

In this issue:

- Local communities benefit from SGP collaboration with IWECO...pgs. 1-3
- Message from the RPC ...pgs. 1-8
- SGP in St. Kitts & Nevis—Highlights ...pg. 2
- IWECO:TT Quarry Rehabilitation Champions have graduated ..pg. 4
- Having fun and learning about the Negril Great Morass too!...pg. 4
- IWECO's Mid-Term Review is Underway! ...pg. 5
- Students in St. Kitts learn about IWECO & Environmental careers...pg.5
- SDG Workshop introduces interlink-ages ...pg. 5
- World Wetlands Day in the Negril Great Morass ...pg.6
- IWECO, "Water and Climate Change"...pg. 7
- GEF IWECO's 4th Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting postponed ...pg. 8

Sustainable Development Goals being addressed



Volume 3, Issue 1

March 2020



IWECO:link

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

www.iweco.org

Message from the Regional Project Coordinator



Dear colleagues,

COVID-19 has taken us all by surprise...sneakily and silently, until we noticed the first human victims. It has become a global pandemic and a disaster for humanity, for the economic systems we have set up, the societies we built, and the things we prioritized.

We are now forced to abandon 'doing business as usual' in order to survive and this may be frightening for us.

But is it really a surprise?

Have we gone too far using and manipulating the ecosystem services provided by our planet?... sometimes far beyond their stretching point?

Globalisation has been the magic word during the last decade; inevitable perhaps as we seek to satisfy the materialism of the growing human population.

But are we thinking too much 'globally' without even recognizing anymore the diversity and complementarity between sensitive systems, between and within countries, and between different cultures? Have we forgotten the uniqueness of the various parts which together make up the complex global ecosystem upon which we all depend? Have we not learned that species originating on one side of the planet can become invasive species once transported to the other side?

While there are definite advantages and benefits to globalization, we are now facing a global threat specifically to humankind. We are seeing that, as human activity is reduced in large areas of the world, natural processes are immediately filling the gaps.

(Continued on page 8)

Local communities benefit from Small Grants Programme collaboration with IWECO

IWECO has a key objective of enhancing livelihood opportunities and socio-economic co-benefits for targeted communities from improved ecosystem services functioning. This aspect of the Project is supported by the GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) which has considerable experience in building economic livelihoods through community-based initiatives. A key element of the SGP-IWECO Project partnership is the stimulation of entrepreneurship and encouraging the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region.

Through SGP, the local community works to rehabilitate the Higuamo River, DR



GEF SGP's involvement in IWECO is coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which has directly disbursed funds to its programmes in the eight IWECO participating countries that have National sub-Projects. This is meant to enable activities in alignment with the respective National sub-Projects which build capacity for enterprise development and implementation amongst local community groups in support of IWECO's overall objectives. In addition to working with the National sub-Projects, SGP would work with Barbados and Grenada to achieve contributory outputs at the regional level.

IWECO allocated US \$1 million in funding to be matched by the SGP, in addition to technical support. Project level co-financing gen-

(Continued on page 2)



Caribbean Public Health Agency

CARPHA

SGP The GEF Small Grants Programme

SGP in St. Kitts & Nevis - Highlights -

St. Kitts & Nevis has four IWEco-funded SGP Projects. Three are ongoing and one has been completed. Two are highlighted here:

Preserving the natural environment and contributing to the Island of Nevis' reforestation programme

(February 2019 - June 2020)

Nuff Tings Boys Club in the Fountain Village, Mount Lily and Westbury communities of Nevis is implementing a project which responds to increased and prolonged drought conditions experienced and aims to increase environmental awareness and responsible stewardship of natural resources to boys, young men, their families and the broader community. It has so far refitted the existing meeting house to serve as part of a water harvesting and storage system and constructed a garden gazebo with the roof to be used for water harvesting and plant propagation. In the second quarter of 2020, the newly established greenhouse and additionally prepared garden space will be used to grow coconuts, almonds and sea grape for reintroduction at beaches usually frequented by residents and visitors such as Herbert Beach, St. James and Paradise, St. Thomas.



Water harvesting and storage to supply organic farm system

(February - December 2019, completed)

Implemented by **Gideon Force Agricultural Co-operative Society Ltd, located in Verchild's Mountain, St. Kitts**, this project was to address water shortages and associated food insecurity, both major issues in St. Kitts & Nevis. The Co-op produces and markets organic produce but there has not been enough water available to adequately irrigate their crops in the past. This two-phase project was intended to address the major water supply, to make the cooperative more viable and directly improve the economic benefits and overall livelihood of its members. A water catchment and storage system (dam) has been built above the farm to collect water for farm use and of four water tanks were installed on the farm to collect water during the rainy season for use during the dry season. Existing solar panels were repaired and upgraded and a solar powered water pump installed. Over a three-month period, training in agriculture and water conservation practices was provided for members.



(Continued from page 1)

erated at the community level would leverage additional support. SGP would provide direct financial and technical support to communities and local organizations in the participating countries to address the project objectives at the community level.



SGP facilitated the and involvement of Quarry Rehab Champions in Trinidad's National Project through two NGOs

The community component of the IWEco intervention would undertake the following activities within the regional sub-projects and national sub-project demonstration sites:

- support the demonstration and piloting of sustainable local solutions to environmental problems in the areas of wastewater and effluent management, coastal habitat management, fisheries, chemicals and hazardous substances and other priority issues in the region;
- develop local stakeholders' capacities to implement regional and national policies at the community level;
- incorporate community-based experiences and approaches into the management of widespread and biologically significant coastal ecosystems through upscaling by national governments and regional entities; and
- facilitate vertical exchanges of information between local, national and regional levels, and horizontal exchanges between communities beyond national boundaries.

By the time IWEco's 2nd Regional Project Steering Committee (RPSC 2) Meeting took place in February 2018 in Havana, Cuba, it was recognized that SGP activities associated with the National sub-projects were facing challenges for a number of reasons. These included changing contexts, political sensitivities, lack of capacity, other operational challenges, and, not least, the fact that by that time, most of the National sub-Projects had not yet begun implementation.

Recognizing that the SGP projects needed to accelerate development and implementation, the RPSC agreed that it would be allowed to align its work with the various countries national priorities, and try to develop activities in the physical sites of national projects while being given the flexibility to develop and implement activities outside the national project sites when deemed appropriate by the respective SGP national steering committee. In other words, adaptive management and flexibility would be encouraged to ensure that GEF IWEco-funded SGP interventions would support the overall objectives of IWEco at local community level offering opportunities for learning, replication and up-scaling.

The result is a mix of projects, some of which are closely associated with, and supporting, the National sub-Projects; and others which support wider IWEco objectives.

Table A (Page 3) provides an overview of GEF IWEco-funded SGP Projects in participating countries.



SGP worked to build consensus for Saint Lucia's Agro-Tourism Park

Table A: GEF Small Grants Projects in support of the IWEco project (funded by GEF IWEco)

COUNTRY	SGP IWEco PROJECTS	GRANTS (US)	CO-FINANCING	STATUS (January 2020)
Antigua & Barbuda	Creating value from coconut waste	5,000	2,800	In progress
	Innovation in the use of microalgae cultivation, using sequestered CO2 from exhaust gases and nutrients from wastewater treatment	5,000	3,000	In progress
Cuba	Metal recycling for ecosystem protection and community empowerment	50,000	6,000	In progress
	Conservation and sustainable management of natural resources for the benefit of the community in Rincon de Guanabo	50,000	117,000	In progress
	Reduction of contaminants from swine farming in areas of the San Juan watershed, Santiago de Cuba province	50,000	20,000	In progress
Dominican Republic	Beekeeping in the communities of the Yerba Buena and Mata Palacio Municipalities	25,000	31,204	In progress
	Rehabilitation of the Higuamo River	24,500	29,577	In progress
Jamaica	Development of sustainable agriculture in Gonzalo, Los Limones and Mango Fresca, Higuamo River Watershed	38,500	N/A	In progress
	Biodiversity restoration through community engagement in the Portland Bight Protected Area	43,000	43,000	In progress (90% completed by Feb 2020)
	Evaluating coastal water quality at Discovery Bay to improve capacity for environmental management	44,500	117,000	In progress
Saint Kitts & Nevis	Preserving the natural environment and contributing to the Island of Nevis' Reforestation Programme	32,500	59,666	In progress (to be completed by June 2020)
	Water harvesting and storage to supply organic farm system	26,400	35,129	Completed
	Youth involvement to promote the sustainable use of water, land and ecosystem resources in St. Kitts and Nevis	22,700	6,259	In progress (to be completed by March 2020)
Saint Lucia	St. Peter's water harvesting and storage community project	5,900	Foreseen	In progress
	Connecting cooperatives to the SDGs and commencing the formative stages of building climate change resilience in the fisheries sector in Saint Lucia	6,487	8,443	In progress
	Building consensus for the establishment of the Fond St. Jacques agro-tourism landscape	5,000	15,000	Completed
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	Sustainable employment for youth using indigenous fruits in and outside of the Qualibou Caldera	36,936	21,519	In progress
	Sandy Bay ecotourism, cultural and development project	86,000	N/A	Foreseen (first quarter 2020)
Trinidad & Tobago	Abandoned quarry-site rehabilitation at national quarries	43,500		In progress
	Building climate resilience through community-led rehabilitation	43,500		In progress

IWEco TT Quarry Rehabilitation Champions have Graduated!

It was a festive atmosphere in Sangre Grande, East Trinidad, on 30th January 2020 as IWEco:TT held the graduation ceremony for 27 'Quarry Rehabilitation Champions' (QRCs) along with its partners, the Trust for Sustainable Livelihoods, IAMovement and the GEF UNDP Small Grants Programme.

Each graduate proudly stepped on stage to receive certificates of completion along with a beautifully handcrafted wooden plaque in the shape of a tree bearing their name.

Marva Ann Neptune White, also fondly known as "Auntie Marva" on the project, delivered a rowdy "extempo" about her experience as a QRC which had the whole audience singing along. Leann Josa Lucas Manick was class valedictorian and spoke on behalf of the QRCs.

The programme was developed with two non-governmental organizations, the Trust for Sustainable Livelihoods and IAMovement in collaboration with the UNDP SGP, to deliver training in quarry rehabilitation as part of the livelihoods programme of the national project.

Twenty-seven persons from communities surrounding the pilot sites at National Quarries Company Limited in Guaico, East Trinidad, underwent 4 months of training in the classroom, followed by 12 months of field work at the pilot sites. They were trained in techniques such as site preparation and planting; creation of check dams and fire tracing; nursery development; top-soil conservation and management; mulching and implementing vetiver as a rehabilitation intervention.

Congratulations to our Quarry Rehabilitation Champions!!!



Valedictorian Leann Josa Lucas Manick receives her certificate and plaque from Jonathan Barcant, Mg.Dir., IAMovement



< Auntie Marva delivers her extempo.

Lystra Johnson > proudly displaying one of her vetiver crafts.



The Quarry Rehab Champions celebrate their achievements!



The Regional Project Coordination Unit joined NEPA's Project Management Team in public awareness activities ...



...and administered the KAPS to visitors of all ages.



(Below) As the donkey races continued, some competitors were definitely more interested in looking good than in racing!



Having fun and learning about the Negril Great Morass too!

The Negril Rotary Club's Annual Donkey Races in Negril on Sunday 9th February 2020 presented a great opportunity to find out how aware the public is of the nearby Negril Great Morass, site of IWEco's Jamaica's National sub-Project, and, to promote the planned project activities aimed at restoring it.

The brief Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Survey (KAPS) conducted by the IWEco Regional Project Coordination Unit got feedback from 195 community members and visitors. Essentially, the survey revealed a discrepancy between awareness of the Morass and knowledge of what it is. Older people generally seemed to know more about the Morass and some remembered a time when it was open to the public (it has been closed to the public since early -2011). As many as 39% of respondents did not know what it is and just less than 50% of respondents stated that wetlands are important.

Although the National Environment Planning Agency (NEPA), which is responsible for executing the National sub-Project, has commissioned a much more detailed and comprehensive KAPS, the results will not be available until July 2020. In the interim, this brief survey provided some useful information.

We thank the Negril Rotary Club for this great opportunity to reach a wide cross section of the public who attended the races!

IWEco's Mid-Term Review is underway!

IWEco's Mid-Term Review began in late-January 2020. While measures taken by all participating countries to deal with COVID-19 mean that visits are on hold for now, we expect that the evaluators will continue their visits to the projects when the situation improves.

The evaluators successfully concluded their visit to the IWEco:Cuba National sub-Project (titled "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity from the Integrated Management of Watersheds and Coastal Areas in Cuba") on 26th February 2020. Dr. Sherry Heileman, Consultant Evaluator, was accompanied by the Regional Project Coordinator, Jan Betlem.

Several meetings were held at different Project locations to assess the progress of each of the components. The effective partnership between the various project executing agencies (the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Agriculture – including the Forestry Directorate and the Institute of Hydrological Resources) was evident and process of acquiring equipment to enable the interventions is well underway.

The report of the Mid-Term Review is expected in time for the Project's next and Fourth Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting (RPSC 4) which will take place during the second quarter of 2020 in Saint Lucia. Here are some highlights from the visit. It was great to see the progress being made!



Alain Munoz-Caravaca, National Project Coordinator shares documents at the first meeting.



(Above & below)

A series of meetings was held at different project locations in the Arimao River Basin.



(Above & below)

The acquisition of equipment to enable research and monitoring activities is well underway.



Students in St. Kitts learn about IWEco and Environmental Careers!



In St. Kitts, Cayon High School held an Environmental Career Day on 12 March 2020 and IWEco's National sub-Project Coordinator, Dr. Halla Sahely, shared IWEco and environmental management careers in

general with the very keen students who participated. Young people are learning that there are so many ways to contribute to better and more sustainable environmental management!



St. Kitts & Nevis' Minister with responsibility for Environment, Eugene Hamilton, addresses students.

SDG Workshop introduces interlinkages

IWEco's St. Kitts and Nevis National Project Coordinator, Dr. Halla Sahely, attended a workshop in San Jose, Costa Rica, 4 - 5 March 2020, organized by the United Nations University, UN DESA and UNDP, on using a SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) designed to facilitate countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in water-related sustainable development.

Monitoring of SDG 6 :Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, at the global level through the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI) and SDG 6 Data Portal and an overview of regional progress, challenges and opportunities for achieving SDG 6 were on the agenda. Participants debated SDG 6 targets in the context of the SDGs and learned about the inter-linkages, co-benefits and trade-offs with other SDGs.



World Wetlands Day in the Negril Great Morass

IWEco's Jamaica National sub-Project, which focuses on restoration of the Negril Great Morass, celebrated World Wetlands Day, 2 February 2020, with a boat trip up the South Negril River into the Morass on 7 February, followed by a short walk to the Royal Palm Reserve. It was a good day to observe the beauty of the Morass and the amount of biodiversity it supports. Keisha Spence of the Negril Environmental Protection Trust, a member of the Project's Steering Committee, was along to provide a description of the area and some interesting history about the Royal Palm Reserve.



The tour began on Seven Mile Beach behind Negril's community Centre and Craft Market. The Negril Great Morass is part of an interconnected land-ocean ecosystem. Without the Morass, which is an important nursery for many species of fish, the nearby coral reefs and beaches would not thrive and be the beautiful places tourists and locals alike flock to see.

The fishing depot close to the mouth of the South Negril River provides livelihoods for many local fishermen, some of whom also use glass bottomed boats to give tours of the nearby coral reefs.



A wide range of stakeholders is involved in the Jamaica National sub-Project. They include the Negril area Environmental Protection Trust (NEPT) which has, for more than 25 years, played an integral role in shaping sustainable solutions for the conservation and protection of marine ecosystems in Western Jamaica. Keisha Spence of NEPT was our guide and source of much valuable information.

The Negril Great Morass is a biodiversity hotspot and the Negril Royal Palm Reserve is at the heart of it. One of the Project's aims is to restore important elements of biodiversity that are of national, regional and global significance.



The Morass has been closed to the public since 2011. Development of an integrated management/restoration plan for the Negril Environmental Protection Area, of which the Morass is a part, is one of the objectives of the Project. The Project plans to refurbish the old visitor facilities and establish an interactive, interpretive research and knowledge sharing centre within the Reserve.

“Humans and nature are part of one connected system, and nature provides the food, medicine, water, clean air and many other benefits that have allowed people to thrive, ... Yet like all systems, we need to understand how it works so that we don’t push things too far and face increasingly negative consequences.”

- Doreen Robinson, Chief of Wildlife, UN Environment Programme

Read this editorial from UN Environment Programme’s Ecosystems Branch:

[Coronavirus outbreak highlights need to address threats to ecosystems and wildlife](#)

IWEco, “Water and Climate Change” Rehabilitating quarry land in North East Trinidad

World Water Day 2020, celebrated every year on 22nd March, is about water and climate change. The two are inextricably linked because how we use water affects flooding, droughts, scarcity and pollution, and can either mitigate or exacerbate climate change.

Trinidad & Tobago’s IWEco National sub-Project (IWEco:TT) aims to restore natural vegetation, reduce sedimentation and flood risk and restore ecological function to exhausted or abandoned quarry pits.

Following a national launch in May 2018 which involved volunteers from a variety of organizations, twenty-seven persons from surrounding communities, called “Quarry Rehabilitation Champions”, were trained in various intervention methods by two Nongovernmental organizations, the Trust for Sustainable Livelihoods (SUSTRUST) and IAMovement (IAM), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme - Small Grants Programme, partners in IWEco. Developing community capability to enable replication and sustainable livelihoods are important aspects of the Project.

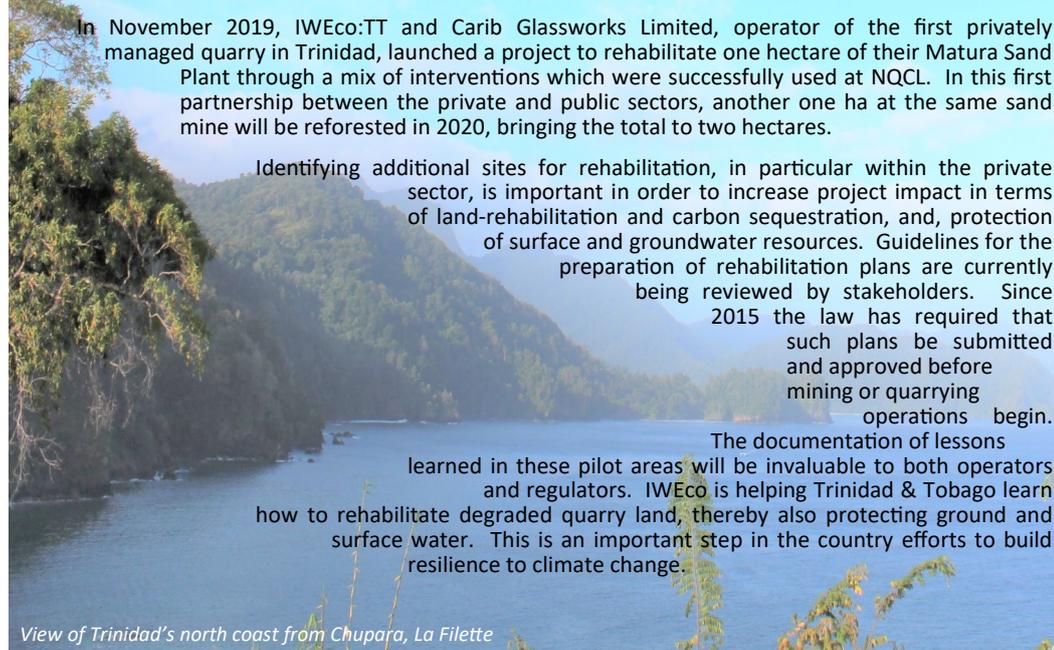
Rehabilitation work in the ten months between October 2018 and July 2019 progressed on three separate pilot sites within the state-owned and operated National Quarries Company Limited (NQCL).

Interventions at all three sites were completed in July 2019 and a GPS mapping exercise to determine the size of the area rehabilitated was conducted by the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), which is responsible for project implementation, in late-August 2019. It found that a total area of 7.05 hectares was rehabilitated in the period between May 2018 and July 2019. When these efforts began in May 2018, the team had estimated that a total of 2.7 ha. would be rehabilitated - this has actually been exceeded by 4.35 ha!

In November 2019, IWEco:TT and Carib Glassworks Limited, operator of the first privately managed quarry in Trinidad, launched a project to rehabilitate one hectare of their Matura Sand Plant through a mix of interventions which were successfully used at NQCL. In this first partnership between the private and public sectors, another one ha at the same sand mine will be reforested in 2020, bringing the total to two hectares.

Identifying additional sites for rehabilitation, in particular within the private sector, is important in order to increase project impact in terms of land-rehabilitation and carbon sequestration, and, protection of surface and groundwater resources. Guidelines for the preparation of rehabilitation plans are currently being reviewed by stakeholders. Since 2015 the law has required that such plans be submitted and approved before mining or quarrying operations begin.

The documentation of lessons learned in these pilot areas will be invaluable to both operators and regulators. IWEco is helping Trinidad & Tobago learn how to rehabilitate degraded quarry land, thereby also protecting ground and surface water. This is an important step in the country efforts to build resilience to climate change.



View of Trinidad’s north coast from Chupara, La Filette



Toxic relationships
don't have to last forever.
Join the worldwide movement and
Break Up
with single use plastics

See:

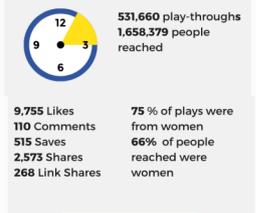
[Caribbean Breaking up With Plastics Video](#)



BREAKING UP WITH PLASTICS CAMPAIGN FEBRUARY 2020

SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM



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

The new UN Coronavirus web page is: <https://www.un.org/coronavirus>

(Continued from page 1)

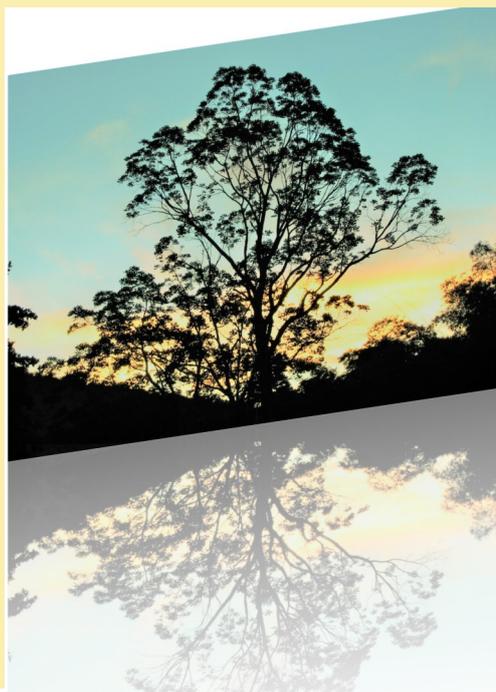
I hope that recent global developments will give us time for reflection and for more 'ecosystem-based thinking', will help us to understand that there are limitations to population- and economic growth, and guide us to accept that a more durable and sustainable way of making use of this planet is urgently needed.

We are all in the same boat - 'Planet Earth'. We are all part of the crew and our common future is in our own hands! No time to waste with 'business as usual'! Maybe one day we will say that the year 2020 was the year we really started to make a difference.

On behalf of the IWEco PCU team, I wish you and your loved ones, strength and good health during these worrying days. Let us pause... take a deep breath and move forward determined to make the changes needed for a healthier planet.

Jan Betlem,
IWEco Regional Project Coordinator

In 2020 the International Day of Forests (21st March) focused on Forests and Biodiversity. Let's celebrate and appreciate trees!



Trees enrich our lives in so many ways. They witness and are part of so many events in our lives.

Do you have a favourite tree?

One that is special to you?

Send us a picture (photograph, drawing or painting) and tell us why in 100 words or less.

We will feature a selection of entries in our next newsletter, on our website and on social media, where we will ask people to vote on their favourite.

The winning tree will get a write-up and you will win a visit to one of IWEco's projects that is planting trees!

Send your entry to:
donna.spencer@un.org
Deadline: 22nd May 2020

GEF IWEco's 4th Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting (RSPC4) has been postponed due to the measures put in place to control COVID-19.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused. As soon as a new date is decided we'll let you know. Take care and be safe!

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

IWEco thanks all Project Partners for their contributions to this issue.

For more information contact:

Project Coordination Unit
GEF IWEco Project
United Nations Environment Programme
14-20 Port Royal Street
Kingston, Jamaica
Phone: 1(876)-922-9267/9; Ext. 6225
Email: donna.spencer@un.org

www.iweco.org

@caribbeaniweco



IWEco countries



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

#CaringForOurFuture