

Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States

Centre of Excellence's mission is "to strengthen innovation and resilience in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) by sharing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) related best practices and lessons learned and to support SIDS in their road maps for Sustainable Development".¹⁾ In all the member islands of SIDS, one of the main problems that they face is Waste Management. As the focus of the Centre of Excellence (COE) is on Sustainable Development policies sharing, the waste disposal and recycling are an important field of study.

Headquartered in Aruba, the institution seeks collaborations to promote sustainable initiatives for islands. Thus, for the following years, they decided to switch the emphasis from sharing best local practices in all these islands on their platform, to providing SIDS with in-country technical assistance. Among the countries where trainings will be held in the next few months, we encounter Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Seychelles, Vanuatu, Dominican Republic and Belize. COE will continue sharing the lessons on their web site.²⁾

The first training took place in October 2017 in Antigua and Barbuda and was centered on the Waste Management problem. The workshop brought about an article with recommendations titled "**Knowledge sharing to ensure that waste does not go to waste**" written by Ms. Ruth Spencer, National Coordinator GEF/SGP in **Antigua and Barbuda**. It includes insights regarding the Waste Management types of policies that can be implemented on the other islands. Thus, **the ideas shared in the articles can be related to Aruba** and represent a starting point to a Sustainable Waste Management on the island. The main topics addressed at the Antigua and Barbuda training are summarized below.

1. Desired future of Waste Management

In the October 2017 workshop, it was discussed the possibility of building a roadmap with the key components (stakeholders) playing an important role in the process. Antigua aims a conversion of the waste in energy by 2025 (by recycling). They consider that the guidance of the island to a sustainable future should be part of an integrated business concept. But in order to reach that goal, the authorities should support the local initiatives that are engaged in waste recycling and waste diversion.³⁾ The idea that fuels the waste sustainability is that "the waste should be seen as having a value".³⁾

Amongst others, the article talks about the compost generation from organic and trees waste. The compost could be further used in building up the island's degraded soils and in providing nutrients to increase the soil water retention and hence fight the dry weather conditions.³⁾

This section of the article provides some recommendations that relate to the Waste Management in Aruba. Amongst them, the most important one is concerning the **support that the government and the other institutions should give to the local businesses** that enters the recycling market or waste collection market. A desired future for the waste management in Aruba comprises not only the **existence of a proper landfill** and the **avoidance of the illegal dumps sites**, but mostly the **emergence of local recycling companies**.

2. Obstacles seen in reaching a Sustainable Waste Management

The workshop also discussed the issues that Antigua is currently facing. The first one was concerning the Cooks Landfill. It is 4.6 m higher than it should be and it is located next to a wetland area.³⁾ The damages that the landfill brings to the watershed and the ecosystems are too big to not be taken into consideration. The second obstacle is represented by the illegal dump sites that are found all over the country. A new approach related to payments to the companies that collect the waste, the contracts from their National Waste Authority and the construction waste from hotels and other construction sites needs to be discussed.³⁾ The last identified issue is the lack of reliable data. This data should represent the starting point in creating management policies.³⁾

In the case of Aruba, the workshop provided some valuable aspects. The **official dump** site owned by Serlimar N.V. is **situated close to the ocean and to a mangrove forest**. Thus the environmental impact is visible and unfortunately it is translated in **ocean and air pollution** and the **loss of the ecological services provided by the mangrove**. Regarding the Particulate Matter air pollution at the dump, there are areas where the 2.5µm diameter particulates are found in a concentration of almost four times higher than the European Union standard value set for an average period of 1 hour (25µg/m³).⁴⁾ The **illegal dump sites** are also a problem for the Waste Management in Aruba, as even the Government states in a February 2017 release on their web site.⁵⁾ The illegal dump sites can become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Aruba also faces problems with the **lack of environmental data**.

3. Market for improved Waste Management

Regarding the funds necessary to implement sustainable initiatives in the public sector and to support the private waste management businesses, the Antigua workshop concluded that a financing mechanism should be legally incorporated – the Sustainable Island Resource Financing (SIRF) Fund.³⁾ New legislations for the Paris Agreement will come in the next few months, so the waste management initiatives will need to be supported, enhanced and upscaled.³⁾ The article also provides examples of how can the financial fund be sustained (e.g. environmental levy from buying cars).

Aruba should follow the same pattern and improve the use of **money collected from environmental taxes to support ongoing local waste management actions** such as recycling businesses⁶⁾.

In conclusion, based on the idea of experience-sharing that the Centre of Excellence focuses, we tried to take the best practices, recommendations and solutions from the October 2017 Centre of Excellence's workshop in Antigua and Barbuda. As it is stated in the article issued from the workshop discussions ("Knowledge sharing so that waste does not go to waste", Ms. Ruth Spencer), the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Aruba as part of them, should focus on depicting a desired future, identifying the obstacles and finding the financial sources in order to create a better Waste Management.

List of References

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