



## Regional Technical Advisory Group Meeting Nassau, Bahamas 7-8 July 2009



Prepared by  
Project Coordination Unit of the  
Global Environment Facility-funded Integrating Watershed  
and Coastal Areas Management (GEF-IWCAM) Project

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## List of Acronyms

Term / Phrase	Acronym
Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP)	AMEP
Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission	BEST Commission
Caribbean Environmental Health Institute	CEHI
Fifth Caribbean Environmental Forum	CEF-5
Geographic Information Systems	GIS
Global Environment Facility-funded Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (project)	GEF-IWCAM
Integrated Water Resource Management	IWRM
National Intersectoral Commission	NIC
Project Coordination Unit	PCU
Project Information System	PIMS
Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities of the Cartagena Convention	LBS Protocol
Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea (project)	REPCAR
Regional Technical Advisory Group	RTAG
Small Island Developing States	SIDS
Technical Cooperation among Countries	TCC
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United Nations Development Programme, Jamaica Country Office	UNDP – Jamaica
United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP
United Nations Environment Programme's Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit	UNEP CAR-RCU
Watershed Management Committee	WMC

## Background

The fourth official meeting of the Global Environment Facility-funded Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (GEF-IWCAM) Project Regional Technical Advisory Group (RTAG) was held in Nassau, Bahamas on 7-8 July 2009. For information on the Terms of Reference of the RTAG, refer to Annex 1.

## MEETING PROCEEDINGS

### Welcome Remarks

Vincent Sweeney, Regional Project Coordinator of the GEF-IWCAM Project welcomed participants on behalf of the project. This was followed by remarks from Philip Weech of the Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (BEST) Commission, Nelson Andrade Colmenares of the United Nations Environment Programme Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP CAR-RCU), Patricia Aquing of the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), and Akiko Fujii of the United Nations Development Programme, Jamaica Country Office (UNDP – Jamaica).

Mr. Weech welcomed participants to the Bahamas and underscored the importance of the work of the meeting. Mr. Andrade Colmenares spoke of the great significance of the technical input of the RTAG in advising on future work plans and specific activities. He stressed the link between the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention and the project and told the participants that only 3 more countries' ratification is needed to bring the LBS Protocol into force. Mrs. Aquing reported that there are three simultaneous activities taking place in the Bahamas: 1. GEF-IWCAM Meeting on Lessons Learned, 2. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Programme of Action – CEHI collaborative workshop on wastewater management, and 3. the RTAG Meeting. She also spoke about the sustainability of the IWCAM approach, stating how imperative it is that the IWCAM approach becomes a way of doing business in the Caribbean. The final welcoming remarks were made by Ms. Fujii, in which she re-emphasized the importance of the project to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She spoke of the significance of a regional approach to environmental issues and how this can help countries to apply it to national level policy and legislation. Ms. Fujii also highlighted the issue of sustainability and national ownership of the project.

### Introduction of Members

RTAG participants introduced themselves and shared their expertise. Technical areas represented included:

- Agronomy and Agricultural Engineering
- Chemistry
- Civil Engineering
- Coastal Zone Management
- Environmental Awareness, Education, Engineering, Health and Management
- Forestry
- Geography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Hydrology

- International Economics
- Linguistics
- Marine Biology and Ecology
- Natural Resources Management
- Parks Management
- Policy
- Pollution Control / Hazardous Waste
- Physical Geography
- Urban Planning
- Water and Wastewater Management and Water Quality
- Watershed Management

See Annex 2 for the Participants List.

## **Organisation of the Meeting / Adoption of the Agenda**

### ***Designation of Officers***

A representative from Barbados nominated the Bahamas to serve as the Chair of this meeting of the RTAG. The nomination was seconded by Jamaica and Grenada and Deon Stewart of the Bahamas was designated the Chair by acclamation of the group.

Sasha Beth Gottlieb for the GEF-IWCAM Project Coordination Unit (PCU) was appointed as the rapporteur of the meeting, based on unanimous agreement.

### ***Organisation of Work***

The participants of the meeting officially adopted the agenda, which was provided to them for review the previous week. The working hours of the meeting were modified slightly to 9:00 am – 5:00 pm and with the attempt to finish the meeting by mid-day on July 8<sup>th</sup>. The representative from Haiti suggested that adaptation strategies to climate change related to IWCAM be addressed by the meeting, which was agreed to by consensus.

See Annex 3 for the Agenda.

## **Status Report**

A presentation was made by Mr. Sweeney on the implementation status of project activities, which is attached as Annex 4.

This presentation led into discussion about the past year's activities and suggestions for upcoming interventions by the project. The discussion about the past year's activities is presented below and comments related to upcoming activities are detailed in the following section.

### ***Haiti***

It was noted that the GEF-IWCAM Projects' interventions have now moved from ideas to concrete action with a specific budgetary allocation, which will help to accelerate activities in Haiti. The representative from Haiti committed to assist the project in overcoming any barriers impeding this progress of such activities.

Mr. Andrade underscored the attention and resources that UNEP is also dedicating to Haiti and that organization's plan to implement related activities. UNEP is seeking to define these activities and will be visiting Haiti, together with the GEF-IWCAM Project, in late July. Mr.

Andrade stressed the need for government commitment in order to see these projects to fruition.

### ***Translation***

The RTAG strongly recommended that awareness and technical materials developed by the project be translated into French and Spanish.

### ***Sustainability***

With one and one-half years left of the project, its sustainability was the topic of much discussion. The RTAG stressed that much of the sustainability of the approach would be linked to ratification of the LBS Protocol. LBS ratification would entrench the IWCAM approach into national governance structures. It will also prove helpful in obtaining external funding from donors. Currently, ratification by three additional countries is all that is needed to turn the Protocol into international law. The RTAG suggested that the project focus its activities on countries that are close to ratifying in order to help with this process, identify the gaps, and take the needed actions to help the process move forward. It was noted that Bahamas and Haiti have not yet signed (acceded) to the Cartagena Convention. The representative from Barbados noted that there is still a lot of work to be done nationally before they are able to ratify the LBS Protocol.

Mr. Sweeney noted that perhaps a number of countries don't realize how easy it is to move from where they are to ratification, and this can be further exacerbated by the lack of champions at the national level. Nadia-Deen Ferguson of UNEP CAR-RCU noted that they have recently launched a web-page dedicated to the LBS Protocol (<http://www.cep.unep.org/countdown-to-the-lbs-protocol>). The page includes count-down to LBS, a legislative toolkit specifically oriented to the LBS, sample press kits, draft memorandums, etc.

In regards to the LBS Protocol, Ms. Aquing highlighted the division between technocrats and politicians, underscoring how important it is for us to re-orient ourselves to speak the language that our legal / policy people can understand. The IWCAM approach and the LBS Protocol must be linked to economic development, sustainability, human health, with clear downsides highlighted.

### ***Technical Cooperation among Countries***

Additional information was requested on the opportunities for technical cooperation among countries (TCC). RTAG representatives were informed that a formal communication was sent to all National Focal Points, asking them to identify their needs for TCC as well as areas in which they felt their country could provide training for others. The response to date has been very weak, which is of concern for the PCU. All RTAG representatives were requested to follow up on this matter with their national focal points.

### ***Mid-Term Evaluation***

In May-June 2009, a mid-term evaluation on the project was conducted, the results of which Mr. Sweeney presented (see Annex 5). This presentation was then followed by an active discussion on some of the more salient issues.

### ***Exit Strategy***

The RTAG spent some time discussing the "exit strategy" of the project, which is closely linked to the previously discussed sustainability issue.

Some representatives, such as Jamaica and Saint Lucia, shared their countries' approaches in terms of developing exit strategies for the demonstration projects.

The government of Jamaica, from the inception of the demonstration project, committed to engaging community members as much as possible to ensure sustainability of effort after the project concluded. They employed many different approaches, such as:

- Grants Programme
- Economic Incentives
- Community Animators
- Meetings in a variety of different forms (community meetings, sports and environment events, etc.)

The Jamaican representative also spoke about the monitoring programme, whose results in turn have spurred people on to undertake community work. The project team and others help to present and interpret the monitoring results and then solicit solutions from the community itself to the problems.

In retrospect, the Jamaica demonstration project noted that it could have better documented on video some of the activities of the project and the reactions of the community members to it. The Jamaican representative spoke of one experience in particular, where a local man was in tears speaking about the positive impact that the project had accomplished, stating that it literally had changed his life. It is those sorts of images and interactions that the demonstration project team regrets not having documented, in addition to the more technical information.

The Saint Lucia demonstration project has been addressing the sustainability issue through the establishment and strengthening of a Watershed Management Committee (WMC). The empowerment of the WMC is such that the members truly "own" the project and are able to note with pride the impact it makes on their lives and the lives of their neighbors. The demonstration project has been working with national programmes, to help promote a replication of the lessons learned from the project. For example, these good practices will hopefully be adopted and promoted by the newly established Water Resources Management Agency. Also data from the demonstration project will be included in national level databases.

In more general terms, it was suggested that sustainability really fell under the headings of management, project design, policy and legal framework, and capacity and knowledge generation, all of which are key to any successful and sustainable exit strategy. This was echoed by many other representatives.

The reliance on external funding was brought up as a deterrent to sustainability. Funding should not be project driven and projects should strive to be less reliant on external funding, but instead locally driven and their activities should be supported by regular budgetary allocations. In order to do this, highly successful initiatives should be packaged and shown to decision-makers in terms of how truly transforming they can be. Building on previous initiatives was suggested as a way to help ensure their sustainability.

It was noted that co-funding needed to be better captured and the PCU was asked to create a specific template for GEF-IWCAM countries to ensure consistency. Ms. Fujii noted that co-financing has a lot to do with the project's sustainability, demonstrating government ownership. If the government doesn't find a particular project or set of activities beneficial, it won't put in its own resources.

Participants recommended incorporation of both legislators and the private sector in IWCAM work, again to ensure that the approach continues on after the project ends. It was also suggested that the GEF-IWCAM Project consider contracting a private sector consultant to determine how best to incorporate the private sector in the work of the project and hold additional training for legislators to help them better understand environmental issues. Training in proposal writing was also suggested, with a specific focus on writing proposals for internal consideration of national governments, and not specifically for external funding.

## **Country Presentations**

Participants made brief and informal country presentations. Salient points are listed below.

Saint Kitts and Nevis noted that the technology used for mapping of the aquifer has proven to be a very efficient and economical way to obtain important hydrological and geological data. Two abstracts have been prepared and submitted to the annual Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association conference on these activities.

The representative from Saint Kitts and Nevis also highlighted three challenges that the project faced or is facing:

- Project inception was significantly delayed due to problems in finding and hiring a suitable project manager. That person has now been in place for approximately one year and things are moving forward.
- Due to the shortened time period for project execution, demonstrating stress reduction is a real challenge. It is important to be realistic about what can be achieved in this timeline.
- The re-composition of the National Intersectoral Commission (NIC) is likely to be difficult. Such a committee previously existed, but will need to be revived.

The Saint Kitts and Nevis representative also asked the other participating countries to share their experiences in separating the regulatory functions from the water utility.

The Antigua and Barbuda representative noted communications challenges with consultants hired to undertake much of the policy / strategic work, which has resulted in delays in starting the actual construction.

The representative from Cuba underscored their willingness to provide training for other participating countries.

## **Indicator Development**

A presentation on Indicator Development is included as Annex 6, which was followed by a discussion on how to promote the effective use of indicators within the IWCAM approach. It was suggested that many people are unfamiliar with indicators and how they are used. In order to address this deficiency, RTAG participants recommended IWCAM indicators workshops. These could be national workshops which present the IWCAM template, address how to define and talk about indicators, and then move on to how indicators are used. The indicators template should be distributed at those workshops. The national workshops would lead to a regional workshop in which the indicators database activities in Barbados would be highlighted.

It was also suggested that the IWCAM indicators approach could be promoted to specific entities identified by the RTAG and by national focal points. The representative from Haiti suggested the National Geographic Information Systems Centre in that country, as they are soon going to define indicators for watersheds and protected areas.

It was noted that the Community-Based Resource Assessment tool being developed is an excellent example of translating environmental indicators into common language, which could lead to mainstreaming indicators.

### **Discussion on Draft Work Plan for 2010**

Mr. Sweeney made a presentation on the draft work plan for 2010, which is attached as Annex 7.

The work plan was endorsed by the RTAG, although participants made suggestions as to additions that could be considered. These included:

- Senior-Level Ambassadorial Workshop for private sector with high level politicians: This would promote dialogue on how we can involve the private sector in an effective way. It could be held at a regional or national level, but national level is preferable.
- Co-financing strategy: It was recommended that projects work with the Ministries of Planning in order to ensure the necessary project co-financing. The South China Seas project has a good model / template for co-financing and adaptation and application of that would be useful. A workshop was suggested to develop a co-financing model for participating countries.
- LBS Protocol: The contracting of a consultant to prepare cabinet notes, draft legislation, and undertake similar tasks was recommended in order to promote the ratification of the LBS Protocol. In addition, a factsheet that clearly lays out the advantages of the LBS Protocol, would be useful. The Fifth Caribbean Environmental Forum (CEF-5) is an apt opportunity to promote the LBS Protocol and the work of the GEF-IWCAM Project.

### **Legislative and Policy Reform**

Nadia-Deen Ferguson, of UNEP/CAR-RCU, presented on Legislative and Policy Reform (see Annex 8). Following her presentation, RTAG representatives noted that capacity was needed in legislative drafting and preparation of cabinet papers. It was suggested that in order to achieve ratification of the LBS Protocol, assistance should be very targeted rather than spread throughout all countries. UNEP/CAR-RCU is targeting Barbados, Grenada, Dominica, and Antigua/Barbuda.

The representative from Antigua and Barbuda noted that access to a ministerial body is needed for Cabinet consideration. They suggested that a Ministerial / IWCAM meeting be organized and then the LBS Protocol be presented.

The Barbadian representative stressed the link between the Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CReW) and the LBS Protocol.

### **Integrated Water Resource Planning**

The session on Integrated Water Resource Planning was facilitated by Dr. Cox, and his presentation is included as Annex 9.

RTAG participants discussed whether the project should work with one participating country to develop a full scale integrated water resource management (IWRM) plan or work with more than

one. Some participants felt that there was not enough time remaining, as by its very nature, the IWRM plan development process must be stakeholder driven and participatory, which is a full iterative process and can take a long time. On the other hand, it was suggested that the process may not take as long as we think, and it would be very useful in terms of lessons learned. In general, the consensus of the group is that the GEF-IWCAM efforts should focus more on the ratification of the LBS Protocol than the development of full IWRM plans.

Other suggestions included:

- The project could hire IWRM Champions at the national level for one year.
- Linking the highly-publicized issue of climate change to IWRM-related work.
- Provide guidelines for the development of the IWRM plan (general for all countries). In regards to this point, it was noted that a Global Small Island Developing States (SIDS) IWRM Methodology is being developed by a consortium of consultants. GEF-IWCAM will convene a workshop to review this methodology prior to finalization.

It was agreed by the RTAG that the GEF-IWCAM Project should focus its LBS and IWRM activities on Grenada, Dominica, and Barbados first and then later on St. Lucia and Antigua/Barbuda. It was recommended that the project work with the first three countries for six months and then assess how much has been accomplished. Based on that determination, a decision would be made whether to extend the technical assistance in this area to additional countries. Some suggested activities include:

- High level ministerial session
- One week "blitz" lobbying
- Identification of a champion
- Targeted publications and materials to address different groups.

## **Capacity Building**

Training needs for 2010 identified by the RTAG were:

- Project and Proposal Writing (targeting national governments rather than external funding sources)
- Wastewater treatment and re-use. A specific need for training in wastewater re-use in agriculture and related guidelines was identified.
- Preparing watershed management plans (process / methodology)
- Hydrochemistry and water analysis interpretation
- Train-the-trainer workshops at the national level, in a variety of subject matters that were not identified at the time
- Online tutorials for all trainings.
- Online tutorial on GIS (related to GIS workshop in Cuba). RTAG participants stressed this training as extremely important.

In the session on capacity building, the RTAG also discussed the laboratory strengthening activities. UNEP/CAR-RCU informed the group that it is preparing an inventory of all laboratories in the region, listing their capabilities, which should be available for review in August 2009. A similar exercise has taken place at the national level, led by the government of the Dominican Republic. The representative from Grenada expressed concern that laboratories don't have sufficient capacity and needed to broaden the amount of tests that they do. In Haiti, the laboratories actually have more than enough equipment, but lack adequately trained personnel. The representative from the Barbados noted that they use two laboratories for water

and environment, which are the public health laboratory and government analytical services. The Barbados Water Authority has provided equipment and personnel to the lab to strengthen the capacity. It also helped the laboratory to develop a client base.

### **Utilization of Geographic and Other Information Systems for IWCAM**

Annex 9 includes the PowerPoint presentation made by Dr. Cox on the Utilization of Geographic and Other Information Systems for IWCAM. It was followed by a presentation by Trevor Thompson on the Water Information System in Grenada. Ms. Ferguson also presented on the interactive map prepared by UNEP/CAR-RCU regarding Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) and the Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea (REPCAR) Project.

A formal recommendation was made by the RTAG to standardize data within GEF-IWCAM and ensure common metadata and for countries to standardize their GIS data. Along the similar lines, the project was asked to consider information exchange protocols, focusing on the LBS / IWCAM indicators.

It was noted that without the need for data, there will not be a strong enough impetus to maintain any sort of information system. As such, it is essential that data be used as part of a decision support system for policy formulation and implementation.

The RTAG participants were asked how the project could best assist in GIS and for the Project Information System (PIMS). The following recommendations were made:

- Saint Lucia noted that the cost of data collection is high, so direct support for the Water Resources Management Unit in the re-establishment of a Water Information System would be useful.
- Dominica requested continued capacity building in collecting and establishing baseline data.
- Barbados highlighted the need for human resource development to better manage data.

### **Any Other Business**

A request for proposals regarding sustainability of GEF-IWCAM demonstration projects was presented and participants were asked if the approach was appropriate. General consensus was that yes, but it should be extended to help all participating countries with their sustainability and replicability plans.

A GEF Caribbean Constituency Meeting will be held in the Fall in Barbados and it was recommended that the GEF-IWCAM Project do a presentation at this meeting. The RTAG asked the PCU to follow up on this.

The link between the IWCAM approach and climate change adaptation strategies was noted. It was suggested that the project should try to capture its achievements in terms of adaptation to climate change and the contributions that the IWCAM approach has been able to make, bearing in mind different aspects of adaptation strategies.

### **Date and Place of the Next Meeting of the RTAG**

The RTAG recommended that one RTAG Meeting be scheduled for 2010, to take place in July 2010, with the possibility of adding another if so determined necessary by the PCU and Implementing and Executing Agencies.

## **Annexes**

The following annexes are available at

<http://www.iwcam.org/documents/meeting-reports/gef-iwcam-regional-technical-advisory-group-rtag/rtag-4-july-2009/rtag-4-report-of-proceedings> or <http://tiny.cc/fcfoD>

Annex 1: RTAG Terms of Reference

Annex 2: RTAG Meeting Participants List

Annex 3: RTAG Meeting Agenda

Annex 4: GEF-IWCAM Implementation Status Presentation

Annex 5: Mid-Term Evaluation Presentation

Annex 6: Indicator Development Presentation

Annex 7: Draft Workplan Presentation

Annex 8: Legislative and Policy Reform Presentation

Annex 9: Integrated Water Resource Planning Presentation, Utilization of Geographic and Other Information Systems for IWCAM Presentation