



Report of the

Meeting of Regional Partners in the Caribbean Water

and Wastewater Sector

28-29 April 2014, Barbados

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the proceedings, outputs and recommendations out of a Regional Meeting of Partners in the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Sector during April 2014. The meeting was hosted by the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C), The United Nations Caribbean Regional Coordination Unit (UNEP-CAR/RCU) and the Global Environmental Facility Caribbean Revolving Fund for Wastewater Management (GEF-CReW). The main aim of the meeting was to share information regarding projects and programmes being undertaken by the various participating organisations. The meeting also sought to strengthen regional partnerships in a bid to address the issues facing the water and wastewater sectors within the region against a backdrop of climate change.

The two day exercise incorporated several presentations followed by two (2) facilitated sessions to discuss and prioritize issues facing the water and wastewater sector in the Caribbean. The participants comprised *inter alia* representatives from inter-governmental, regional, international, NGO and research organisations. Key issues highlighted during the meeting included: the recognition that the region needed to develop practical ways of addressing water and wastewater issues; there needed to be collaboration between regional partners with the same goals; information and data sharing was critical so as to avoid duplication of projects; more efforts in public awareness programmes was important as was fully examining lessons learnt from each agency including the challenges and short comings faced.

The facilitated sessions were two phased- the first phase sought to identify the projects and programmes that each of the organisations previously conducted or were planning to carry out within the next year. The aim of this session was to establish what information was already there; the similarities between the various projects; and to identify priority interventions for water and wastewater in the region. The priority areas identified in the first session: governance, targeted interventions, capacity building and data sharing; were then were further discussed by the groups. In terms of governance, the main issue identified was the disconnect and lack of awareness about water resources management issues across the region. With regards to targeted interventions issues identified included the protectiveness of agencies in sharing information and that the overall results of IWRM initiatives not being properly defined at the regional level.

Capacity building issues took into account the lack of funds and a need for accreditation and continuous education; and finally regarding the point of data sharing it was noted that there was immense difficulty across the region when it came to accessing and utilising information. Poor data quality was also an issue. Another major point coming out of the discussions was investment, in particular, the need to explore how the returns on investments were being measured throughout the region.

Mechanisms for increased collaboration and the need to raise the profile of water and wastewater were also discussed. These mechanisms included the role of the High Level Session- Ministerial Forum co-hosted for the past nine years by the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) and the Global GWP-C; the increased involvement of Ministers from sectors other than water and wastewater; and leadership at the technical level to champion the cause of proper water resources management. Other suggestions included: collaboration especially on large projects; use of formal agreements or informational arrangements as needed; the formulation of regional databases of projects and expertise which could be easily accessible to all; and the engagement of the private sector among others.

1. Background

In the Caribbean, responsibility for water resources management at the regional level is shared among intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, international organisations, research institutions and professional networks. Ongoing challenges with regards to this shared responsibility include information sharing and coordination amongst these entities to avoid duplication of effort and ensure maximum utilisation of resources. There is also an ongoing need to share lessons learnt in the execution of water related projects. Another frequently articulated need is a common framework which organisations can reference their work against.

There have been a number of initiatives and frameworks developed which attempt to address these needs. One of these is the CARICOM Consortium of Water Institutions which was endorsed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Council for Trade and Economic Development-Environment (COTED) in 2008. This COTED also approved “the process for the Development of a CARICOM Common Water Framework”. The Consortium, comprised of a core of CARICOM agencies, and other regional agencies working in water resources management, was charged with identifying priority issues for water resources management within the region and also the coordination of technical work. The TORs for the Consortium included the development of a database of water resources projects and another on regional water resources expertise. The TORs also spoke to the development of joint work programmes among agencies. The last meeting of the Consortium was in 2011. A Consortium briefing note, supplied by the CARICOM Secretariat is provided in Appendix 1.

An existing framework which speaks to *inter alia* the management of water resources is the CARICOM Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change and accompanying Implementation Plan (IP). These were developed by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), and were approved and adopted by CARICOM Heads of Government in 2009 and 2012 respectively. These documents recognize water as a cross cutting issue and speak to the need to build climate resilience within the water sector. The Protocol concerning Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS) established under the Cartagena Convention also articulates regional targets relating to water, wastewater and sanitation.

There is some formal collaboration on projects among agencies e.g. the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) is executing the Water, Climate and Development Programme for the Caribbean in partnership with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC). The Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) is collaborating with the Global Environment Facility-Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (GEF-CReW) for a wastewater reuse project. There are several other examples. Regional agencies also share information partner and collaborate informally. However both formal and informal partnerships and collaboration need maintenance. Periodic networking and information sharing events help sustain these formal and informal cooperation mechanisms. These type of events also help

identify options for emerging regional water resources issues, as well as new avenues for cooperation.

2. Meeting Overview and Outputs

In April 2014, The Global Water Partnership Caribbean (GWP-C) and the United Nations Environmental Programme, Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP-CAR/RCU) jointly hosted a “**Meeting of Regional Partners in the Water and Wastewater Sector**”. The Meeting took place in Barbados on the 28-29th of April 2014 with financial support from the GWP-C WACDEP and the jointly implemented UNEP-CAR/RCU and Inter American Development Bank (IDB), GEF CReW Project.

Both the GWP-C WACDEP and the GEF-CReW project work plans speak to regional coordination and knowledge sharing. The WACDEP focuses on information sharing, strengthening partnerships and coordination for improving regional climate resilience and water security. Similarly the GEF-CReW project supports regional dialogue and knowledge exchange among wastewater stakeholders. Recognizing that there have been no recent regional coordination meetings and that there was a strong need to share information on new projects and initiatives, discuss new challenges, and identify avenues for cooperation, GWP-C, UNEP/CAR-RCU and GEF CReW organized a meeting specifically:

- To strengthen collaboration amongst agencies working in the water and wastewater sectors in the region.
- To highlight critical regional Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) issues e.g. climate resilience and wastewater management
- To identify and document ongoing or planned projects, activities, tools and resources developed by various regional agencies.
- To identify new mechanisms and strengthen existing mechanisms to raise the profile of water and wastewater in the Caribbean region.
- To assess how the Protocol on Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution established under the Cartagena Convention as well as other regional and global targets relating to water,

wastewater and sanitation can be used to advance the water (including wastewater) agenda for the English Speaking Caribbean.

Detailed proceedings and meeting presentations are provided in the Rapporteur's report as Appendix 2. A participant's list is provided as Appendix 3. Appendix 4 provides a database of participant's current and planned IWRM projects (2014-2015). This database is based on a facilitated session during the first day of the workshop. During this session participants produced information cards on their organisation's water and wastewater project/programmes which were displayed on boards and subsequently grouped according to thematic areas to better explore areas of synergy and collaboration. Appendix 4 attached also includes information on existing and potential collaborations among the partner agencies present at the regional cooperation meeting. This information was gleaned from a facilitated session where participants were specifically asked to identify existing joint initiatives and potential collaborative opportunities pertinent to their organisation's water and wastewater initiatives.

Formal agreements or declarations were not sought as an output of this meeting. Instead the organizers tried to improve awareness of agency activities towards improved bilateral and multilateral collaboration. In a sense the meeting attempted to provide participants with a "snapshot" of what was currently going in the region. The meeting provided the baseline information which have been expanded into a number of databases and information to further build coordination. Meeting outputs also included a list of strategic recommendations for improved water and wastewater management put forward by participants. These were not formal recommendations, but possible strategies to inform agency activities and work programmes. The meeting also identified priority interventions for new water and waste water projects as well as provided suggestions for more effective collaboration.

It is hoped that the participants use the knowledge products, ideas and suggestions generated at this meeting and described in the report sections below to help further their work and collaborations. It is also hoped that the outputs of this meeting can also be utilized and taken forward at other collaborative regional fora.

3. Priority interventions for new water and wastewater projects including opportunities for enhanced partnerships

The meeting identified the following priority topics for water and wastewater projects in the region:

- Capacity building
- Policy governance
- Collaboration
- Targeted interventions
- Research and outreach
- Data and information
- Resource mobilisation.

The issue of investments and investigation on the return from investments also came to the fore but this was noted by the meeting's participants as requiring more exploration. Table 1 below highlights what participants felt were key issues which need to be addressed under these priority areas.

Table 1: Key issues and priority interventions for new water and wastewater projects in the Caribbean region

Governance	Targeted Interventions	Capacity Building	Data Sharing
More awareness of water and wastewater issues needed. The disconnect to these issues need to be overcome	Communication needs to be improved	Funding needed	Improvements needed in accessing and utilising information
	Agencies need to be less protective and more open to sharing information.	Research needed	Bureaucracy in accessing data and information needs to be overcome
	More locally driven interventions needed.	Accredited courses and continuous education needed.	Improvements in data quality needed including improved consistency of data
	IWRM initiatives need to be defined at the regional level	Improvements in information access needed.	The matter of repercussion of data release

4. Mechanisms for improved collaboration, strategic directions for improving the profile of water including wastewater in the region.

Participants identified existing and potential areas of collaboration (see Appendix 4) and improved mechanisms for collaboration strategic directions forward. These are outlined below.

4.1 Utilise and improve existing fora

An existing regional collaborative mechanism is the GWP-C/CWWA High Level Session-Ministerial Forum (HLS) which brings together Caribbean Water Ministers and policy makers to discuss IWRM matters. The participants felt the following steps could be undertaken to better shape the Forum and improve the uptake of outputs:

- Increased involvement of Ministers from non water sectors
- Getting more input from the Ministers as to what they would like to get out of the Forum and solicit their recommended steps for taking the declarations/decisions forward
- Increased focus on technical leadership i.e. identifying key technocrats to champion the causes and decisions made at the Ministerial Forum in their own countries.
- Greater consultation with regional agencies before the HLS and after the forum working with the agencies that have standing with regional Ministerial Fora such as the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) to bring issues/declarations/decisions from the HLS to the COTED. Alternatively or in tandem, individual Ministers could be lobbied to place HLS issues on COTED agenda
- Opening up the forum e.g. linking the forum to the UN and CARICOM and their decision making processes.

4.2. Improve data, data sharing and awareness of water and wastewater issues

General comments were made about the need to improve water and wastewater data, inter alia to improve consistency however, specific parameters were not identified. The need for increased sharing of said data was also highlighted, in particular the utility of building on existing data management structures to avoid duplication.

Improving access to water data and information was also highlighted inclusive of identification and publication of lessons learnt in water resources management. The need to share more information on what the various agencies were doing was noted, including possibly the development of databases of IWRM projects. The point about information sharing referred to both information sharing among the meeting participants as well as awareness building on water and wastewater issues among the general public. However it was pointed out that seed investment into databases and information mechanisms need to be maintained. Another key point was the need to map organisational roles and relationships among the regional players in the Caribbean water and wastewater sector. This was seen a crucial to avoid misinterpretation of roles.

4.3 Utilise suitable reference frameworks

It was suggested that suitable overarching frameworks be used to frame agency roles and possible collaborations. The main one highlighted was the United Nations Post 2015 Development Agenda. The five water related aspects on this development agenda are: a) drinking water, sanitation and hygiene; b) water resources; c) water governance; d) wastewater pollution and water quality; and e) water-related disasters. Participants showed strong support for the suggestion indicating that this may be a useful framework to reference their work programmes against, using it for example as a matrix to plug in roles and responsibilities. The utility of this approach according to the participants would be the alignment with global priorities which would be especially useful in increasing visibility, identifying synergies and securing funding.

4.4 Improve partnerships with the private sector

Increased collaboration and partnering with the private sector was highlighted with the caveat that transparency must be maintained so that individual private sector partners would not be seen as being favoured. Private sector partnership was recommended to reduce the dependency on funding agencies. Ways to encourage private sector partnership such as making the link between community service and profit were noted but it was also felt that the private sector is already prepared to be engaged further given their understanding of procurement processes. Any such partnerships would benefit from the formulation of appropriate contracts. It was suggested that

there were a number of entry points for the engagement of the private sector e.g. networks with private sector members which were represented at the regional meeting. A critical point made however, was listening to the needs of the private sector not just talking “at” them.

4.5 Increase investment in the water sector

The need for more investment in the water and wastewater sector, including investment for sustainability beyond the seed investment was emphasised. Also highlighted was the need to measure and showcase the return from investments to gain further investment.

4.6 Utilise formal agreements or informal relationships as needed

It was suggested that formal agreements among organisations; loose organisational relationships or personal relationships to improve collaboration could be utilised as needed. While formal relationships may be needed for protection in some cases, in other cases less formal arrangements would be acceptable depending on the stakeholders involved. It was felt that a combination was possible in that a formal networking arrangement does not take away from informal networking or personal relationships. Moreover, personal relationships also help with promoting project activities and identifying medium term strategies. Sample model partnership agreements were noted as being useful.

5. Regional Collaborations post April 2014

Since the April 2014, there have been a number of collaborative initiatives building on those identified at the regional meeting. These included inter alia a multi-partner Rainwater Harvesting Workshop in October 2014 and another installment of the HLS session of Caribbean Water Ministers.

Baseline information obtained at the meeting have been subsequently used to develop a GWP-C database on IWRM projects in the region. This GWP-C information product is scheduled for release in the first quarter 2015. It elaborates on project/programme information provided in the attached database to include the following project parameters:

- Aims and Objectives
- Project contacts
- Funding
- Geographic Coverage
- Target beneficiaries
- Outputs
- Impacts
- Lessons Learnt
- Opportunities

A database of this type had been previously identified as an important resource for regional cooperation in Water Security by the CARICOM Consortium on Water. The first edition of this databases houses 40 records, but will be continually updated and expanded by GWP-C. The IWRM project database has also been further refined and elaborated into a detailed study on the Sustainability of IWRM Initiatives in the Caribbean also scheduled for release in the first quarter of 2015. A related database which is currently being finalized is a Database of Regional Expertise, which as per the IWRM projects database also draws on information generated at the Barbados meeting.

6. Way Forward

Regional coordination and knowledge exchange is an ongoing process. The April 2014 meeting and outputs represent informal mechanisms and reference material to further this agenda. It is hoped that the outputs will be utilized by regional agencies as they plan further work and collaborations, including future coordination meetings.

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Appendix 2: Rapporteur's Report

Appendix 3: Participant's List

Appendix 4: Agency projects highlighting collaborations