



***Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management
in Caribbean Small Island Developing States***

#CaringForOurFuture

Monthly Project Highlights

August 2021

This e-bulletin highlights activities of the GEF UNEP IWEco Project in the month of August 2021. For more information on the project see: www.iweco.org

We invite Project partners, National Focal Points and national project management units to submit short items and links relevant to IWEco and related subjects! For more information contact Donna Sue Spencer at donna.spencer@un.org.



Participants in a vanilla cultivation training session, at Barre D'Isle in the Dennerly Forest learn how to build a trellis system, April 2021. Photo credit; IWEco Saint Lucia Project.

Cultivating vanilla to support the forest and sustainable livelihoods

The **IWEco Saint Lucia National Project** is using an innovative approach to forest conservation and sustainable land management by training farmers to cultivate vanilla, an increasingly precious commodity, in the south of the island. The vanilla training sessions which began in April 2021, aim to build knowledge of best practices for vanilla cultivation as well as to restore and uphold traditional knowledge. The project is revitalizing vanilla cultivation on the island, ensuring that traditional knowledge of the management of the crop is not lost, creating

sustainable livelihoods, and enhancing the economic viability of the island's agriculture sector. Most importantly, this agro-forestry activity is contributing significantly to conservation efforts and sustainable land management by giving farmers a financial reason not to destroy the forest.

[Read more](#)



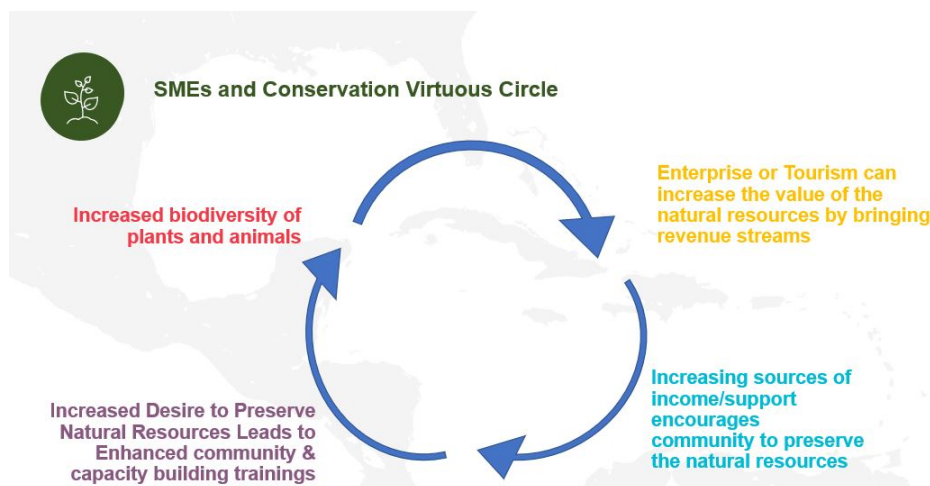
The IWEco.Cuba Project charts its progress!


Specialists from the Cienfuegos Centre for Environmental Studies (CEAC) are working on the first phase of drawing up the map of landscape units in the Arimao River basin, one of four Watersheds which are the focus of IWEco activities in Cuba.

Preparation of the map takes into account geological and climatic conditions, the morphology of the area, the types of soils and existing plant formations. Changes to the natural landscapes by human activity are also analyzed and integrated. It is also being informed by the information on the natural, economic and socio-demographic characteristics of the area. This map will be the basis for development of an environmental zoning proposal for the river basin with the aim of ensuring wiser use of existing natural resources, their rehabilitation and improvement, as well as an increase in the quality of life for the inhabitants of the Arimao River Basin.

This is just one of many activities covered in IWEco.Cuba's latest newsletter! Check it out:

[Read IWEco Cuba's latest bulletin](#)





IWEco is working through CANARI to strengthen Small & Micro Enterprises (SMEs), outlining the relevance of strong, sustainable nature-based SMEs to nature conservation and human well-being.

Strengthening nature-based enterprises and livelihoods in IWEco - CANARI's capacity building for mentors is underway!

CANARI has completed a series of five, online capacity building sessions for mentors under its partnership with the GEF-IWEco Project to strengthen and support nature-based small and micro enterprises (SMEs) in the Caribbean.

This is part of the two-year long partnership between CANARI and IWEco [to strengthen and support stewardship and sustainable and climate-resilient livelihoods in the targeted IWEco countries](#) to in turn facilitate healthy and resilient ecosystems under four intervention areas. For more information on the project and the four intervention areas.

These capacity building sessions focus on Intervention Area 2 'Strengthening community enterprises to ensure sustainable use and enhance socio-economic benefits to surrounding communities.' This is meant to support community nature-based Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) in delivering triple bottom line (environmental, social and economic) co-benefits through support provided by trained in-country small business development mentors. The overall objectives of these initial capacity building sessions are to (i) raise awareness of targeted SMEs on capacity building (ii) build capacity of SME Mentors to provide support to SMEs and (iii) build capacity of project stakeholders.

Representatives from government and regional agencies, involved in natural resources management and/or supporting small businesses were also invited to participate in sessions focused on specific tools for supporting nature-based SMEs. The intention is to learn from these agencies' experiences and share the tools and processes that CANARI uses to support nature-based enterprises. The series which started on 4th August and ended on 1st September, took place virtually using the Zoom platform Following the launch of the programme, sessions have covered:

- Understanding community nature-based enterprises
- Mentoring community nature-based enterprises
- Assessing capacity of community nature-based enterprises and planning for capacity-building
- The Mentor-Mentee relationship

Now that these lively sessions have been completed, the mentoring begins with the SMEs which have met CANARI's criteria!

#CaringForOurFuture #NosImportaEIFuturo #CANARICaribbean #SMEs

[Read more](#)





Bonefish cruising over seagrass along mangrove edge, East End, Grand Bahama
Photo credit: IWEco The Bahamas Project.

Restoring and sustaining the natural environment of East Grand Bahama

The IWEco Project promotes collaboration with the IWEco The Bahamas Project which, although a separate project, also has a Ridge-to-Reef approach. The Bahamas Project is focusing on ecologically important mangrove wetlands and pine forests which encompass East Grand Bahama, one of the most ecologically diverse yet vulnerable areas of the country. It is focused on restoring and sustaining the natural environment, developing an ecotourism sector that supports sustainable livelihoods and implementing proper watershed management planning for an area that spans some 49,000 acres.

The components of this Project align closely with the UNEP-implemented GEF-funded Implementing Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWEco) Regional Project although it is being coordinated directly by the UN Environment Programme Task Manager to the GEF rather than the Project Coordinating Unit based in Kingston, Jamaica at the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention, it is part of the IWEco family and benefits from regionally planned activities and tools being developed under the regional project.

The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) in the Ministry of the Environment and Housing serves as the Executing Agency and the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) is the Partner Executing Agency. A wide cross-section of public and private stakeholders, experts and environmental managers are working collaboratively to achieve project outcomes over a three-year period, February 2020 to January 2023. On 16th August 2021, IWEco The Bahamas, hosted a virtual public meeting to present the objectives and plans of the project and progress so far. Topics included Biodiversity, Watershed Planning, Developing an Ecotourism Plan of Action, and Legal Concerns.

The project has now established its own website and newsletter. Take a look:

<https://iwecoproject.depp.gov.bs/>

July 2021 newsletter:

<https://iwecoproject.depp.gov.bs/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Island-Eco-Diary-newsletter-19th-July-2021.pdf>

IWEco The Bahamas website



The Third IWEco Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting, held in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, in April 2019, was the last regional project meeting held in person.

IWEco's 5th Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting to be held virtually, 23 - 24 September 2021

The IWEco Project will hold its 5th Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting (RPSCM 5) on 23rd and 24th September 2021, virtually. RPSCM 5 will be hosted by the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis and attended by all project participating countries and partners.

The main objectives of RPSCM 5 will be to:

- i. provide an update on the status of national projects as executed by the National Entities, as well as the status of regional support initiatives as executed by the project's Co-Executing Partners, given the observations and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review final report;
- ii. report on the completion of the UNDP executed GEF Small Grants Projects and other UNDP-led interventions, as supported by IWEco;
- iii. discuss the general progress, the budget situation and the expected timeline in order to complete all of the IWEco project activities;
- iv. identify and discuss opportunities for collaboration with other regional programmes, projects and activities.

Look out for our quarterly newsletter, IWEco:link, September 2021 issue, for highlights.





The Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWEco Project) is a five-year, regional project that builds upon the work of previous initiatives, to address water, land and biodiversity resource management as well as climate change.

IWEco's objective is to contribute to the preservation of Caribbean ecosystems that are of global significance and to the sustainability of livelihoods.

IWEco is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment Programme) is the lead Implementing agency for national and regional sub-projects, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implementing some activities.

www.iweco.org

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