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A WEEK OF EXCHANGES IN HAVANA BETWEEN THE PARTNERS OF THE CARIBSAN PROJECT TO DEVELOP CONSTRUCTED WETLANDS FOR SANITATION

Review of the CARIBSAN institutional and technical mission that took place in Havana, Cuba from 16 to 20 May 2022.

Havana, 21 May 2022

On Friday 20 May 2022, the CARIBSAN project partners concluded their institutional and technical mission in Havana with the 5th steering committee meeting. At the end of the mission, a partnership framework agreement was signed by the various representatives of the institutions involved in developing the Constructed Wetland* technology, a wastewater treatment technique inspired by the natural heritage of the Caribbean.

The institutional delegation was composed of representatives from Dominica (DOWASCO) and St Lucia (WASCO), the Executive Director of the Caribbean Association for Water and Sanitation (CAWASA), and the Directorates General of the International Office for Water and the ODE Martinique. The technical delegation was made up of engineers from the International Office for Water (OiEau), the main operator of the project, scientists from INRAE and the engineer in charge of the project from ODE Martinique.

Under the leadership of the First Vice President of the INRH in Cuba, political discussions took place, in the presence of the Ambassadors of Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, Dominica, the European Union and the French Development Agency (AFD). These initial discussions are a prerequisite for the CARIBSAN regional conference to be held at the end of the year 2022 and for a continuation of the CARIBSAN project after 2022.

In addition, the partners were able to attend the presentation of PhD works on Constructed Wetlands by young Cuban engineers. Field visits were also organized: the Havana water treatment plant, the national botanical garden (presentation of local plants), a visit to the sewage and drinking water pipe production plant HYDROPLAST (unique in the Caribbean),

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the Hydraulic Research Centre of the Technological University of Havana, and a visit to potential sites preselected for the future construction of a constructed wetland.

The Cuban government emphasised the importance of this cooperation programme. Indeed, Constructed wetlands should be included in the Cuban national sanitation planning.

The first CARIBSAN pilot constructed wetlands treatment plants are expected in each country by 2024.

This first mission fully demonstrated the strong interest of the partners, and was crowned with success thanks to the high level of professionalism of the Cubans and their warm welcome.

* The Constructed wetland technology takes advantage of nature-based processes. Constructed wetlands have the advantage of being efficient (high treatment efficiency), simpler and cheaper than conventional wastewater treatment systems. They can cope with tropical climatic events such as heavy rainfall or cyclones. Constructed wetlands are a diverse family: some processes treat both water and sludge. The technical objective of CARIBSAN is to build a constructed wetlands treatment plant in each partner territory, Cuba, Dominica and Saint Lucia, based on the model of the constructed wetlands treatment plants developed in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Beyond this technology sharing, the CARIBSAN project also aims to increase Caribbean cooperation in the field of sanitation.

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