

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (PIR) FY 2021

**GEF - IDB
PIR # 1**

IMPORTANT: The reporting period is GEF Fiscal Year (July 1st, 2020, to June 30th, 2021)

PROJECT GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Name:	GEF CReW+: An integrated Approach to Water and Wastewater Management using Innovative Solutions and Promoting Financing Mechanisms in the Wider Caribbean Region				
Project's GEF ID:	9601	Project's IDB ID:	RG-T3412	Overall Stage:	Disbursing (From eligibility until all the Operations are closed)
Country/ies:	Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago				
GEF Focal Area:	International Waters, Land Degradation				
Executing Agency:	(i) DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT GMBH; (ii) GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES; (iii) INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK; and (iv) THE DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT				
Project Finance:	Total disbursements of GEF Grant resources as of end of June 30th, 2021 (cumulative)				US\$1,563,975.14
Project Dates:	Date of First Disbursement				6/1/2020
	Agency Approval Date				12/18/2019
	Effectiveness (Start) Date				12/18/2019
	Original Last Disbursement Expiration Date ¹ (OED)				2/12/2023
	Current CED				2/12/2023
	Estimated Operational Close Date ² (EOC)				5/13/2023
Project Evaluation:	Mid-term Date (Expected)				2/28/2022
	Terminal evaluation Date (Expected)				5/23/2023

¹ For the GEF, this is equivalent to the project's "Expected Completion Date".

² For the GEF, this is equivalent to the project's "Expected Financial Closure Date".

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE RATING (DO) & ASSESSMENT

Make an overall assessment and provide a rating³ of “likelihood of achieving project objective” during the period (2020-2021). Describe any significant environmental or other changes attributable to project implementation.

Project Objective: To implement innovative technical small-scale solutions in the Wider Caribbean Region, using an integrated water and wastewater management approach and building on sustainable financing mechanisms piloted through the program. The project will include watershed and freshwater basin protection, water conservation and efficiency, and water reuse, and will prioritize technologies for treating wastewater in rural and peri-urban areas that are replicable and sustainable.

The GEF approved the preparation of the Full-size GEF Project (see PIF document approved in October 2017). The project will be implemented jointly by IDB and the UN-Environment (previously UNEP), under separate executing schemes but with a common coordination.

The beneficiary countries include 13 IDB member countries, and 5 non-member countries. Activities exclusively directed to non-member countries will be funded under the UN Environment-provided funding.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT (DO)	RATING
The project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, with minor differences from the committed objectives due to the findings in the initial assessments of each activity, which will guide us in developing a more sustainable results for the countries. Therefore, the rating assigned for this fiscal year is Satisfactory (S).	S

PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

The project started during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and faced other ensuing challenges such as:

- a. Remote planning and recruiting
- b. Tropical storms ETA and IOTA
- c. Travel restrictions and elections in target countries – Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Suriname.

Despite these challenges, and with the full commitment and support of our country focal points, their teams, and the regional partners, we have finalized the preparation of most of the national and regional activities and started the implementation.

The GEF CReW+ Inception Workshop was held on November 23-24, 2020 and the first Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting was held on November 25, 2020. This included the development of background documentation including: (i) the Terms of Reference for the PSC and National Focal Points; (ii) a detailed Work Plan and Budget for the project; (iii) the contractual arrangements in connection with the roles of the Executing Agencies; (iv) the CReW+ Results Matrix; (v) the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; and (vi) the proposed Communication Strategy) and

³ See Annex 1: Definition of Ratings.

presentations for these events, the recruitment of a facilitator, assisting in the prior promotion of the events and facilitating simultaneous English and Spanish interpretation as well as the virtual platform for the meetings.

The meetings brought together delegates from:

- a. All eighteen GEF CReW+ participating countries
- b. Representatives of the CReW+ Project Implementing and Executing Agencies
- c. CReW+ Partners
 - Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA)
 - Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association (CAWASA)
 - Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo - Sistema de Integración Centroamericana (CCAD-SICA)
 - Comité Regional de Recursos Hidráulicos – Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (CRRH-SICA)
 - Global Water Partnership - Central America (GWP Centroamérica)
 - Regional Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Group for the Latin American and Caribbean Region (WASH LAC)
 - The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
 - The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)
 - The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- d. Representatives from all the main regional and international institutions involved in Integrated Water and Wastewater Management (IWWM) in the Wider Caribbean Region, with support from the Regional Project Coordinator (RPC).

During the first year of 2021, countries such as Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago initiated the execution of the national activities, which will be finalized during 2022. The rest of the countries will initiate their activities in the second half of the year 2021.

The Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention has been advanced in the outputs related to the Cartagena Convention and its LBS Protocol.

On February 2021 the GEF CReW+ Academy was launched, emphasizing the importance of providing training to all the stakeholders involved. The first series of webinars on different topics related to integrated water and wastewater resources management was conducted during February-April 2021. Experts from all over the world presented their tools and discussed their findings, experiences and lessons learned on the development of climate resilient water and wastewater infrastructure and the importance of gender, financing, and engagement of indigenous communities. Thematic priorities for a second block of trainings and webinars, including monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals and reduction of ocean pollution, are currently being designed.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS RATING (IP) & ASSESSMENT

Insert here an assessment and provide ratings⁴ of overall Implementation Progress, including information on progress, challenges, and outcomes on project implementation activities from July 1st, 2020, until June 30th, 2021. **As applicable, please include information on issues and solutions related to COVID-19.**

OVERALL ASSESSMENT (IP)	RATING
<p>During fiscal year 2021 the project's progress implementation is rated as Satisfactory (S).</p> <p>Despite the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic, the national and regional activities will be in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only a few that are subject to remedial action, with the support of country focal points, their teams, and the key regional partners. Specifically, progress was made through the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The diagnostic analysis of existing policy framework, legislations, guidelines, and standards in support of IWWM started in Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago. b. Technical feasibility study started in San Antero de Cordoba (Colombia), Costa Rica and Honduras. c. The outputs related to capacity building in Components I, II and III achieved great results. d. On February 2021, the GEF CReW+ Academy was launched, emphasizing the importance of providing training to all the stakeholders involved. e. The first series of webinars on different topics related to integrated water and wastewater resources management was conducted during February-Abril 2021. The webinars conducted were the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ingenious WaSH Wisdoms I - Integrated Water Management - World Women´s Day: Her Money - Gender Lens Investing - Wetlands as a Nature-based Solution for Water and Sanitation (WaSH) - Climate Resilience of Wastewater Infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean - Sanitation Technologies in Indigenous Communities - Constructed Wetlands (Biofilters) for Wastewater Treatment - Decentralized Wastewater Treatment and Reuse Experience in Bolivia. 	<p>S</p>

⁴ See Annex 1: Definition of Ratings.

RISK RATING & ASSESSMENT

Make any adjustments necessary to the assessment ratings⁵ of overall Project Risk⁶ that you provided in the last PIR (2019-2020). Please include details and remedial measures for High and Substantial Risks, specifying who will be responsible for these measures.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT (RISK)	RATING
<p>The main risks identified at the preparation phase of the project were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Limited stakeholders' involvement. Limited political will of participating governments to push the implementation of the pollution reduction measures. Cultural resistance to accept new wastewater management measures. Weather hazards, especially hurricanes. <p>The risks identified were rated as medium/low and there have not been substantial changes at this stage. Therefore, the risk rating for the period 2020 - 2021 is Modest (M).</p>	M

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Please add information on any progress, challenges, and outcomes with regards to stakeholder engagement, based on the project's activities during its implementation through the 2020-2021 GEF Fiscal Year. **As applicable, please include information on issues and solutions related to COVID-19.**

Progress and outcomes

- During the first full year of project implantation, CReW+ continued building a broad community of partner agencies and individuals focused on integrated water and wastewater management.
- Progress at the national level primarily involved engagement of the ministries of environment, and by extension the National Focal Points, who are critical and indispensable constituents of the program's operational architecture, and who serve as primary links to the agencies and beneficiaries executing specific components.
- Regionally, CReW+ established agreements with CWWA, UN-HABITAT, CCAD, GWP-Caribbean and GWP-Central America.
- In February 2020, the CReW+ Academy was launched as an online learning platform to offer short courses on wastewater management throughout the wider Caribbean region: <https://academy.gefcrew.org/en/>
- CReW+ continually seeks opportunities to identify new partners through conferences, symposia and other (largely virtual) events, and to exchange perspectives on common issues and challenges.

⁵ See Annex 1: Definition of Ratings.

⁶ These should include risks identified at CEO Endorsement AND any new risks identified during implementation.

Recommendations:

- Clearly, the post-pandemic "new normal" will differ from the old one, and it will be necessary to identify evolving financial, institutional, and political conditions and capabilities, which in turn will require adjustment and adaptation.
- During second quarter 2021, the program will conduct a comprehensive stakeholder analysis to identify the engagement modalities of key regional and national stakeholders, and to promote and clarify implementation of partnership arrangements.

GENDER

Please add information on any progress, challenges, and outcomes with regards to any and all gender-responsive measures that were undertaken in the project's activities during the 2020-2021 GEF Fiscal Year. Also: Were indicators on gender equality and women's empowerment incorporated in the project's results framework? (Yes/No). If applicable, include the indicator with its baseline, target, and current value (2020-2021).

The project has actively promoted the cross-cutting element related to all stakeholder participation and involvement in the project which seeks to promote gender equality and empowerment of women throughout the implementation of activities. In every consultancy the agencies encourage women, people of African descent, people of indigenous origin, and people with disabilities to apply.

Gender audits and targeted analyses to ascertain derived benefits by stakeholders have been conducted in the first block of the CReW+ Academy, with the results of 52% of participants were women.

Following the CARICOM strategy on "Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics and Indicators" and in compliance with its social and gender implementation plan, keeping with national commitments to the implementation of their national gender policies and in response to the GEF-6 strategy on gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming has been an integral part of the project and process towards the achievement of equity in social development.

Promoting gender equity is included in the CReW+ Project. Nine out of 18 of the national focal points are women. The Project will keep working in this line building on the multiple project outputs, sub-outputs and activities that include gender-specific elements.

KNOWLEDGE

Please add information on knowledge activities and products developed in relation to the project (with GEF or non-GEF resources), with special emphasis on activities carried out during the 2020-2021 GEF Fiscal Year. **As applicable, please include information on issues and solutions related to COVID-19.**

To feed lessons learned from the provision of its advisory services into wider discourses, the project analyses and disseminates practical, on-the-ground knowledge and experiences by developing knowledge products (i.e. best practices) during the advice on policy and regulation reforms, sustainable and tailor-made financing options and provision of innovative small-scale, and community-based solutions, as well as conducting outreach measures, feeding practical, on-the-ground experiences at country level into LAC regional discourses i.e. CReW+ Academy, social media, executing agencies platforms, collaboration with key stakeholders such as GWP-C, CWWA, and FLACSO/ CCAD. By doing so, GEF CReW+ scale up its transformative impacts beyond its current countries of implementation.

Additionally, to the above-mentioned channels, to facilitate knowledge exchange across all participating countries, we make use of the SuSanA (Sustainable Sanitation Alliance, with a dedicated chapter to Latin America) platform, IWLearn, Red SNIP, as well as GIZ sectoral and regional Communities of Practice (CoPs Water & Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, Circular Economy & Resource Efficiency, Red Sectorial GADeR-ALC).

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat developed a dedicated page on its website for the GEF CReW+ project. The webpage outlines the main information on the project and provides further insights into the specific project activities carried out by the Secretariat.

The GEF CReW+ Academy web portal <https://academy.gefcrew.org/en/> was launched as a bilingual platform to facilitating capacity development activities, disseminating materials produced by the project, to promote the importance of IWWM and IWRM, and to increase the corporate identity of the brand CReW+. The website (Spanish version) has received more than 7,300 visits, while the English version has had more than 5,700 visits since it was launched.

A pilot video on the activities in Honduras was produced in English and Spanish. In addition, Instagram and Twitter accounts were created for GEF CReW+ to effectively disseminate these videos and other project products in the future <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4BqkdyAInU>

PROJECT MODIFICATIONS

Please report any significant modifications made to the project design since July 1st, 2020. (The basis for comparison is the Project Results Framework Matrix included in the original Request for CEO Endorsement Document.) This should be based on the Project Results Framework Matrix included in the original Request for CEO Endorsement Document.

CATEGORY	YES/NO	APPROVED BY	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE AND EXPLANATION
Objective	No		
Outcome	No		
Output/Activities	No		
Other	No		

EXTENSIONS OR OTHER MODIFICATIONS

Has the project been granted any extension or other modification covered by the OA-420 from July 1st, 2020, until June 30th, 2021? If yes, please explain below. **As applicable, please include information on issues and solutions related to COVID-19.**

None.

LESSONS LEARNED / BEST PRACTICES

If the project generated any lessons learned or best practices during the 2020-2021 GEF Fiscal Year, please provide a short description. **As applicable, please include information on issues and solutions related to COVID-19.**

Organizational dimensions

In a GEF project of this size, with 18 countries, 2 implementing agencies and 3 executing agencies, it is important to define the coordination structure to have constant and effective communication between the partners for the correct execution of the activities.

Recommendations:

- During the preparation phase, it is important to maintain dialogues to create the structure jointly and that all stakeholders take ownership of it and feel involved.

Successes

- In November 2020, the GEF CReW+ Project held its Inception Meeting and the first project steering committee meeting. There was participation of more than 100 representatives from the 18 countries and regional stakeholders.
- The GEF CReW+ Academy web portal was established. A bilingual platform to facilitate capacity development activities, disseminate materials produced by the project, as well as to promote the importance of IWWM and IWRM, and increase the corporate identity of the brand CReW+. The website (Spanish version) has gathered more than 7,300 visits, the English version more than 5,700 visits since its launch.
- A pilot video on the activities in Honduras was produced in English and Spanish. In addition, Instagram and Twitter accounts were created for GEF CReW+ to effectively disseminate these videos and other project products in the future.
- An article in the World Ocean Day 2021 was released to promote and update the status of the Project.

ANNEX 1. DEFINITION OF RATINGS

Development Objective Ratings

1. **Highly Satisfactory (HS):** Project is expected to achieve or exceed **all** its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
2. **Satisfactory (S):** Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
3. **Marginally Satisfactory (MS):** Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve **some** of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
4. **Marginally Unsatisfactory (MU):** Project is expected to achieve **some** of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only **some** of its major global environmental objectives.
5. **Unsatisfactory (U):** Project is expected **not** to achieve **most** of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
6. **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, **any** of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

Implementation Progress Ratings

1. **Highly Satisfactory (HS):** Implementation of **all** components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
2. **Satisfactory (S):** Implementation of **most** components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only a few that are subject to remedial action.
3. **Marginally Satisfactory (MS):** Implementation of **some** components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with **some** components requiring remedial action.
4. **Marginally Unsatisfactory (MU):** Implementation of **some** components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with **most** components requiring remedial action.
5. **Unsatisfactory (U):** Implementation of **most** components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.
6. **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** Implementation of **none** of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.

Risk ratings

Risk ratings will assess the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risks of projects should be rated on the following scale:

1. **High Risk (H):** There is a probability of greater than 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face high risks.
2. **Substantial Risk (S):** There is a probability of between 51% and 75% that assumptions may fail to hold and/or the project may face substantial risks.
3. **Modest Risk (M):** There is a probability of between 26% and 50% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/ or the project may face only modest risks.
4. **Low Risk (L):** There is a probability of up to 25% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/ or the project may face only modest risks.