LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL STORIES

Caribbean

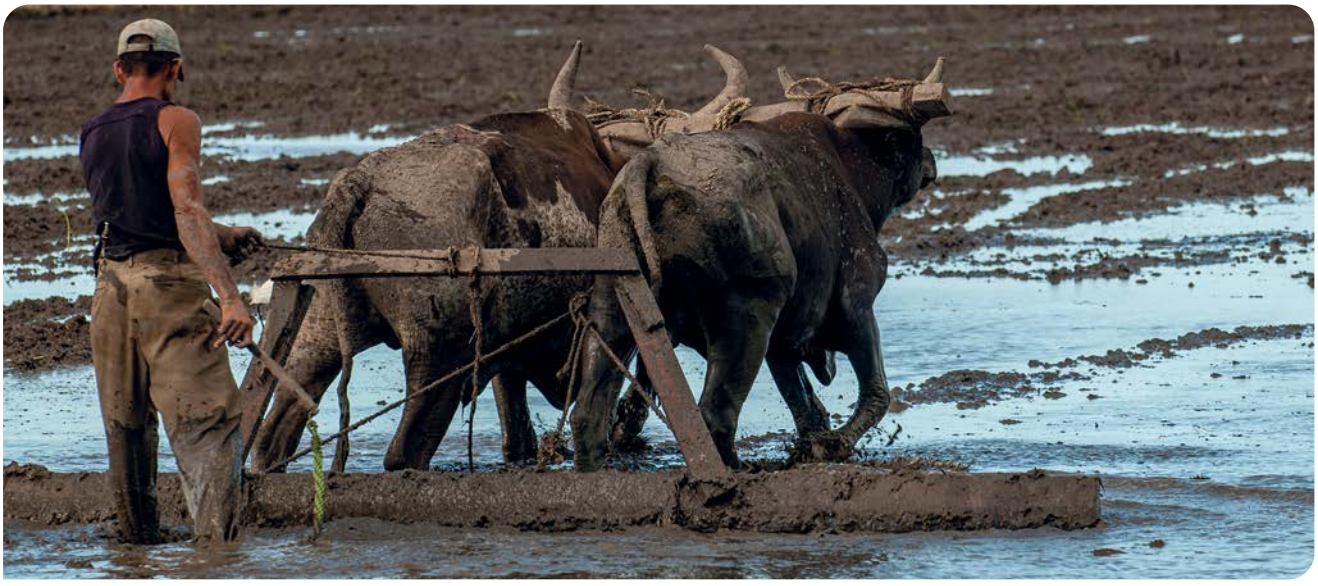
Flood risk assessment for the Dominican Republic

GWP Caribbean is supporting the Government of the Dominican Republic to implement a series of activities to inform the country's submission for the second round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). In early 2020, this work included a flood risk study. Based on projections of rainfall under conditions of climate change, the study provided an estimate of the increased risk of flooding and landslides. The process included three online stakeholder consultations to validate the rainfall projections and share the process of risk assessment, before and after a flood or landslide. Stakeholder participation provided useful data and feedback, as well as improving general knowledge of risk assessment processes. Further training will be offered through capacity-building workshops in 2021.

Creating and sharing knowledge for water security in the Caribbean

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many GWP activities around the world. However, it has also provided an opportunity to reinforce commitment to adopting a more integrated approach to water resources management. To support this process, GWP Caribbean prepared a paper entitled Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Caribbean Water Sector. This explores access to safe water and sanitation, preparing for the impacts of climate change, promoting science-based solutions, implementing water payment options, and wastewater monitoring. The publication also discusses the importance of regional cooperation and the future outlook, including opportunities to promote integrated water resources management.

Working with the Caribbean WaterNet (Cap-Net) and the University of the West Indies, GWP Caribbean also produced two training manuals. The first, Water Use Efficiency in Agriculture, aims to build capacity for improved water management by maximising water-use efficiency. The modules cover water resources and climate change, crop water use, irrigation technologies and monitoring, and alternative production systems. The second, Aquaculture for Caribbean Small Island Developing States, aims to build capacity to develop sustainable water-related food production systems and thereby protect the marine environment. The modules cover the choice of species, systems, and sites; stock management, harvesting and processing; water budgeting and waste management; and cash flow. Both sets of training materials include lecture presentations.



Rice cultivation in the Dominican Republic

Central America

Ministers welcome drought management workshops

In 2020, GWP Central America coordinated a series of workshops on integrated drought management. This was part of a regional project implemented by the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) to increase capacity for flood and drought risk reduction and promote climate resilience in six countries of Central America. High-level officials from the ministries of environment of Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua participated in the reporting-back sessions, in which GWP presented a summary of the events. The ministers appreciated being informed about the participants' feedback, which included recommendations for priority actions in future national drought management policy.

"This workshop coincided with preparation of the National Plan for the Reduction of Drought Risks and it gave us many ideas for actions to include in the plan. The experiences of other countries and having a broader perspective was also very useful," said Ivis Meza, Operator of Geographic Information Systems and Databases, General Directorate of Water Resources of the Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment of Honduras.

Freddy Chiroy, Vice-Minister of Environment of Guatemala, said that the ministry had prioritised water resources in their agenda and, therefore, the feedback was very much aligned to their needs. "The results strengthen what the ministry has visualised, and support the integration of the public strategies we are developing regarding this issue," he said.

Regional dialogue on transboundary water

Central America has 25 international watercourses and 18 transboundary aquifers. Equitable water resources planning and management therefore depends on finding mutually acceptable ways to share cross-border water resources. Following a successful event in 2019 that catalysed the process, GWP Central America and CCAD organised a second regional roundtable in Honduras in February 2020. Participants were drawn from six Central American countries, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, and included representatives from government ministries of foreign affairs and environment, cross-border commissions, river basin organisations, academic institutions, non-governmental organisations, and private sector companies. The event was held in parallel with a meeting of the Council of Ministers of CCAD, which enabled the ministers of environment to contribute to the discussions. In addition to pledging their support for continued dialogue, the participants agreed to form a regional community of practice as a mechanism for further coordination, priority setting, and information exchange.

Regional dialogue on transboundary waters in Central America

Methodology for measuring IWRM implementation at local level in Honduras

Working at the municipal level is a priority in Central America, to advance the implementation of IWRM. In 2019, GWP Honduras helped to organise a series of six workshops to build the capacity of local actors for measuring the implementation of IWRM (SDG indicator 6.5.1). These experiences have been synthesised in a guide (in Spanish): Measurement of IWRM at the municipal level, and can now be shared with others. The guide complements a second publication (also in Spanish): Guidelines for the development of municipal water policies, which proposes a process to follow and is designed for use by municipal technicians. The publication was compiled with information gathered through a webinar for participants from six countries across Central America.

SDG 6.5.1 workshop in Honduras

South America

Big data to support water resources decision-making

GWP South America led a webinar series in 2020, with sessions throughout the year attracting participants from most countries in the region. The events were designed to answer the question, can big data improve water research in Latin America? The webinars were based on a detailed literature review of more than 30,000 articles, conducted by researchers from the University of California, Davis. The interdisciplinary team was looking to identify opportunities for water resources research in Latin America and the Caribbean, secure equal access to data sources, and promote academic collaboration. Based on the review, the researchers identified potential areas of progress in integrated water resources management for each country in the region and compiled a data-sharing platform. GWP played an important role in sharing the platform with researchers and non-academic stakeholders, and in gathering feedback on priority issues. It is hoped that the data platform will help to create collaborative projects across the region.

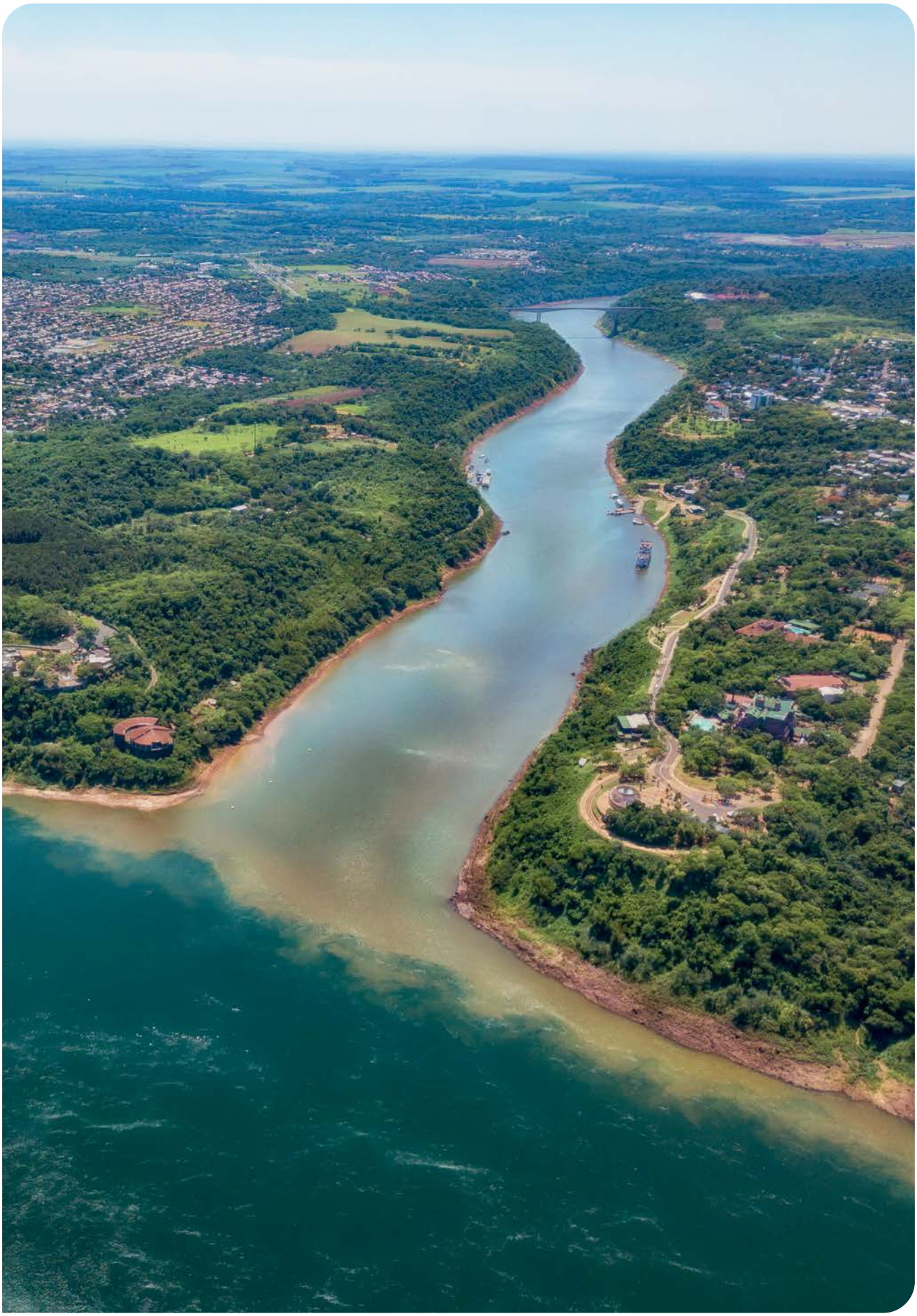
"Our GWP project partners have been key in recruiting and identifying key researchers and decision-makers who have helped us in building the water platform," said Dr Samuel Sandoval, project leader. "In simple words, this project would not have the scope and design of the platform without the support of GWP South America."

Action on climate change in Ecuador and Paraguay

GWP South America is collaborating with Ecuador's Ministry of Environment and Water, the NDC Partnership, and other agencies to support implementation of the country's NDC, focusing particularly on the inclusion of gender in climate-resilient development. In 2020, this work included developing the capacity of stakeholders to incorporate gender perspectives in planning and implementation tools. Building on the country's ongoing work to develop climate hazard identification and risk assessment, GWP and partners will develop indicators to measure gender-related issues. The knowledge gathered on effective approaches to gender inclusion in climate adaptation will be shared widely through the GWP Network.

"GWP's expertise has allowed us to maintain an articulate and agile workplan," said Rosa González, Climate Change Adaptation Specialist, Undersecretariat of Climate Change, Ministry of the Environment and Water of Ecuador. "GWP's technical advice etc. has allowed us to generate fluid and effective results."

GWP Paraguay has signed an agreement with the national government to coordinate activities towards the second round of NDCs to be presented in 2021. The agreement includes technical support to prepare a baseline for the country's current level of adaptation to climate change from a sector and area perspective. GWP will also help to formulate adaptation goals in line with the Paraguay national plan for climate adaptation, ensuring integration with the country's national development plan and other SDG processes. GWP will also be tasked with building the capacity of stakeholders and coordinating input to an implementation and financing plan for climate adaptation.



Border between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay at the confluence of the Iguazu and Parana rivers