

PRESS RELEASE

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Officers From the Ministry of Environment Receive Training on Water Quality Monitoring

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GOVERNMENT OF
VIRGIN ISLANDS
Ministry of Environment, Natural
Resources and Climate Change

The Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change in collaboration with H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC), Center Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) and Spatial Innovision Ltd conducted a series of training sessions to enhance the capability of environmental and technical officers in water quality monitoring, data analysis and storage.

Approximately twenty - one (21) officers attached to the Ministry, HLSCC, Environmental Health Division, Water and Sewerage Department, Agriculture and Fisheries, National Parks Trust and Town and Country Planning Department benefited from these series of workshops.

Officers completed nine (9) ArcGIS courses, spanning from November 2023 through October 2024, that enhanced technical skills in geographical data collection and analysis in ArcGIS software in addition to advanced enterprise level training to enhance GIS warehousing skills.

Project coordinator, in the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change, Ms. Atoya George said, “one of the primary objectives of the RESEMBID project is to ensure capacity building among key individuals, equipping them with the knowledge and technical skills required to collect, analyse, interpret, report, and manage water quality data.

Throughout the year, we have hosted a series of GIS training sessions to educate participants on spatial analysis of water quality data. These workshops build on that foundation, ensuring that officers acquire the full range of skills needed to effectively manage a water quality monitoring programme.”

Officers also gained fundamental skills from a five-day workshop, conducted on September 23 - 27, 2024, that strengthened their capabilities to assess, collect, test, analyse, interpret and warehouse water quality data and enhance their laboratory maintenance knowledge. Finally experts are completed their final geodatabase training geared toward understanding their newly built water quality geodatabase on December 20, 2024.

Meanwhile, RESEMBID's Senior Programme Manager, Andrea Floudiotis, said that "RESEMBID supports the successful collaboration between the Government of the Virgin Islands and other key entities to further continue to train officers in water quality monitoring. Improved water quality is central to ensuring human and environmental health. We commend the Government of the Virgin Islands' efforts to increase its capacity to collect and use water quality data for improved evidence-based decision-making on pollution control strategies."

Recognizing that water quality monitoring is essential for ensuring a well-managed marine environment, which provides the data needed to support sustainable spatial planning and "no-regret" approaches to socio-economic and coastal development, the Ministry remains committed to equipping its officers with the tools necessary to understand and mitigate human impacts on the marine ecosystem.

This commitment includes promoting a comprehensive understanding of pollution sources and effective monitoring strategies.

The 'Strengthening the Virgin Islands' Water Quality Monitoring Programme to Inform Effective Environmental Management and Spatial Planning' project is supported by the Resilience, Sustainable Energy, and Marine Biodiversity (RESEMBID) programme. RESEMBID is a 48-project programme funded by the European Union and implemented by Expertise France - the development cooperation agency of the Government of France and supports sustainable human development efforts in 12 Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) - Aruba, Anguilla, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Montserrat, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Saint Barthélemy, Sint Maarten and Turks and Caicos.