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CAPACITY BUILDING, REFORESTATION AND SOIL SCIENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN



Dirt is so underappreciated, but its importance cannot be overstated. It is the very substance of all of life as we know it on our planet. The Partnership is on a quest to bring soil into the spotlight through CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 1. This is our multi-country project that was launched last March (see our January 2023 issue for more details) and is now gearing up literally break ground. Of the 8 countries, St. Lucia took the lead as the first to begin soil sampling hot on the heels of last month's unprecedented training initiative. Who knew dirt could be so exciting?



Partnership Initiative on
Sustainable Land Management

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NEWSLETTER

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PISLM TRAINS REPS FROM 8 COUNTRIES IN SOIL SAMPLING

St. Augustine Trinidad

Last month, National representatives from eight CARICOM countries convened at UWI St. Augustine to attend a 5-day Fieldwork Training in Sustainable Soil Management. The training is being executed in collaboration with the PISLM Regional Research, Advisory and Capacity Building Facility on New Adaptation Technologies (RAC/NAT), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN) and The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus (UWI). Since the 1970's, there have been almost no surveys or collection of comprehensive soil data for the Caribbean. For those who have data, only a few countries have it digitized. Attendees from Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and St. Lucia trained in various functions, such as soil sampling design, sample collection and modern cataloging techniques including georeferencing. The training will aid in building capacity that they are sharing with their teams in their respective countries.



ST. LUCIAN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER KWESI GODDARD SPEAKS ON JANUARY'S SOILCARE TRAINING



This past January, Kwesi Goddard and 14 contemporaries from 8 countries in the Caribbean community converged on UWI St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago to train in the latest soil evaluation strategies under Agricultural Engineer, Global Soil Partnership Soil Science Consultant and FAO Trainer Guillermo Ezequiel Peralta. He gave us this interview right after his return to St. Lucia

Rashida: As an agricultural engineer, you deal with soil evaluation on a regular basis, is that correct? Can you give us an example in recent work?

Kwesi: As an agricultural Engineer, in the area of soil conservation and drainage, I deal with issues around the conservation of productive soil aspects for the improvement of productivity in agricultural production systems. Example in recent work would include island wide drainage assessments, agricultural land use evaluations for the matching of production systems to appropriate agricultural zones.

Rashida: What kinds of new information and tools did you gain from this week's training?

Kwesi: Tools gained included: 1.The methodology of selecting areas for study and the creation of a base line for a longitudinal observation of the impact of sustainable soil management interventions over time. We were also empowered with the use of the open source programs of QGis, QField, and google earth engine to generate georeferenced location maps, which we were able to upload to QField on handheld devices for navigation to the sites where the observations are carried out.

Rashida: How big is your team in St. Lucia?

Kwesi: Our team in St. Lucia consists of Officers from the Forestry, Research, Engineering, and extension services. Our team is composed of officers in different roles and amounts to 30 people. **Rashida:** From your perspective, how will the tools and resources you gained this week change the way St. Lucia's Ag Engineering Services Division does its Soil Management functions?

Kwesi: The tools gained will improve the functioning of the Land Resource Management Unit in the area of multivariational analysis, for land capability classifications, recommendations and the identification of hazards. It will improve our ability to assess soil and land health, and the ability to train other divisions of the Ministry.

Rashida: I see the representatives from the different countries have varied backgrounds and levels of expertise in Soil Science. Was there knowledge sharing happening between you?

Kwesi: There indeed was knowledge sharing and continues to be amongst participants.



DOMINICA'S FORESTRY DIVISION RECEIVES OVER US\$60K IN EQUIPMENT FOR REFORESTATION PROJECT FROM PISLM



More than US\$60,000.00 in equipment was procured for Dominica's Forestry, Wildlife and National Parks Division by the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) for post Hurricane Maria reforestation efforts on the island. The donation was made at a handing over ceremony, which took place on Friday 20th January 2023 at the Forestry Division office in Roseau. Receiving the equipment on behalf of the Division was Director Mr. Minchinton Burton.

The donated equipment includes chainsaws, clearing saws, cutlasses, drills, chisels, seedling trays, plant bags and gloves.

The handing over was part of component one of the "Strengthening Resilience of Agricultural Lands and Forests in Dominica in the Aftermath of Hurricane Maria" Project, also known as "The Post Maria Project". It is one of two being undertaken by the organisation in Dominica.

Euan James, National Project Coordinator of PISLM, highlighted the organisation's contribution to this component. "The manpower has been deployed and we are clearing the forest area and replanting. PISLM has contracted private nurseries to assist in ensuring we have the quantity of seedlings that we require for this project."

The equipment will further enhance the efforts of PISLM to build capacity within the Forestry Division, as several training and development activities have taken place, the most recent being a two-day workshop in November 2022, where Staff were trained on improving adoption and implementation of SLM approaches to management of forests and related ecosystems in Dominica

PISLM 5TH HIGH LEVEL FORUM TO TAKE PLACE IN TRINIDAD NEXT MONTH



PISLM's 5th High Level Forum will happen in two segments:

20th - 21st March 2023 will be the Technical Meeting

23rd - 24th March 2023 will be the Ministerial Meeting

The agenda of the 5th Session of the PISLM High-Level Forum shall comprise of, inter alia:

- 1) A review of progress made in CSIDS - SOILCARE Phase I
- 2) Approval of the GEF Project Implementation Form (PIF) for CSIDS - SOILCARE Phase II
- 3) Setting the parameters for the Caribbean LDN Transformative Project
- 4) A review of the institutional capacities of PISLM to carry out its mandate

These discussions will finalize the approximately US\$90M funding that has been identified by PISLM for the execution of the Sustainable Land Management and Land Degradation Project in the Caribbean. Registration is underway.

[Click here to register today!](#)

ST. LUCIA MAKES HISTORY: THE FIRST REGIONAL SOIL SURVEY IN OVER 50 YEARS

St. Lucia is the first, but it won't be the last. The SOILCARE Project will spend much of the next 12 months continuing to carry out soil surveys country by country. Next stop: Grenada.

Catalyzed by the recent SOILCARE Fieldwork Training in Soil Sampling, the first regional soil survey is now underway. This historic moment was commemorated by a ceremony, presided over by St. Lucia's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Rural Development Mr. Alfred Prospere and Project Coordinator Mr. Trevor Thompson, who travelled from Grenada.

A watershed moment for the PISLM, the outcome of this exercise will be the production of state-of-the-art soil maps that will provide data on organic content and much more. These data will empower the individual nations and the CARICOM at large to make more strategic decisions in land use planning, improve food security and achieve land degradation neutrality target setting programme goals.

As such, the region is doing its part towards achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals 2 - Zero Hunger - and 15 - Life on Land. This latter goal seeks to "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss".



PISLM WATERSHED CONSULTANTS DRS. DAVE LLOYD AND CAMILE DAVID CONDUCTED SLM TRAINING FOR AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICERS IN DOMINICA



On the 26th and 27th of January, in the Public Service Union Conference room in Dominica's capital, 18 officers convened to receive training as part of the Sustainable Land Management in the Commonwealth of Dominica Project. The goal of the training was to improve adoption and implementation of SLM approaches and technologies in the Dominican agricultural sector. Watershed and Marine Specialist Dr. David presented the "Ridge to Reef" Concept for watershed and aquatic ecosystem management, while highlighting human stresses within watershed ecosystems. Dr. Lloyd, an Agroecologist and Soil Scientist, introduced the concept of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and presented the nation's target-setting obligations.



On day one, participants learned about the major soil types and trace elements, as well as how to interpret the results of soil and plant tissue analyses and soil fertility management. On day two, the group went into the field, visiting sites at Warner, Layou Park and Sultan to practice soil sampling methodologies, view examples of degraded land and conduct assessments and examine polyculture cropping systems. The day was packed with information. See next month's newsletter for follow-up interviews with those who attended

