



# INTERNATIONAL WATERS EXPERIENCE NOTES

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## Lessons-learned Reporting on Demonstration Site Selection and Design: IWCAM



**Abstract:** The overall project sought to include demonstration projects in order to deliver actual achievements in mitigation and resolution of threats and root causes. The agencies developing the project needed to be politically sensitive to the possibility of not all countries running projects and manage the process of criteria-setting in order to ensure that consensus was reached before any demo projects were identified. The project chose demonstration projects using a methodology which included the following steps: hotspot/sensitive area selection process, agreement on IWCAM GEF Operational Program (OP) 9 eligible issues, adoption of selection criteria for project submissions, submission of concept papers, development of full demonstration project Submissions, and adoption of the submissions by the IWCAM Steering Committee. A partnership conference was organised, to involve potential partners and donors in the elaboration of the demo submissions. This approach allowed for objective evaluation at the country-level of the priority areas for attention and also allowed for some diplomacy and negotiation, which is needed when consensus-building is a desirable outcome. The project experiences in selecting and preparing the nine demonstration projects are applicable to similar SIDS projects under similar conditions.

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**Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management in Caribbean  
Small Island Developing States (IWCAM)**

# Lessons Learned Reporting on Demonstration Site Selection and Design: IWCAM

Experience of the GEF sponsored

## Integrating Watershed & Coastal Area Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWCAM)

GEF Project ID: 1254

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management (IWCAM) concept and approach provides a framework for countries to better address environmental management challenges that they face. To this end, the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the Regional Project on Integrated Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) over a period of 6-8 years, starting in 1998, through a thorough consultative process in 13 countries of the Caribbean region. These countries include Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago.

The Project went through two Block-B Phases, starting in 2000. At the end of the First Block-B Phase, and Experts of the Scientific, Technical & Advisory Panel (STAP) reviewed the Full Brief in March 2002. Based on the STAP Roster Review, the GEF Secretariat supported a Second Phase in order to elaborate Demonstration Project for inclusion in the Full Project Brief. These Demonstration Projects were developed by 2003. Eventually the Full Project was approved by the GEF Council in May 2004. The project will be of 5-years duration and has a total budget of US\$ 112,660 for the Full Project phase with US\$14M of GEF grant and the balance being contributions from the Governments themselves, NGOs, CEHI and the private sector.

Project documents were finalised by UNDP and UNEP, the Implementing Agencies, in 2005. Country launches of the project started in mid-2005 and continued into 2006. Full project

implementation began in May of 2006 when the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) was established at the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute and a Regional Project Coordinator (RPC) was hired. CEHI and the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention at the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) of UNEP are Co-Executing Agencies.

The overall objective of the IWCAM Project is to strengthen the commitment and capacity of the participating countries to implement an integrated approach to the management of watersheds and coastal areas. The long-term goal is to enhance the capacity of the countries to plan and manage their aquatic resources and ecosystems on a sustainable basis. The thirteen countries involved in the Project have agreed to adopt IWCAM as a management approach. As such they will be required to re-orient their systems and mechanisms as well as address the issue of policy and legislative re-alignment to fully mainstream IWCAM at the national level. While support and resources will be provided by the Project, the commitment and support will be required at the regional and national levels to effect IWCAM as a "way of doing business".

The IWCAM Project has 5 major components:

- Demonstration, Capture and Transfer of Best Practice
- Development of IWCAM Process, Stress Reduction and Environmental Status Indicator Frameworks
- Policy, Legislative and Institutional Reform for IWCAM
- Regional and National Capacity Building for IWCAM
- Project Management and Coordination

Activities include review of IWCAM indicators as well as training in their use and demonstration of their use; conduct of Hotspot Diagnostic

Analyses; development of Integrated Water Resources Management & Water Use Efficiency Plans; development of programmes to amend legislation and policy related to IWCAM; awareness raising and networking on IWCAM; capacity building in IWCAM-related areas; and project management.

## ISSUE AND CHALLENGE

A major focus of this regional IWCAM project is to undertake specific demonstrations of targeted IWCAM activities. The overall project sought to include demonstration projects in order to deliver actual achievements in mitigation and resolution of threats and root causes. As such, this represents a discrete Component of the overall project (Component 1 - The Demonstration, Capture And Transfer Of Best Practices). Within this Component, a number of Demonstration Projects have been developed at the national level. The objectives of the Demonstration Projects in respect to the overall regional IWCAM project are as follows:

- To target selected national and regional hotspots of watershed and coastal impacts and threats, as well as sensitive areas which are particularly vulnerable to similar impacts and threats
- To address OP9 eligible issues 'on-the-ground' through GEF funding supported by significant co-funding
- To deliver real and concrete improvements and mitigation to IWCAM constraints and impacts
- To identify and mobilise reforms to policy, legislation and institutional realignment consistent with IWCAM objectives
- To provide transferable lessons and best practices which can serve to replicate successes elsewhere both nationally and regionally

A multi-country project such as this presented a specific challenge related to satisfying all countries. In a region where country population varies from under 10,000 to over 5 million there is always a need for balance and to ensure that the smaller countries do not feel "left out" or marginalized. IWCAM was immediately faced with the prospect of some countries not receiving funds for individual demonstration projects. The agencies developing the project needed to be politically sensitive to this and manage the process of criteria-setting in order to

ensure that consensus was reached before any demo projects were identified.

The Executing Agencies (UNEP/CEP and CEHI) both were sensitive also to the need to be able to demonstrate direct and tangible benefits to be derived by their respective Member States as a result of the IWCAM Project. In this regard, the delivery of specific funding, directly to each participating country was considered politically desirable by both EAs, especially when one considers that these EAs are competing with other agencies for the small allocation of quota contributions from Member States and therefore need to demonstrate "value-for-money".

In selecting demos, the existing capabilities of government departments and NGOs had to be considered, as these vary from country to country. In some cases the government department might consist of one responsible officer, compared with others involving a team of many persons. The ability to manage and experience in managing funds by these officials and/or NGOs was also a concern. In some cases there were well established and funded NGOs who were much better placed to manage the demos than government departments. Further to this, the determination of the IWCAM Focal Point, as distinct from the GEF Operational Focal Point, was critical, as the expertise for managing the demos might not reside in the OFP offices.

## EXPERIENCE

The preparation and Steering Committee selection of the Demonstration Projects was guided, *inter alia*, by the following:

### A. Hotspot/Sensitive Area Selection Process

Each country was required to complete a Hotspot, Sensitive Area and/or Overriding Issues Identification Sheet based on the GIWA Hotspot Selection Process. This required the countries to rank their top 3 Hotspots and top 3 Sensitive Areas on the basis of major GIWA concerns such as freshwater shortages, types of pollution, habitat modification or destruction, etc. These Hotspots or Sensitive areas were also further ranked on the basis of their geographical size, affected population, important natural resources under threat to local livelihood, national development etc. The nature of the threats and the main human activities were also

recorded. Careful guidance was given on how to score these rankings and some rankings were weighted more than others. This process is a standard part of the GIWA and followed the same approach. Selection of Hotspots and Sensitive Areas was to be done through a consultative process involving all relevant stakeholder groups.

#### *B. Agreement on IWCAM OP 9 Eligible issues*

Careful review of the eligible OP 9 issues relating to SIDS identified the specific areas of eligibility. Fisheries and Climate Change were omitted as these are both the subject of separate GEF regional initiatives in the Caribbean which include the SIDS.

#### *C. Adoption of Selection Criteria for Project Submissions*

The Steering Committee, made up of all countries participating in the project, reviewed and adopted a set of standard selection criteria for all project submissions. Every submission was required to meet these criteria. The criteria are discussed below.

#### *D. Submission of Concept Papers*

Each country then developed at least one Concept Paper based on their hotspots and sensitive areas, and aligned with the GEF OP9 eligible issues. In some cases, the development of concepts was supported by a Project Development Specialist, funded by the project. These concepts were carefully reviewed by the Executing and Implementing Agencies as well as by technical experts, and were shared with the GEF Secretariat for their comments on eligibility. Countries were guided as to the eligibility of their Concept Papers and given recommendations on how to proceed with their Full Demonstration Project Submissions.

#### *E. Development of Full Demonstration Project Submissions*

Based on feedback from the GEF and the Implementing Agencies, countries proceeded with the development of their Full Demonstration Submissions. These were required to follow a pre-selected format as agreed by the Steering Committee. This procedure was adopted to ensure equity of opportunity and to allow for accurate comparison. It also allowed for easier

synthesis of budget and co-funding data in the Full Regional Project.

Co-financing was a critical component of the preparation of the Full Demos. In this regard a Partnership Conference was organised, to involve potential partners and donors in the elaboration of the demo submissions. Each demonstration project was presented in detail to the potential partners at the Partnership Conference. Their relevance with the national priorities was highlighted and the problems and impacts discussed. Where applicable, the various national partners were presented and responsibilities described. Discussions followed the project presentations. Many interventions made by potential partners after specific presentations of demonstration projects deserve to be mentioned as they applied to all projects and impacted on how partnerships would be developed and on the project brief itself. These include:

- The involvement of the civil society in projects must be planned early in the demonstration projects;
- Efforts to identify and include all stakeholders and partners (including private sector) must take place;
- The IWCAM concept and its application must always be clearly stated in each project;
- Comparative Analysis of alternatives must be provided in terms of environmental and economic impacts;
- The sustainability of the demonstration projects must be demonstrated;
- Incorporate into the projects the capacity to carry out work (e.g. field research) by making sure, among others, to emphasize the use of national sources before looking outward (regional, international);
- Develop synergies with other initiatives (e.g. land degradation/desertification)

The comments and concerns expressed were further discussed on a bilateral basis when looking at concrete partnerships for each demonstration project and the national focal points were invited to consider all of them when producing the final proposal to be evaluated by the Steering Committee.

In the final analysis, 9 national Demonstration Projects were submitted to the Executing and

Implementing Agencies for inclusion in the Full Project. Some countries were unable to meet the deadline for submission due to constraints of time and limited human resources, as well as difficulty with meeting the requirements for co-financing.

#### *F. Final Adoption of Full Demonstration Submissions by IWCAM Steering Committee*

The Steering Committee for the IWCAM PDF project phase, at its second meeting, reviewed the 9 Full Demonstration projects as submitted, and confirmed their eligibility under both GEF requirements and in respect of the Steering Committee's own criteria for selection, as follows:

- **Global, regional, sub-regional and multinational nature of projects:** The Demonstration Projects should clearly respond to the environmental benefits in the region and contribute to overall global environmental benefits. In this respect Projects developed and selected should have a sub-regional or regional outlook or involve several countries.
- **Demonstration projects must target the hot spots** identified by the countries using the methodology based on the GIWA approach as agreed by the Steering Committee. Its lessons and best practices will be then replicated in the other hot spot areas within the Caribbean SIDS region.
- **Multi-focus:** Projects should aim as far as possible at integrating the thematic coverage within the IWCAM concept.
- **Participatory nature:** Projects should demonstrate development and implementation through a participatory approach with strong ownership by all partners including the government, the private sector, civil society including NGOs and the scientific community. The projects should also have a gender balance;
- **Programmatic approach:** Projects should be integrated in a comprehensive, programmatic and, as far as possible, strategic approach;
- **Sustainable Development Perspective:** Projects should be designed taking into account the need to alleviate poverty and promote economic growth;
- **Capacity Building:** Projects should integrate capacity development needs as part of their planned activities
- **Maximize utilization of regional expertise:** Projects should aim at maximizing the utilization of local experts and institutions;
- **High rate of replication:** Projects should be designed to ensure replication and dissemination of good practices and experiences.
- **Sustainability of activities:** Projects should have activities whose benefits are sustainable beyond the life cycle of the interventions
- **Funding and Co-Financing:** Only projects likely to attract adequate domestic funding and/or external support would be considered. Projects demonstrating strong co-financing were given priority.
- **Promote sharing of experiences and learning:** Projects should aim at promoting sharing of experiences, enhancing regional co-operation and collective learning
- **Performance criteria:** Projects should contain clear objectives, performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms
- **Thematic balance:** Balance between the thematic areas should be sought
- **Geographical balance:** Balance between the 13 Caribbean Countries should be sought.

The overall development of the IWCAM project involved two PDF-B phases. After the First phase it was expected that a Full Brief would have been approved, without elaborated demonstration projects. This approach, which had been accepted by the GEF in the past, was not accepted and the GEF funded a Second PDF-B phase, in which the demos were to be elaborated. In future, it should be clearly stated (and understood by all parties) that the PDF-B phase will require full elaboration of the demos, prior to submission to the GEF Council.

The selection process for demos involved both an evaluation of technical issues (s.a. using the Hotspot and GIWA approach with scoring system) and political sensitivities. This approach allowed for objective evaluation at the country-level of the priority areas for attention and also allowed for some diplomacy and negotiation, which is needed when consensus-building is a desirable outcome. However, the fact that Hotspots were not compared across the region, and only at the national level, means that some critical Hotspots might have been left out at the expense of less sensitive areas, in order to ensure geographic balance. It however must be recognized that endorsement and commitment to co-financing may have been more difficult had it not been for the geographic balance.

The final decision was made easy by the number of qualifying submissions received. All but one could be considered and the total amount of funding required fell within the estimated budget for the demos. Whereas the final decision was easy, the criteria which influenced most that decision probably had to do with geographic balance. In the end, 8 countries and 9 demos were selected. The process for selecting the demos was influenced entirely by the participating countries. Consensus was always achieved and the criteria were accepted by all countries at the earliest possible stage in the project development.

The capacity which existed in order to prepare and select demos varied from country to country. In some cases the local inter-sectoral committees were very strong and needed little assistance from the IAs in order to elaborate the concepts and Full demos. In other cases the demo concepts and Full submissions were almost completely drafted by a Project Development Specialist hired by the EAs. Eventually agreement had to be reached by the country team before the demo would be submitted. As such, the demos were driven by the country needs and supported by consultants and agencies. However, in some cases, the responsiveness of countries was so poor that some missed the submission deadlines. This related largely to capacity at the country level to respond.

The Partnership Conference, convened to secure broader participation of partners in the demo project development, brought together

many important development actors in the region, with specific interest in IWCAM. Although the number of development agencies and donors present was relatively small, those present showed a clear interest in being a part of the IWCAM project and offered to develop mechanisms to concretise these interests. On the other hand, the Partnership Conference was very successful in engaging the interest and further involvement of Civil Society groups, especially the regionally-active NGOs. There was a general understanding and agreement between the national focal points, the potential partners, the IAs and the EAs that partnerships were to go beyond co-financing and must also take the form of technical support, exchange of information and experiences, and definition of common goals and approaches. The importance of a continuous effort to secure more co-financing was often repeated and the EAs jointly with the national focal points were urged to act accordingly, within the timeframe agreed upon.

## **REPLICATION**

The project experiences in selecting and preparing the nine demonstration projects are applicable to similar SIDS projects under similar conditions. These include scenarios where a number of independently-governed countries agree to collaborate on a regional initiative, around a common geographic focal point, in this case a sea (the Caribbean Sea). Had these countries been part of some Confederation or dependencies, the political dimension might have been completely different. In the case of IWCAM, the politics could not be overlooked as each country had influence among the Executing and Implementing Agencies.

The experiences are also applicable to small sized states with small populations and limited in-country technical capacity. Determination of the most effective modalities for elaboration of the full demos can be informed by the experiences with IWCAM. A combination of self-help and technical assistance will likely be necessary for most other SIDS regions.

Implementation challenges include the requirement to identify co-financing, usually 1:1, in order to permit consideration of the demo submission. This proved a challenge and required some "creativity" and innovation in identifying the in-kind contributions that countries and partners could provide. It is also a

challenge to generate interest among other donors after the concept has been identified. In the IWCAM project development phase, donors and other partners were included at a stage where concepts were elaborated and were seeking co-funding. Future projects should seek to involve the donors at the earliest possible stage, in order to seek ownership.

Finally, it may be useful to incorporate into future projects the possibility of developing additional projects (Medium-Sized or otherwise) through these projects. The IWCAM intends to assist those countries with Hotspots and which were not recipients of demo projects to prepare relevant additional projects.

## REFERENCES

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## KEYWORDS

- ◆ Small island developing states
- ◆ Demonstration project
- ◆ Caribbean
- ◆ Project preparation

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