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# Developing the concept for a Water Resources Management Unit in Grenada Lessons Learnt from G-CREWS

## Challenge

The 2020 National Water Policy of Grenada envisages a Water Resources Management Unit (WRMU) to assume responsibility for the management of Grenada's water resources in their entirety including: surface water; ground water; rainwater; estuarine water or coastal water and water contained by waterworks for the purposes of providing a water supply service. The WRMU's role is to ensure that waters are managed and maintained for present and future generations and for the continued provision of environmental services. The WRMU's powers, duties and responsibilities will reflect the objectives and principles of the Water Policy.

## Observations from some CARICOM Countries

The different water management entities in Dominica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica were examined during the elaboration of the concept for Grenada's WRMU. The key lessons learnt from these initiatives to establish and operate independent water resources management entities are:

- All states have a commitment to separating water supply services from water resources management;
- The entities established are mostly funded by taxpayers;
- The entities all experience, at some time, financial and personnel resource deficiencies; and
- The entities depend on a collaborative effort and meaningful involvement of other agencies.

The key issues of having a functional WRMU can be summarized as: level of autonomy; adequate staffing; adequate funding; appropriate legislative environment; and effective involvement of key stakeholders.



## Lessons Learnt

### 1: Having an Approved Water Policy

Having an approved water policy is a crucial part of water governance. The water policy must address information on (a) ownership and entitlements of water, (b) accessibility of users to affordable clean water, (c) institutions and legislations responsible for the water policy, (d) the economic value of water and taxation. The water policy should be clear about a supported institutional arrangement governing the water policy including the relationship of a newly created WRMU.

### 2: Importance of Involving the Relevant Stakeholders

During the elaboration of the concept for the Unit, one must identify the most relevant stakeholders including: CSO, private sector, and women groups, to know their interests; how these stakeholders will not only support during the planning stage of a new WRMU, but also in the establishment of its legal framework. Early in the stakeholder involvement process, it is necessary to identify who should be fully involved in the analysis and planning of the process and who needs to be consulted only. This can be achieved during the process of stakeholder involvement by using criteria like "power to effect change" and "interest in reform" to classify the stakeholders.



*Grand Etang Lake, one of Grenada's natural water reservoir*

### 3: Managing Consultations

When planning and organising workshops, it is necessary to limit the number of stakeholder groups to those with similar interests; if their interests are too far apart, consensus on possible concessions is difficult to achieve. When planning division into breakout groups, it is important to form the groups according to converging interests.

### 4: Managing Expectations

The limits of the new entity shall be clearly communicated as there will always be limits on what new institutions can do. Stakeholders might want to solve all problems that can be tied, even marginally, to the WRMU but it should be also explained that the policy framework or responsibilities can be updated if needed once the Unit is established and in operation for some time.

### 5: Selection of Experienced Local Consultants is Critical

It is of vital importance to engage local consultants who have good working knowledge within the government structures. Additionally, the consultants must have knowledge of the water and environment sectors and regulations as well as within civil society. Their experience of working in the sector and their personal contacts, as well as positive relationships between consultants and key stakeholders, improves the chances of success.

### 6: Willingness-to-Pay Survey

Stakeholders' recognition of the importance and need for a WRMU does not translate into a willingness to pay for it. A willingness-to-pay survey should precede the conceptualisation phase. This would signal, at an early stage, the potential contribution that the state would have to provide.

### 7: Contract a Legal Advisor

Legal advice is already essential during development of the concept for a WRMU. As soon as a draft technical concept is available, the legal adviser can start to develop the legal framework under the definition of the concept.

### 8: Understanding the Processes within Government Institutions

When the processes of government institutions are not fully understood or appreciated, frustrations can be induced from apparent non-commitment of government personnel, unavoidable delays on planned activities, or unexpected changes in staff.

### 9: Enroll "Process Champions" at an early stage in the Formation of the WRMU

A "process champion" is a person who is respected by key stakeholders and decision makers and who is willing to defend the need for the creation of the WRMU. Such a support can be instrumental in succeeding.

### 10: The Use of Virtual Workshops has Limitations.

The active participation of stakeholders in virtual workshops are not always guaranteed. In a physical meeting, participants are more actively involved in workshop activities and active participation is essential for meaningful stakeholder consultations. The outcome of a virtual workshop is therefore not the same as in a physical one.



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