprietors may jeopardize the interventions and objectives (e.g. farms in Saint Lucia and private quarries in Trinidad & Tobago).
- Mid-term and end-of-project targets must be realistic** in terms of the time required to meet them. Achieving targets such as those related to environmental impacts of the interventions can take considerably more time than the project's lifespan and lead to low project evaluation ratings, compared to process-oriented targets such as capacity building, institutional strengthening, and reforestation that can be achieved in a shorter timeframe.
- Executing national/local components of a regional project through **strategic alliances with partners with established presence and networks in the country increases efficiency and promotes sustainability** of results. Successful execution in some of the project countries can be partly attributed to involvement of the private sector, local non-governmental organisations, and the GEF/UNDP SGP.
- Execution of multiple national projects with similar objectives within the country by the same executing agency, with one project manager and project management committee, capitalizes on potential synergies and increases efficiency and cost-effectiveness** (as seen in the case of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). This strategy can be particularly effective for countries with limited capacity to execute projects.

See the full briefing note: <https://tinyurl.com/y3p95gew>



(Continued from page 1)

<https://www.iwlearn.net/valuation>) such situations are referred to as "Tier 1" projects, i.e. areas/regions which can only provide limited resources towards an EV. Nevertheless, valuable results can be obtained from a "Tier 1 analysis", also with limited resources by using the simplified method as described in the GEF IW:LEARN Guidance Documents.

The later utilization of the results needs to be planned from the very beginning, and depends on the policy context of the assessment, the current situation in the project area, in terms of starting or running the Transboundary Data Analysis. Strategic Action Planning (TDA/SAP) process, the resources, the time and expertise invested in the economic valuation.

A Tier 1 economic valuation, using the methodology presented in the Guidance Documents (e.g. for a "screening analysis", assessing the overall value of all ecosystem services in a whole Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) or transboundary river basin in a resource-efficient way) will generate values that provide a rough overview of potential values of ecosystem services in the area/region. Hence, these can be used effectively for communication and awareness raising purposes. They can also be used for policy appraisals and to influence decision making, but here transparency is required regarding the shortcomings, frame of analysis and assumptions used in the methodology. Also, the accuracy of an EV depends on the scale of the region and the ecosystem services covered, e.g. an assessment of all ecosystem services in a large region, such as a LME, will be less precise than assessments on a sub-national or even local scale.

Article submitted by Dr. Eduard Interwies

Applying Economic Valuation of Ecosystem Services in IWeco

In partnership with UNIDO and GEF IW:LEARN, the IWeco Project is supporting technical capacity building at the National and Regional levels by introducing ESV in a two phased approach:

Phase One consisted of training on the application of the guidelines for the implementation of an economic valuation in the context of IWeco participating countries, all of which are Small Island Developing States. This training took place on 15th September 2020 as part of the Project's Partners' Webinar Series. Its primary objectives were to:

- Improve regional understanding of basic economic valuation concepts, to better contextualize the valuation of natural (wet) ecosystems.
- Improve regional knowledge about economic valuation methods – what methods exist, when can they be applied.
- Improve regional understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the various valuation methodologies in various contexts.
- Facilitate understanding of the application of these tools and associated repository to inform national planning and policy making.

In **Phase Two**, IWeco will partner with the executing agency of the Jamaica National Project, the National Environmental Protection Agency, and other supporting institutions, organizations and stakeholder groups involved with the management of the Negril Great Morass on an economic valuation of the Negril Great Morass.

Both Phases One and Two are based on the methodology and training materials as described in the "GEF Guidance Documents to Economic Valuation of Ecosystem Services in IW Projects", developed under the GEF International Waters: Learning Exchange And Resources Network - Subcomponent 4.1 Systematic consideration of the economic valuation of natural resources into the TDA/SAP process (to be found at: www.iwlearn.net/valuation).

According to Jan Betlem, IWeco's Regional Project Coordinator, "ESV can help the case for investment in ecosystem protection. It can highlight the benefits and costs of a particular policy, measure or action in monetary terms. IWeco hopes that the training provided in Phase One will improve understanding and application of this valuable tool; and that Phase Two, focusing on the unique ecosystem of the Negril Great Morass, will illustrate the approach in action and encourage its wider use to inform decisions throughout the Caribbean."

COVID-19 and Work with JB



How has the coronavirus outbreak affected your work?

When I boarded the plane in Montego Bay in early-March on my way to Europe on planned leave, I could not imagine that it would be the last plane to leave the island before the outbreak. After arrival in Europe, I learned that my on-going flights to visit family had all been cancelled. I shortened my leave and started planning to return to Jamaica... ..in vain...today I am still stuck in the Netherlands, my home country!

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IWEco:Cuba makes progress with environmental monitoring



Monitoring Water Quality and biodiversity in the Arimao Watershed and adjacent coastal zone

As part of the environmental monitoring activities of the IWEco's Cuba National sub-Project, in the period July-September 2020, researchers, specialists and technicians from CEAC and the Botanical Garden of Cienfuegos carried out various campaigns with the aim of monitoring the waters in the Arimao watershed and the adjacent coastal zone, including biodiversity. The objective is to assess the quality of the waters and the riparian vegetation using the environmental indicators selected to measure the progress and impact of the intervention actions that are being undertaken in the watershed, one of four addressed in this project.

Monthly workshops on participatory methodologies for coral monitoring in the Guanabo Watershed



The working group of the Guanabo watershed in Havana develops workshops every month in coordination with the Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation, with the participation of divers, who collaborate with the local museum. Training activities are carried out on a new methodology for participatory coral monitoring.

See the full IWEco:cuba bulletin at:

<http://www.iweco.org/publications/boletin-iwecocuba-volumen-3-iii-trimestre-2020>

Resilience in the face of COVID-19 setbacks!

The **Trinidad and Tobago National Sub-Project** resumed operations on July 1st 2020 following cessation of all field activities for almost 14 weeks due to national Covid-19 health and safety restrictions. During the lock-down period they could not enter the compound of National Quarries Company Limited (NQCL), site of the project's interventions. As a result the 10,000+ mixed forest species community nursery suffered approximately 90% seedling and sapling mortality. This resulted in an estimated set-back of 6 months for the field quarry rehabilitation effort while the nursery stock is regenerated.

While some might feel defeated, throw their hands up and give up in the face of such loss, this devastation did not dampen the spirits of the Quarry Rehabilitation Champs. On the first day back out in the field, they devised a plan to shift gear and plant organic short crops to sustain the livelihoods component of the Project, under the guidance of the Trust for Sustainable Livelihoods field supervisor, Daniel Iles.



Champs prepare beds for planting

The team cleared the nursery and Site 1 and prepared seedling beds to plant organic lettuce, patchoi and bodi (string beans), using the knowledge of the Champs, some of whom are also small home garden farmers. To date, the Champs have been able to harvest and sell approximately US\$100 of produce (patchoi and lettuce) to staff at NQCL, and to the surrounding community, by setting up a small roadside market table on the main road to the quarry entrance.

They also singlehandedly negotiated the sale and supply of fresh lettuce and bodi (string beans) to the cafeteria at NQCL, although this arrangement is still to be regularized.

According to Alicia Aquing, IWEco's National sub-Project Manager, *"The positive attitude adopted by our Champs to ensure that they did not sit idle while the Project gets back on track is testament to the level of determination and commitment to ensuring the success of this national project. This is truly a lesson learnt for community-led adaptive strategizing in the face of project challenges and set-backs"*.

Three months into this initiative, the Champs have expanded crops to include hot peppers, cabbage, parsley, chives and ochro. A "Garden Wars" competition has been initiated where the Champs have formed themselves into smaller teams and are planting beds. The group with the best yielding produce and planting methods will be crowned the "Garden Wars" Champs. We look forward to healthy competition amongst these teams!



Rows of patchoi in project nursery

Along with this activity, tending of seedlings continues and the Champs hope that planting out of the trees can soon begin again.

Sharing and Exchange via IWEco's Partners' Webinars!



Since our first Partners' Webinar on 2nd June 2020, IWEco has hosted six more (16th June, 14th and 28th July, 1st 15th and 29th September). These have provided good opportunities for Project personnel and partners at local, country and regional level to discuss concerns and challenges relating to Project implementation, and to exchange experiences and lessons learned, particularly in this period when COVID-19 restrictions have meant that much adaptation is needed to get things done.

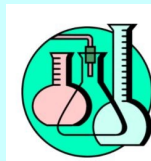
Themes covered so far have included: overall updates particularly measures to mitigate and adapt to COVID-19 and resulting impacts upon implementation; national sub-project updates, challenges and achievements; the community-focused projects being implemented by the Small Grants Programme in alignment with IWEco, and; the identification, documentation and dissemination of lessons learned and good practice.

The webinar on 15th September 2020, was extended to four hours to provide an introduction to Economic Valuation which received excellent feedback from participants. We plan to periodically use the webinars for training on a range of subjects.

The platform used is Microsoft Teams and notices generally go out in the week preceding the webinar. We try to host them bi-monthly. Do you have any ideas or topics in mind? If so, please contact the PCU.

Regional Laboratory Assessment

IWEco has begun a laboratory assessment to update and build on the one previously carried out under the IWCAM Project (2006-2011) in order to further strengthen national and regional capacity to perform environmental quality monitoring and to analyse the data to inform the effectiveness of remediation activities. Priority areas for assessment have been expanded to include the capacity to analyse soil, sediment, and perform biota monitoring in addition to water analyses.



The assessment will assist laboratory capacity building efforts within the Region through:

- The development of an inventory of existing laboratory capacity to process soil, sediment, water and biota samples for environmental monitoring purposes.
- The strengthening of the capability of national laboratories to perform environmental surveillance and monitoring of parameters related to the attainment of IWEco objectives through: the identification of suitable labs to build capacity based on existing throughput and available manpower, and the identification of training needs with respect to use and maintenance of equipment.
- Achievement of compliance with the obligations of the key international agreements.
- Improved environmental health surveillance which will contribute to updating of the SOCAR/SOMEE reports developed by the Cartagena Convention. Secretariat.

The survey report, due by end-December 2020, will make recommendations for suitable laboratories in which to conduct capacity building activities. IWEco is then committed to the provision of equipment to support environmental quality monitoring in selected laboratories, and; capacity building through training in the use and maintenance of laboratory equipment.

REMDAP Scoping Exercise undertaken by IWEco



IWEco has begun a scoping exercise to assess existing regional environmental data sources, existing and/or proposed platforms and map the associated data flows, formats and storage points of such data. This is the first step (Phase 1) towards creation of a web-based (online) **Regional Environmental Monitoring Data Portal (REMDAP)** meant to ultimately strengthen the scientific basis for effective regional environmental monitoring and assessment, include tools and indicators for multi-scale application, develop improved methods for multi-scale assessment and monitoring of land degradation trends, and contribute to monitoring the impacts of GEF investments in water, land and ecosystem services maintenance.

This desk study, due in the fourth-quarter of 2020, is looking at the environmental monitoring data and data flows required to produce national State of Environment Reports, Regional Reports on State of Marine Pollution - SOCAR and State of Marine Habitat by UNEP CEP, the SOMEE coordinated through the UNDP GEF CLME+ Project, and data and data flows needed by the respective countries to report on relevant global MEAs such as UNFCCC, Stockholm Convention, UNCCD, CBD and WSSD targets.

The REMDAP, which could possibly be created in a later Phase 2, will display data resulting from various national, regional and global monitoring efforts and will facilitate improved decision making and compliance with reporting under relevant MEAs including the Cartagena Convention. It is expected that it will be housed at the Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention (UNEP CEP) to ensure maximum coordination, usability and sustained database population and maintenance.

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After a few days of real leave, I realized I had to prepare for weeks of stay and fix up my 'new' office. It didn't seem like a big deal at the time ...but since that moment I have been working "from home", far away from my other "Jamaica home".

First, it was a must to reconnect with IWEco colleagues and office colleagues in Kingston. Then there was adjusting the way I work. For the 'external' colleagues probably nothing has changed much; they continue receiving emails and phone calls as before. The biggest change is not being able to meet on a daily basis, and even several times a day, with dear colleagues in the office. I am a people-person and direct interaction enhances my creativity and inspiration. As it is now, I do not feel good about no direct contact at all. This is not the way to manage a project or people!

Now, I have only my African pussycat visiting me from time to time (especially when she is hungry and needs more food...). Although Skype, Zoom and TEAMS have excellent features, nothing replaces the direct interaction with colleagues in the office environment.

What are your solutions helping you manage the disruption?

There are not many solutions to manage the disruption; we simply have to accept the new situation with its pro's and con's.

Pro's: I don't need to worry about the health care situation (I think that this country will be able to cope with the pandemic); it has been decades since I have been in my home country for such a long time in spring and summer and it is nice to experience these seasons again; the Netherlands is the perfect country for cycling so, I bought a bicycle and every day I sneak out to cycle for at least an hour....good for body and mind; my close family members are in easy reach; my working times have changed - I now start looking at my screen immediately when I wake up in the morning, and I do a last check just before bed time in the evening...even on weekends I am in front the computer. In general, I work much more compared to working from the office.

Con's: Project Management is a complex combination of formal- and informal contacts, face to face and digital communication, it is about dealing with people, supporting and encouraging, it is about having the big overview but also having a feel for the details, it is working in a team. This contact is becoming less and less over time as the only way to communicate is 'via computer'. We are strongly advised not to leave the house unnecessarily, so I do not go out apart from trips alone on my bicycle. Yet, although at home, my freedom to move around is very much restricted. Working from home means there are many more potential disturbances ...the pussycat sneaks in to *miauw* for more food, family members invite me to join in activities and there are phone calls or visits from neighbours which cannot be ignored, etc.



What are you most concerned about?

I am most concerned about the huge global impact this pandemic will have on our society. Although we need a different and more sustainable society with improved contacts with ecosystem services all over the world, in the short-term millions of people will lose their income and livelihoods. This will create unrest and an increased use of natural resources. We need to drastically change the way we deal with natural processes and systems. The track-record of humans is not good: we tend to not learn and prefer to continue as we are used to.

What do you want others to know about what's happening in your work?

Well, I think others are in the same situation. We can do part of our work but are limited because of the single means of communication (the computer). Remember, Environmental management is People management. How can our IWEco executing partners assist local communities in the field?

What solutions, coping mechanisms, best practices, or other positive outcomes?

No specific solutions. I am glad I could quickly organize a small office space with internet etc. I believe it is a must to have my own office space. I am more relaxed as I can determine my own working hours during the day and feel a better work-life balance all together. I have wonderful colleagues and I know we all suffer in one way or another, but together we make progress. The bond between us has grown since the crisis started, that is for sure.

Any other reflections, or anything else you would like to share re. COVID-19?

The current situation is, I think and hope, a once in a life time experience. For some of us it will have huge repercussions; for others it will have nearly no impacts. I hope that this period will be used by the global leaders to press the reset button and to engage in shaping a new society that is much more sustainable. Ten years from now we can assess and judge whether we have learned something from this crisis or not. I can only hope for the best.

A great resource to help you document your project!

This webinar, facilitated by IWEco's Communications Partnership in 2018, covers the foundations of visual storytelling by
Chris Willan:

[The Elements of Photography and Visual Storytelling](#)



The West Indian Whistling Duck in its habitat



Photo courtesy: Dr. Ann M. Haynes-Sutton

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wading birds. Its sedges and grasses providing refuge, breeding, feeding and nesting to support the entire life cycle of these animals. Cuba, Jamaica's closest neighbour, hosts the largest population of the species.

Of the over 300 species of birds found on the island, the WIWD is one of six species that are globally threatened or endangered. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List categorizes the WIWD as near threatened which means that though the species is not currently at risk of extinction, it may become classified as such in the near future. Destruction of their wetland habitat and predation, leading to decline in their numbers, are the key factors that place species at risk of extinction.

Through the IWEco Project, the National Environmental Planning Agency (NEPA), which is responsible for execution of Jamaica's National sub-Project, is undertaking a population assessment of the WIWD within the boundaries of the Negril EPA. This assessment will pinpoint the critical sites (e.g. breeding and foraging) as well as the threats to the population in the Negril EPA. Following the assessment, a management plan to restore the habitat of the West Indian Whistling Duck will be created.

For up-to-date info on COVID-19: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

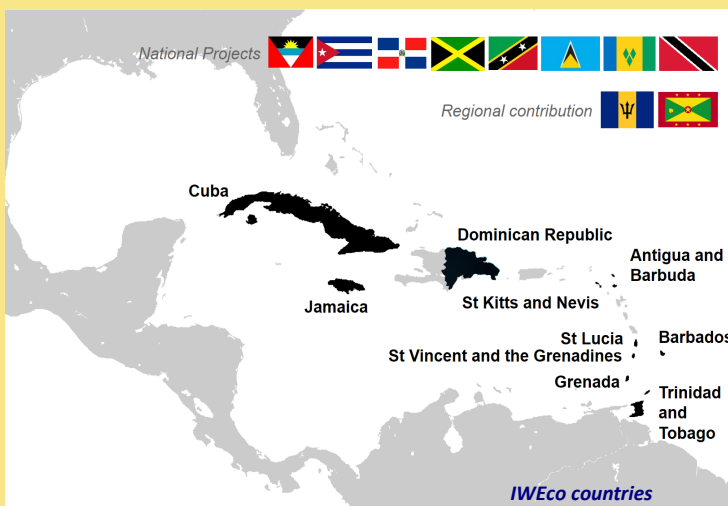
IWEco thanks the Cuba, Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica National sub-Projects, Dr. Eduard Interwies, and other Project Partners for their contributions to this issue.

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

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