

CRew+ LETTER

Implementing solutions for an integrated water and wastewater management for a clean and healthy Caribbean

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Final Year of Implementation! 2025–2026 at a Glance

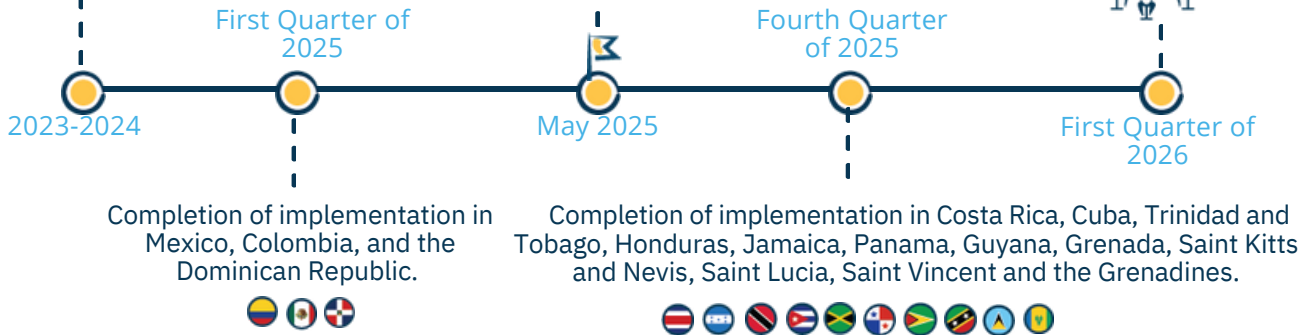
Completion of implementation in Barbados, Guatemala, Belize, and Suriname.



Signing of the implementation agreement between the OAS and the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention



Administrative closure of the project and final Executive Committee meeting.



2

Minds Campaign: Understanding How Solutions Work on the Ground



Andres Marmolejo
ENVIRONMENTAL ADMINISTRATOR
🇨🇴 San Antero, Colombia

“In the development of the project, the reuse of wastewater in agricultural activities is promoted, ensuring compliance with water quality parameters. This initiative provides a sustainable alternative to address periods of low rainfall and ensure the water supply for agricultural production systems in the region”



Marle Reyes
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER
🇬🇾 Kwakwani, Guyana

“The main goal of this intervention is to provide sustainable infrastructure for wastewater treatment, utilizing biological and natural purification processes to improve water quality and protect the environment”



Uver Villalobos
CIVIL ENGINEER
🇬🇹 Rio Motagua, Guatemala

“The situation in the Motagua River watershed revolves around water and how it’s managed. The GEF CReW+ project came with the goal of updating the “Guide for Developing a Watershed. Management Plan”, modernizing its methods and integrating approaches like Integrated Water Resources Management, ecosystem based adaptation, and climate change resilience”

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Public Policy Blog

Shared Challenges, Shared Responses: Building Public Policies for Water and Wastewater Management

Water and wastewater treatment plants are living testaments to the water history of a locality. Their infrastructure is a physical symbol of ongoing efforts, a marked point on the map, and a physical space within the collective imagination. Many even become icons of the work done by development actors. But what about the more intangible activities—do they just disappear and get forgotten? After nearly five years of implementation, it is time to look back and reflect on the impacts of some project activities that have become milestones for participating countries: public policies.






Shared Responses to Shared Challenges

The enactment of laws and public policies does not always align with a country's historical trajectory. Climate change and water security issues have emerged as pressing concerns, meaning even well-intentioned responses may no longer match the evolving nature of the problems they aim to solve.

Component I of the GEF CReW+ Project “*Institutional, legislative, regulatory, and policy reforms for integrated water and wastewater resource management*” seeks to enable meaningful and lasting change in how countries make and implement decisions around water and wastewater. The project has contributed to policy development in four Latin American and Caribbean countries:



-  Belize: Draft National Wastewater Policy.
-  Costa Rica: Update of the National Water Policy and National Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (IWRM).
-  Jamaica: Concept Document for a National Wastewater Policy.

Although public policies have specific implementation periods, their impact is neither fleeting nor insignificant. Recognizing their value requires seeing policies as more than government-issued mandates—they are collective efforts by stakeholders seeking solutions to problems that affect communities, sectors, and the nation as a whole. Why is this important? The case of Costa Rica reveals several key aspects:



Bottom-Up Approach: :

This approach starts with those directly affected by the issues, resulting in more focused and responsive solutions.

[Testimony by Alianza Nacional Ríos y Cuencas](#)



Active Participation of Marginalized Groups:

Traditionally, certain organizations, associations, groups, and entire sectors have been excluded from collaborative spaces due to geographic or other barriers. In Costa Rica, workshops were held in different regions to bring public policy to the people, not the other way around. In some cases, such as with Indigenous groups, specialized support (e.g., linguistic interpretation) was necessary to ensure genuine participation.

[Asada la Palma de Golfito Testimony](#)



Gender perspective:

A gender perspective isn't just about having women in the meeting room; it involves considering how problems affect people differently depending on gender and, therefore, how responses should also be adapted to these realities.

[Testimony from University of Costa Rica](#)

In Belize, efforts to improve water and wastewater management took shape through an integrated strategy combining policy, financing, and infrastructure. The GEF CRew+ project supported the development of the Draft National Wastewater Policy, built on key principles like “polluter pays,” regulatory harmonization, monitoring, and a circular economy approach. Active participation was achieved through a technical committee and stakeholder-specific surveys that allowed fast and focused data collection, even with limited time.

Public policies in water and sanitation have deep, long-term transformative potential. The experiences of countries like Belize and Costa Rica show that participatory design, technical coordination, and innovation are essential to advancing water governance. While all participating countries have faced challenges in water and wastewater management, progress in public policy has varied. Each national context has defined its own pace and scope based on institutional realities, technical capacities, and priorities. These differences reflect unique paths toward a shared goal. The important thing is for each country to continue advancing in developing and updating public policies—only then can truly sustainable, adaptive responses to the region’s real water challenges be consolidated.

More from Costa Rica’s experience:



Vice Ministry of Water

Agua tica

University of Costa Rica



Asada la Palma de Golfito

National Rivers and Watersheds Alliance



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Photo Stories from Mexico

140 people from the indigenous communities of San Antonio Segundo, Yaxley, and Yodzonot Nuevo received water filters.



Explanation on the use of purifying filters, indigenous community of San Antonio Segundo, Quintana Roo.

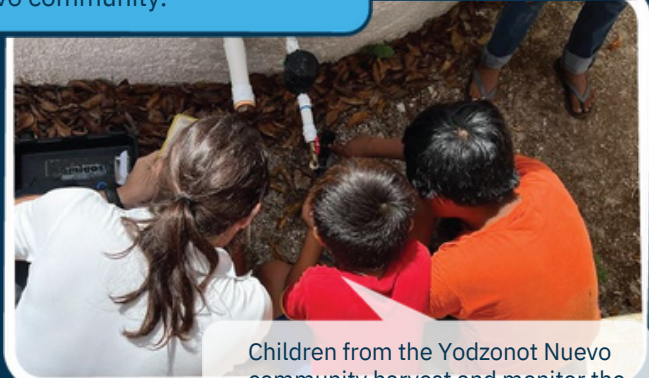


Delivery of purifying filters to the indigenous community of San Antonio Segundo, Quintana Roo.

A 10,000-liter cistern for storing rainwater installed in the Yodzonot Nuevo community.



Water tank installed in the Mayan indigenous community, Quintana Roo.



Children from the Yodzonot Nuevo community harvest and monitor the water quality of the cistern.

1 100 people in 33 communities in Quintana Roo have received environmental education talks.



Environmental education at a high school located in the indigenous community of Yaxley, Quintana Roo.



Talk on eco-technologies links on-the-ground solutions with environmental education.

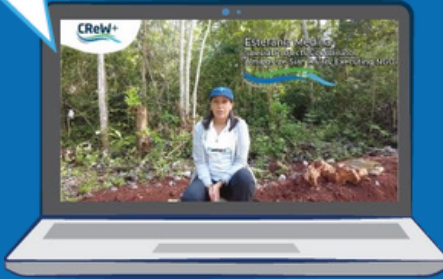
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Environmental Education and On-the-Ground Solutions in Mexico

Solutions in the field

Environmental Education

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqLt47qTNQA>



 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4reZbnRUQo>



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Website Updates and Data Visualization Project



The project coordination team is working on two major initiatives:

Website Updates: A digital archive is being created to host all documents produced during the project, making them easier to locate and helping to share the project's knowledge outputs more effectively. Other sections are also being updated to enhance user experience..

Data Visualization: A new section is being developed on the website to visually present all project results using data. Each data point is structured to clearly and simply convey the project's achievements to non-specialized audiences, using analogies and impact equivalencies.



Implementing integrated water and wastewater solutions for a clean and healthy Caribbean Sea.

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