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NWC COLLABORATES WITH IAEA TO IMPROVE KINGSTON WATER QUALITY MONITORING

NWC Breaks New Ground in Jamaica Water Testing Technology

The National Water Commission (NWC), Jamaica's premier water service provider with 90% of the local potable water market, is breaking new ground in water testing on the island with the implementation of a major 3-year water quality monitoring project in collaboration with the United Nation's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The project – ***An Assessment of the Kingston Hydrologic Basin*** – is aimed at strengthening the water management institutional capacity, provision of specialized equipment and training in enhanced water quality management, use of state-of-the-art nuclear technologies to assess the state of the Kingston Hydrologic Basin and facilitate and inform the development of strategic and mitigating plans for protecting the water supply sources in the basin and the maintenance of water and wastewater systems.

Under the IAEA funded project, the NWC has invited the involvement of other key water sector players including the Water Resources Authority (WRA), National Environment Planning Agency (NEPA), the Ministry of Health, and academic institutions such as the University of the West Indies (UWI) especially in training and capacity building in isotope hydrology, water chemistry, radio-chemistry and the development of the various types of water quality and hydrogeology maps for use in water resource assessment, allocation and protection. It also involves using nuclear technology (stable isotopes) to develop maps that show the characteristics of the water including flow paths, directions and levels of contamination within the Kingston Hydrologic Basin.

The NWC recently received a Laser Stable Isotope Analyzer and other specialized equipment for use at its Laboratories under the 192,400 euro water monitoring cooperation project with the IAEA. A 1-week training workshop on Isotope Hydrology was conducted from December 4-8 by Professor Ian Clark of the University of Ottawa at the NWC's Training Department.

Participants in the training workshop included NWC Water Quality personnel as well as representatives from other agencies such as the National Irrigation Commission (NIC), the Ministry of Health (MoH), Water Resources Authority (WRA), National Environment Planning Agency (NEPA), the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences (ICENS).

According to NWC President Mark Barnett, "the Assessment of the Kingston Hydrologic Basin Project between the NWC and the IAEA is not only significant because of the new ground it breaks in the use of nuclear technologies to study and protect the country's water resources, but also because it is a further demonstration of NWC's unrelenting commitment to the highest standards of water quality monitoring and sustainable water resource utilization so as to ensure the best quality water is available to Jamaicans now and into the future."

Ninety-five per cent of the cost of the 3-year project which is scheduled to end in January 2019 is borne by the IAEA and 5% by the NWC. The Technical Cooperation agreement is monitored by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

The IAEA is an Agency of the United Nations (UN) which promotes the peaceful use of nuclear technologies in many fields including energy, human health, food protection, water management and environment protection.



Information Worth Getting: NWC's Quality Assurance Manager, Wendy Harrison-Smith, is all smiles as she collects her certificate for successful participation in the Isotope Hydrology Training Workshop put on by the National Water Commission (NWC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in December 2017.



Congratulations: NWC's Lewis Lakeman (l), Assistant Vice President for PPP and Project Financing, is congratulated by international expert Professor Ian Clark (r) for his successful completion of the Isotope Hydrology Training under the 3-year Assessment of the Kingston Hydrologic Basin Project between the NWC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in December 2017.