

# Stakeholder Assessment

for the

**GEF CreW+ An integrated approach to water and wastewater management using  
innovative solutions and promoting financing mechanisms in the  
Wider Caribbean Region**

December 2021

## *Foreword*

This report summarizes the outcome of an exercise to assess the status of stakeholder engagement in support of the ***CreW+ An integrated approach to water and wastewater management using innovative solutions and promoting financing mechanisms in the Wider Caribbean Region***. The task consisted of three distinct phases:

The first phase focused on developing a stakeholder matrix encompassing over 700 potential partner agencies involved in Integrated Water and Wastewater Management (IWWM) throughout the Caribbean. The matrix is a database that incorporates information on the agencies' mission and expertise, and preliminarily found areas of collaboration with CReW+.

Subsequently, 23 leaders working on IWWM topics throughout the English- and Spanish-speaking the Caribbean shared their experiences and provided substantive insights as to the functionality of CReW+ approach to partnerships.

Building on the first two phases, the final stage resulted the preparation of an interactive digital map that visually displays current and potential partnerships with CReW+. The stakeholder map highlights their interest, connection to CReW+, and offers insights to the complex institutional ecosystem of integrated water and wastewater management. Discussions are underway to make the interactive stakeholder map publicly available on the CReW+ website.

I would like to acknowledge various persons, whose contributions were essential to the success of this consultancy. Anthony Solano, graduate student and water and sanitation specialist, who developed the digital stakeholder map. Pedro Moreo, CReW+ Project Coordinator, who patiently guided and supported the entire consultancy. And, finally, the individuals who generously shared their experiences and perspective on working through collaborative partnership arrangements.

The primary audience of this report are the implementing and executing agencies of CReW+ and, therefore, is written in a candid style that assumes familiarity with the institutional and programmatic content.

The views expressed in this document are the author's, and do not necessarily represent the views of any party to the GEF CReW+ project.

David L. Rogers  
Consultant to CReW+

## ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

CAR/RCU	Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit of the Cartagena Convention
Cartagena Convention	Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region
CRew+	An integrated approach to water and wastewater management using innovative solutions and promoting financing mechanisms in the Wider Caribbean Region
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
IDB	InterAmerican Development Bank
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
IWWM	Integrated Water and Wastewater Management
LBS Protocol	The <a href="#">Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities</a>
OAS	Organization of American States
PIF	Project Identification Form
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
IFI	International financial institutions
NGO	Non-governmental organization

#### A. Why assess CReW+ stakeholder partnerships?

The GEF CReW+<sup>1</sup> project was designed to implement technologically innovative, small-scale wastewater solutions throughout the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) using an integrated water and wastewater management (IWWM) approach. Four project components support: (1) institutional, policy and regulatory reforms relating to integrated water and wastewater management; (2) sustainable, tailor-made financing mechanisms; (3) innovative, small-scale, community-based water and wastewater management solutions; and (4) knowledge management and advocacy. Sustainability, replicability and the potential for scaling up are crosscutting programmatic themes.

GEF CReW+ supports eighteen countries throughout the WCR in their efforts to fulfill commitments under the Cartagena Convention's Protocol on Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution. In each country, formal engagement with GEF Focal Points responsible for environment and international cooperation link policy, financing and execution efforts. At a regional level, CReW+ supports the community of institutions and individuals to address the myriad issues related to IWWM.

CReW+ emphasis on project implementation through partnerships responds to the Sustainable Development Goal # 17, which aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Throughout the project preparation phase, potential roles and contributions of stakeholders and partners were identified and linked to anticipated project interventions. Both the PIF and the CEO Endorsement documents contain extensive analyses of expected partnerships with named organizations, and with general groups of stakeholders, such as communities, banks, ministries and media.

So, why review stakeholder involvement at this point in project execution? Whereas the previous exercises essentially listed potential stakeholders, this exercise goes one step further to capture information on confirmed and prospective partnership arrangements foreseen within the project timeline.

Finally, the review discusses CReW+'s two-tiered approach to collaborative relationships: The first tier is defined by the formal partnerships created to use GEF CReW+ resources, support the implementation of specific CReW+ activities and achieve agreed project outputs and short-term project outcomes. The second tier embraces a broad community of interested parties that have a long-term presence stake in IWWM and who confer legitimacy, drive sustainability and build institutional capacity for reducing marine pollution throughout region.

#### A. The Stakeholder Matrix

The [GEF CReW 2 Stakeholder Matrix .xlsx](#) is a database that compiles information on over 700 agencies and institutions that work on IWWM issues throughout the Caribbean region. The Matrix is organized into three distinct data sets: national stakeholders, regional stakeholders, and the United Nations University proposal to support CReW+ member countries. The matrix offers a bird's-eye perspective on IWWM stakeholders and their activities.

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<sup>1</sup> [CReW+: An Integrated Approach to Water and Wastewater Management Using Innovative Solutions and Promoting Financing Mechanisms in the Wider Caribbean Region | Global Environment Facility](#) GEF Agency Project ID 9601; IDB RG-T3412; UN Environment 01444

Eighteen Individual data sheets, one for each of the participating CReW+ countries, supply information on three categories of stakeholders: (a) the stakeholders responsible for approval, oversight, execution and sustainability of CReW+ activities in each country; (b) local allies and champions that could be approached in the future; and (c) the GEF Focal Points named in the various CReW+ project documents and on the GEF website who play a critical oversight role.<sup>2</sup>

The regional data set presents information on the 91 agencies working in IWWM, their potential contribution to sustaining CReW+ project results, and other relevant information.

## B. Insights to Stakeholders and Partnerships for CReW+ and IWWM

This section highlights the benefits and challenges of CReW+'s two-tiered approach, in which the first tier is the formal, short-term partnerships for project execution, and the second tier is the open-ended, less-formal partnerships for sustainability and continuity of IWWM objectives. Leaders of organizations working in IWWM throughout the Caribbean provided valuable insights to understanding the regional institutional governance framework in which CReW+ exists, and how stakeholders and partners currently and should work together.

### 1. The IWWM Framework

Several models help understand the relationships among the 700 regional actors involved with clean water and a healthy environment. The “onion” model suggests rings or layers of involvement and commitment, which elucidates some elements of a global-local or macro-micro dimension of reducing marine pollution. The “network of network” model, or a “three-dimensional spiderweb”, helps reveal how each stakeholder has its own networks (which include many of the same agencies) or that some partners themselves are a network of thousands of individuals and organizations, such as the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance. Finally, the model of participating in high-level initiatives, such as the Regional Strategic Action Plan for Building Resilience in the Water Sector in the Caribbean (that includes UN agencies, IFIs, NGOs and national governments), showcases partners’ distinct mandates and topical strengths, where CReW+ is but one of many collaborators.

During the process of developing the Stakeholder Matrix, a lack of information limited the ability to understand and classify stakeholders in terms of their objectives, functions, preferences, location, and operations. Borrowing from the well-known Myers-Briggs analysis of personality traits, the assessment conjured a taxonomy of stakeholder characteristics to help categorize and understand the various functional types. The following list of characteristics reflects a continuum of institutional interests, purpose, structure and reach. There is no judgement given to the intrinsic value of these characteristics:

- Strategic (long-term, structural) / tactical (short-term, operational)
- Regional or international (covers multiple countries) / local (within a single country or community)
- Formal and legalistic (requires formal agreements in order to collaborate) / informal and spontaneous (instinctive, voluntary collaboration)
- Core (explicitly supports IWWM/IWRM) / peripheral (supports related topics such as eco-tourism or organic farming)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/who-we-are/focal-points>

- Financier / recipient / independent (where resides in the financial stream)
- For profit private sector / not-for-profit organization / governmental agencies / or quase-versions thereof.
- Deep / shallow (referring to commitment and involvement with IWWM)
- Resilient / fragile (referring to an agency’s financial, legal, social standing)
- High level political / mid-level technical or operational / community-based small-scale
- Policy-oriented / operationally oriented
- Affirming / negative (some stakeholder support IWWM, while others have doubts or concerns)

Other characteristics traits should also be considered when assessing relevance and impact of a potential partnership:

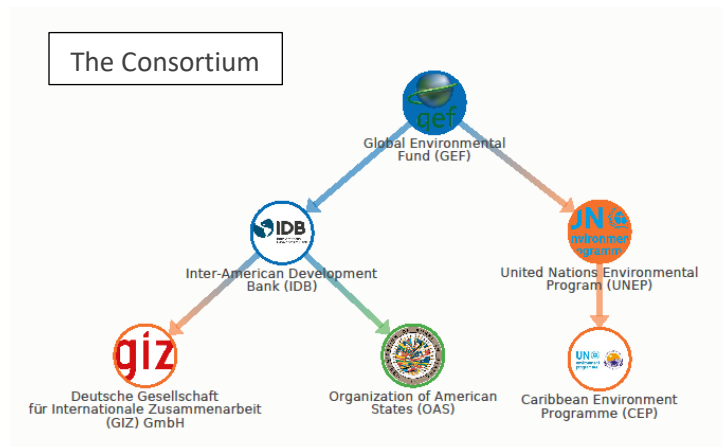
- Geographic location and authorization to work
- Technical capacity and expertise
- Communication style
- Institutional values and cultural norms
- Constraints affecting timing and pace
- Financial incentives
- Direct and indirect costs of the collaboration
- How does the stakeholder benefit from the partnership? How does this advance their own agenda?

The fact that each of the 700 institutions can be characterized by these criteria underscores the complexity of the IWWM institutional framework. On the other hand, none of this is particularly groundbreaking, and it is evident that these topics are being addressed, either implicitly or explicitly, in consolidating partnerships.

It is important to avoid being overly idealistic regarding the stakeholder cooperation. In the end, each agency is accountable to its constituents, and has its own priorities, modus operandi and governance structure. Of the hundreds of agencies identified in the Stakeholder Matrix, only a small portion has explicit mention of wastewater management on the websites. Generating a long list of potential stakeholders may promote inclusivity, but the notion that many agencies consistently collaborate on a given topic is somewhat utopic.

## 2. The Consortium

The unique, multi-institutional arrangement formed by the IDB, UNEP, GIZ, CAR/RCU and OAS, dubbed “the consortium”, is the foundational partnership that makes the CREW+ project possible.



The consortium is the first tier of CReW+'s stakeholder strategy, essential to the effectiveness and sustainability of the project. was created through formal agreements between and among the implementing and executing agencies consistent with GEF policy guidelines. It is an arrangement in which each of the core agencies brings its individual technical expertise, core values, operational strengths and administrative systems. There is ample agreement among the members of the consortium that the results are more than the sum of the individual organizations. The consortium is an asset that provides versatility, broad technical expertise, expectations for continuity and the tools for adaptive management that maximize each agency's legal and operational framework.

The model for the consortium was not in the original project plans but was cobbled together organically by IDB and UNEP to meet emerging needs and work together with more partners. At its best, the consortium allows each agency to advance on its strengths, and to find support and complementarity in its weaknesses. It is a great model, but it has challenges.

The strengths identified include:

- All partners recognize each agency's individual character, maintain collegial relationships and seek complementarity.
- All partners bring specialized expertise, unique connections and knowledge
- Multiple examples of teamwork and collaboration on technical and thematic activities have been identified.
- International forums, training events and communication products are areas where the intra-consortium cooperation excel.
- Participation in CReW+ adds considerable value to each partner's strategic objectives, above and beyond the project per se.
- The cooperation helps individual agencies respond to their own institutional mandates.

The challenges largely center on unreconciled differences, and include the following:

- Ongoing communication among the consortium members tends to be formalistic, which delays implementation. The *esprit de corps* found in CReW#1 seems to be missing.
- Agencies have different time constraints for participating in CReW+: one partner has more flexibility in being able to accommodate delays in project execution, whereas another faces a hard execution deadline. The consortium has yet to come to terms with the issue of extending CReW+.
- For all the members of the consortium, CReW+ is but one short-term project within a long-term portfolio of other programs, projects and activities as well as strategic objectives. When other responsibilities take higher priority and overshadow CReW+, execution progress slows down.
- Project components and responsibilities were distributed between implementing agencies according to a notion of equitably sharing responsibility, as opposed to proven execution capabilities. The efficacy of this approach has yet to be demonstrated.
- Executing agencies have significant differences in the ability to build their respective project teams and stay apace with the project timeline, notwithstanding pandemic constraints.
- Variations in administrative procedures, regulations, managerial styles and levels of (de)centralization have led to uneven results.
- Overlapping responsibilities in a country or on a component have generated confusion, not only among the consortium partners, but with the host country as well.
- Insufficient consultation at key decision points, formalistic communication and slow follow-up have given rise to uncertainty and misunderstandings with country authorities, local partners and beneficiary agencies.

- Each member of the consortium has its unique approach with regard to (a) accepting and using indirect cost financing, (b) in organizing, staffing and backstopping project activities, and (c) in demonstrating accountability to its constituents and beneficiaries. These institutional policies are not easily modified and must be accepted as a given at the project level. On the other hand, a lack of transparency and clarity on these foundational policies is detrimental and leads to inconformity within the consortium.
- Notwithstanding long-standing plans and discussions to work through local partners including government agencies, potential partners interviewed during this assessment stated that the time required to confirm and formalize any collaboration is very long, which is frustrating to them.

As the consortium continues to refine its approach to partnerships, it will be necessary to examine assumptions, reassess mutual expectations and adjust communications.

### 3. Country Stakeholders

Few nations have cross-sectoral frameworks bridging finance, planning, environment, health, marine pollution and utilities, that water and wastewater depend upon. Ministries responsible for setting sector and financial priorities and liaising with regional and international organizations often do not share a common impetus with environment ministries and much less with sanitation utilities. To close this gap, the trend has been to set up a national committee to oversee a project. But unless a lasting policy mechanism is established, when the project ends, the various stakeholders generally revert into their silos. And wastewater agencies continue to face difficult bureaucratic arrangements that limit their ability to garner authority to move forward on proposals that they consider priority. Rarely are the ministries of finance and planning identified as stakeholders in the wastewater sector, but they are singularly important agents who hold the keys to long-term, sustainable progress in IWWM.

In practice, the concept of the GEF Focal Point is somewhat diluted among multiple individuals spread throughout the bureaucracy and multiple GEF projects. The challenge is to find the right focal point to program and champion wastewater initiatives. CReW+ is well positioned to catalyze and advocate for designated leadership in wastewater, and address weaknesses caused by rotating personnel and shifting mandates. CReW+ has had success working with the lowest effective operational focal point who adds value to implementation.

CReW+, struggles for recognition after government turnover, because of its small size, low funding and the low appeal of wastewater. Recommendations for responding to a change in government include the following: Advance as much as possible to approve policies, legislative reforms and projects prior to the change in government, then engage with new authorities to build their ownership of the initiative. Another recommendation to ask IDB in collaboration with CDB to jump start the dialogue on CReW+ and IWWM through its high-level contacts in planning and finance. And, finally, maintain linkages and networks related to highly visible initiatives such as the Regional Strategic Action Plan.

At the end of the day, implementation is what counts, which leads to the question of resources. Regardless of environment ministries' and utility companies' convictions, the finance and planning ministries must ultimately attract the appropriate type of investment from the multilateral banks or private financial sector. The issue is how to create a mechanism whereby the decision-makers negotiating with the financing agencies grasp the issues confronting the water sector and prioritize water and wastewater management in their agenda. CReW+ has an opportunity to foster dialogue



on private sector and financial institutions' involvement, both for the immediate project activities, and for sustaining momentum on IWWM afterwards.

What happens if there is no local stakeholder or counterpart? In several instances, two years after project approval no local counterpart has assumed leadership to finalize a workplan, notwithstanding having initially endorsed CReW+. In two countries, internal disputes over which ministry has authority over innovative wastewater solutions has resulted in a fragmented response and delay. And in another instance, there is no local operator to assume responsibility for the proposed small-scale wastewater treatment plant. In each of these instances, CReW+ will need to conduct specific, tailored interventions to better understand current local circumstances and why the relative priority of wastewater may not be the same as it was four years ago.

#### 4. Champions

A unique sub-set of stakeholders are national champions. But who are they really? The designation is an honorary title for an undefined role, often bestowed on an individual with decision-making authority, technical expertise, or just a sympathetic ear. But effective champions tend to earn their stripes because they are technically qualified, politically astute, compelling advocates, albeit with little formal authority. In fact, many champions for clean water and marine biodiversity are outside of the usual project networks and financial mechanisms, where they can say things that the UNEP, IDB or others cannot say, such as, how polluted a particular beach is because of sewage contamination. Or as the famous young champion for climate change says, "...move beyond the blah, blah, blah". CReW+ is well positioned to support champions in their efforts to articulate convincing arguments on addressing marine pollution, through its knowledge management products that provide objective information about wastewater management – sources, impacts, water quality, etc.

#### 5. Multilateral Bodies

Maneuvering in partnerships with multilateral agencies fits the model of a three-dimensional spiderweb. CReW+, working through its co-implementing and co-executing consortium, has performed remarkably well in the complex institutional environment, with its myriad actors, programming and timetables. CReW+ has consolidated functional agreements with approximately 15 multilateral/regional bodies to collaborate on specific project components, and has taken part in high-level forums, both in and outside the WCR. Opportunities for collaboration in training and communications abound. However, there are unfulfilled needs that CReW+ could address, in partnership with regional bodies, related to entrenched issues such as reusing wastewater in agriculture and landscaping, and developing a sustained, comprehensive and standardized water- and wastewater- quality monitoring system. CReW+ consortium members have their own programs that offer an opportunity to build a coherent communication strategy on broader IWWM themes, as well as CReW+ activities.

#### 6. So, who's missing?

Other stakeholders with significant clout are the media, the private sector, and an amorphous group dubbed “negative stakeholders”.

An ongoing challenge is how to maximize communication through print, broadcast and social media. The central questions are: Targeting – how to ensure messages are appropriate for each individual audience and adapted to each platform? Effectiveness – do people read the messages and are they moved to action? At this point, there are more questions than answers. The CReW+ consortium should have an internal conversation to share communication plans, and identify synergies for a harmonized, collective strategy for the remainder of the program. A subsequent step would be to invite other partners to participate on related topics, such as SDG-6, human settlements, marine biodiversity, mangroves and others.

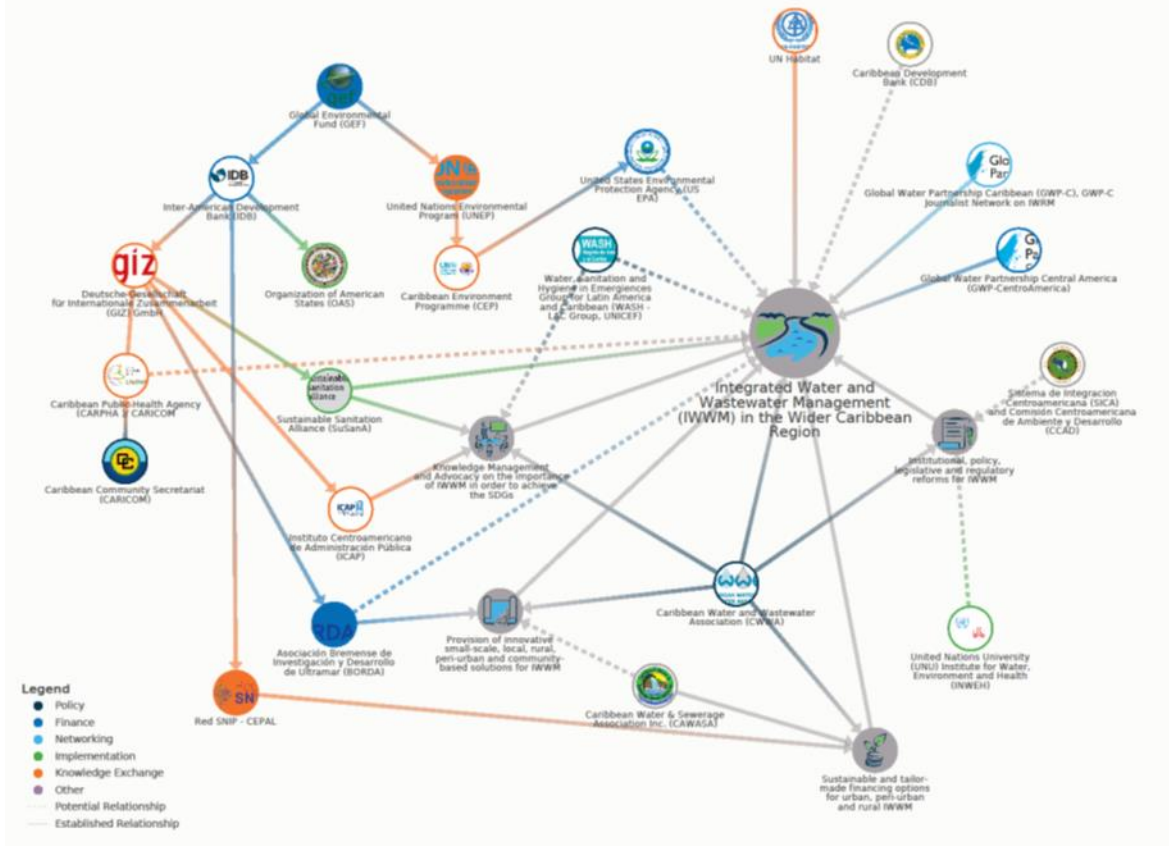
Working with and through the private sector is a GEF priority, but additional effort is needed. The first challenge is to balance the trade-off between ensuring profitability for investors while maximizing environmental benefits. Another issue is the lead time needed to design, approve, finance and execute a sizeable private sector project far exceeds the CReW+ project lifecycle. Finally, how can a grant-based project engage with the private sector, while respecting the principles of public sector procurement, without favoritism or subsidization. More effort is needed to develop a strategy and build private sector interest in wastewater investment, based on good practice elsewhere. In the meantime, quick wins might come from environmentally friendly projects already underway (such as eco-resorts or hotels that reuse wastewater for landscaping) that agree to monitor effluent quality and agree to participate as a CReW+ case study. To date, the best private sector intervention has been Jamaica’s \$12 million revolving wastewater fund under CReW#1.

Finally, negative stakeholders are key actors who see the costs of wastewater management but not the benefits; who have the authority to approve initiatives, but surreptitiously torpedo them; or who lack knowledge on the benefits modern technology offers. Negative stakeholder can appear anywhere in CReW+'s network of relationships, such as the health official who fears the public health consequences of reusing wastewater, the environmentalist who questions the technical competency of the local wastewater utility, or the poultry farmer who calculates the cost of animal waste management to meet new effluent standards will significantly erode his profit margins. CReW+ will need to develop practical and realistic guidance, business case models and linkages to better understand the interests and concerns of these actors. In this context, often the spontaneous, informal partnerships can help reluctant counterparts make quality connections to the conceptual framework of CReW+, SDG6 and the LBS Protocol.

### C. CReW+ Regional Stakeholder Map

The [GEF CReW+ Stakeholder Map](#) provides information of approximately 40 active partners on an interactive online platform called Kumu. The resulting map organizes complex data on the partners’ roles, their interconnectivity and mutual influence in a visually attractive and easily understood graphic format. The map facilitates observation of partner involvement and influence over specific components of the CReW+ project such as reforms and governance, sustainable financing, provision of innovative technologies and knowledge management, as well as more generally their involvement in integrated water and wastewater management. The following graphic depicts the web of current and potential partner relationships within CReW+.

# GEF CRew+ Regional Stakeholder Map



The regional stakeholder map is currently under review for uploading to the GEF CRew+ website. Once publicly available, the interactive map will facilitate the understanding of the complex network of relationships and should help reveal opportunities for collaboration and synergies throughout the Wider Caribbean Region. Over time, more information can be added (either curated or by crowdsourcing) to create a deeper understanding of influencers and system dynamics. This growing body of information will help project partners to enhance innovation, build stronger relationships and strategically manage the complexities of IWWM.

*Kumu* is a cloud-based platform that helps improve the understanding of relationships through systems thinking and social network analysis. It helps visualize and explore the complex web of influence, loyalties, interests and alignment of relationships that affect behavior and create change.

## D. Thoughts Going Forward

The Stakeholder Assessment is a modest step to understanding the IWWM institutional ecosystem in the Wider Caribbean Region, and the resulting Matrix and the Map are, at best, works in progress. Ongoing efforts to address marine pollution through stakeholder partnerships would benefit from further refinement and elaboration of these tools. One suggestion is to survey the 700 stakeholders contained in the Matrix database, using a cloud-based questionnaire, to garner the agencies' own

perspectives on their mission, experience and potential for IWWM partnership. A similar idea invites the national stakeholders to participate in a roundtable discussion to promote IWWM and CReW+ activities. The survey and roundtable results would provide invaluable information to CReW+'s ongoing efforts, strengthen national networks, and inform upcoming GEF operations.

Embracing the complexity inherent within IWWM requires a flexible, multidisciplinary approach to management, problem solving and operational partnerships. Development agencies and governments are dealing with myriad dimensions of climate resilience, pandemic survivability, pollution abatement, political and economic insecurity, in addition to wastewater. Managing wicked problems is a challenge, but part of the solution involves interacting effectively with the vast number of like-minded actors. Only together will it be possible to go beyond supportive statements, and to motivate stakeholders to carry out policies and make investments that make a difference.

It's time to think out of the box and do something different. Many agencies have more to give and CReW+'s short timeframe should not limit their potential to grow and learn from each other. CReW+ could facilitate relationships between stakeholders themselves, in other words, catalyze lasting partnerships that can outlive the project. Seek out more champions. Discuss potential the topic of stakeholder partnerships in CReW Academy workshops. Celebrate the fact that addressing wastewater is a weird and often taboo topic. Make people think about wastewater at least once a day, and maybe some people twice a day.

## Annexes

The following four links to cloud-based digital files are an integral part of this consultant report:

- A. [GEF CReW 2 Stakeholder Matrix .xlsx](#)
- B. [GEF CReW+ Stakeholder Map](#)
- C. [Data Kumu CReW^M Stakeholder Mapping -1112 final.xlsx](#)
- D. [GEF CReW 2 Stakeholder Assessment .docx](#) (this document)

#### Annex D. Persons Interviewed for the Stakeholder Assessment

Name	Last Name	Organization	Position
Chris	Corbin	UNEP	Programme Officer Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Mario	Escobedo	CCAD	Director Unidad de Manejo del Proyecto MAR2R
Ignatius	Jean	CAWASA	Executive Director
Shane	Kirton	CARPHA	Director
Pedro	Kraemer	BORDA	Director
Simone	Lewis	GWP Caribbean	Regional Coordinator
Gonzalo	Meredíz Alonso	Amigos de Sian Ka'an	Director Ejecutivo
Julio	Montes de Oca	GIZ	Coordinator Component I
Pedro	Moreo	OAS	Regional Coordinator - PCG
Eleanor	Phillips	TNC	Director
Manzoor	Qadir	UNU-INWEH	Assistant Director
Rodrigo	Riquelme	IDB	Water and Sanitation Lead Specialist
Andrés	Sánchez	OAS	Water Program Specialist
Bärbel	Schwaiger	GIZ	Programme Director Sanitation for Millions
Lacramioara	Stroe Ziegler	GIZ	Project Manager CREW+
Fabiola	Tábora	GWP Centroamérica	Secretaria Ejecutiva
Isabelle	Vanderbeck	UNEP	GEF International Waters Task Manager
Joaquin	Viquez	GIZ	CREW+ Technical Advisor
Janet	Vivas Aguas	INVEMAR	Jefa Línea Prevención y Protección de Ecosistemas Marinos y Costeros - PEM
Wayne	Williams	CWWA	Executive Director
Rick	Ziegler	US EPA	Director