



CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE

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PRESS RELEASE

Caribbean Environmental Health Institute to host multi-million dollar regional environmental project

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), at this week's Council meeting in Washington, D.C. approved a major regional project focusing on watershed and coastal area management in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This project, specifically entitled *Integrating Watershed & Coastal Area Management in Caribbean SIDS (IWCAM)*, has been under development since as far back as 1998. Value of the project is approximately US\$22M, of which **US\$12M will come from the GEF** as a grant.

Involving 13 Caribbean countries, the IWCAM will deal with both regional and country-specific issues related to management of critical watersheds and the marine environment, in a holistic manner. The overall objective of this 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. It will address water resources management, waste management and coastal zone management. 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. This will be addressed within the context of the currently limited economic opportunities, coupled with an urgent need for development and expansion of trade and commerce, within the Caribbean SIDS. In particular, project activities will be focusing on improvements in integrated freshwater basin-coastal area management on each island of the regional groupings of Caribbean SIDS.

Demonstration projects within the overall project will focus on rehabilitation of groundwater aquifers in St. Kitts; marina waste in the Bahamas; reduction of impacts from sewage on the coast and on groundwater in Antigua; protecting watersheds in St. Lucia and Tobago; reducing impacts from industrial waste in the Dominican Republic; and managing marine, coastal and watershed resources in Jamaica and Cuba.

Several GEF Council members specifically cited IWCAM positively as a best example of a GEF International Waters Regional project. Most specifically, one Council member commended the IWCAM, suggesting that it was the best project in the entire work programme and a 'paragon' in terms of quality and relevance to issues in the Caribbean.

NGOs at the GEF Council meeting also stated their pleasure with the IWCAM project which they felt had demonstrated a near-perfect approach to stakeholder participation and community involvement.

Additionally, a GEF representative from the Pacific stated that the Pacific Countries are deeply impressed with this (IWCAM) Project Brief and would now wish to see similar project(s) for their region being developed as early as possible.

The IWCAM project will be implemented through the UNDP and UNEP, while being co-executed through the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), based in St. Lucia, and the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit of UNEP, based in Jamaica. The Project Implementation Unit will be based at CEHI. Participating 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.

More information can be obtained from the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute at Tel 758-452-2501, Fax 758-453-2721, cehi@candw.lc or from UNEP (www.cep.unep.org/programmes/AMEP/GEF-IWCAM/gef-iwcam.htm)

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