



Environment
Equipped
Resilient nations



Secretary of State in Charge
of Sustainable Development

SUSTAINING INTERNATIONAL WATERS COOPERATION

Title: How do I convince politicians, industries and the public to not waste "waste"water?

Organized by the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention (UN Environment Caribbean Environment Programme)

This clinic will begin by providing an overview of the importance of wastewater management with examples from the Wider Caribbean Region and the implementation of the GEF funded Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CRew) Project.

The “doctor” will identify ongoing challenges, opportunities and approaches for improving the management of wastewater including a circular economy approach. Innovative financial and technological solutions as well as approaches for changing behaviours and perception about wastewater reuse will be highlighted.

The clinic will conclude with how lessons learned from CRew are being used to inform the design of a follow up CRew+ Project Proposal.

Clinic Pitch

"The Wastewater Doctor is in the House."

We assumed that all Caribbean countries had the same sickness but although symptoms were similar, root causes were different. We assumed they would be equally responsive to our course of GEF CRew treatment. And we also assumed they would be good patients and take their GEF CRew medication as prescribed. The Wastewater virus in the Caribbean is mutating and Time is running out.

Our first course of treatment from GEF CRew alleviated a few symptoms but our Caribbean patients urgently need repeat and expanded doses. If not, our wastewater illness will become Terminal.

Come to our clinic and learn what we learned!

Clinic Questions

Result of the in-clinic survey:

- 1. Has the clinic session helped increase your understanding of the pre-identified challenges and your subsequent capacity to implement appropriate tools and solutions?"***

There was a 100% response by all persons attending the two clinic sessions to this question.

2. *What are some of the main messages coming from your clinic discussion with the clinic participants?*

- Behavioural change is key to maximizing the opportunity to promote wastewater as a resource and as part of a circular economy approach. Making linkages to opportunities especially for energy and nutrients recovery as well as impacts on human health will be key.
- Poor Governance and Political influence on the water and wastewater sector including the lack of the enabling environment – institutions, policy and legislation coupled with lack of enforcement were key challenges for improving wastewater management in many countries and for promoting wastewater reuse.
- A range of different capacity building approaches can be used including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), tool boxes, and citizen science to help raise awareness of the negative environmental and human health impacts from improper waste management and how to raise the priority at national level. This would not only help engage the public but also help with the behavioural change.

3. *What were some of the gaps participants identified during the clinic that your tools/methodologies were able to address?*

- How to effectively engage multiple stakeholders through targeted messages e.g. policy makers, water and wastewater utilities, media, politicians and general public.
- The use of Economic Valuation techniques to justify the need for improving wastewater investment

4. *Were there any gaps identified that your tools/methodologies could not address?*

- While the use of the Economic Valuation was important – it was felt that greater use of valuation tools to highlight public health cost, lost tourism revenue, and reduction in ecosystem goods and services was needed at a country level to make stronger business cases for wastewater investments.
- How best can you incentivize wastewater or even water reuse at a household level especially where water is either relatively inexpensive compared to other utilities or readily available?

General Challenges/Recommendations

- The clinics held after the lunch session tended to be more challenging in terms of reduced participation as many persons used an extended lunch to have bilateral meetings;
- Considering the above, rather than have each clinic doctor do their two sessions immediately after each other – it might have been better to split to have one before lunch and one after lunch