



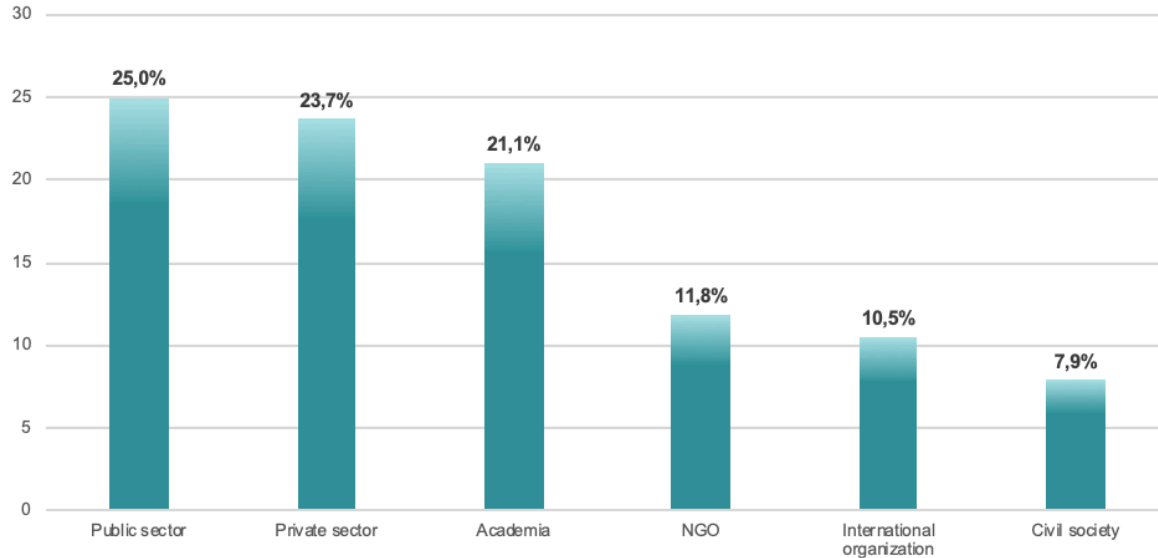
## ECLAC Open Consultation Identification of water priorities for Caribbean countries

ECLAC is leading the regional processes to generate inputs for the United Nations Water Conference 2023 as well as following on the priorities to give adequate support to members states. In particular, ECLAC is collecting the priorities, perspectives and commitments about water from the different Latin America and the Caribbean subregions. For this purpose, ECLAC developed a Caribbean open consultation to showcase the region's priorities on water resources. The consultation was conducted through an open online survey between August and October 2022. It intended to collect contributions from non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector, NGOs, and other stakeholders, as inputs to the preparatory process of the United Nations Water Conference 2023. This, following the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) initiative to develop an open consultation to gather potential topics for the same Conference. At ECLAC's consultation, each participant identified the three most important actions related to water resources that are needed, according to their priorities. The survey is attached in Annex 1.

A number of 461 responses were recorded, coming from 15 Caribbean and English-speaking countries of Latin America. Most respondents self-identified as representatives of the public and private sectors, with respective percentages of 25% and 23.7%, and of academia, with 21%. In addition, the participation of NGOs (11.8%), international organizations (10.5%) and civil societies (7.9%) was also recorded (Figure 1). Also, there was close to equal participation regarding gender, with 52% coming from female actors, 47% from males, and having a 1% participation of non-binary actors.



Figure 1. Sector distribution of responses to the Open Consultation



Source: own elaboration

The participants were asked to choose the three most relevant actions in the water sector that they believe are needed in the Caribbean region. The different options presented were:

- To strengthen the governance and institutional system towards Integrated Water Resources Management
- To ensure sustainable groundwater management
- To address gender and water gaps
- To ensure access and affordability to safely managed drinking water and sanitation
- To expand investment and financing mechanisms to achieve water security
- To promote innovative technologies towards water, food and energy security
- To promote circular economy strategies in wastewater use
- To incorporate nature-based solutions for the preservation of water ecosystem services
- To increase resilience and adaptation to climate change (extreme events and rising sea level)

Regarding the answers on the region's water resources priorities, 53.9% of the respondents chose the option of strengthening the governance and institutional system towards Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) as one of their three main water priorities. Increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change (extreme events and rising sea level) was the preference of 48.7% of the respondents, and 39.5% considered ensuring sustainable groundwater management as one main priority.

Promoting innovative technologies towards water, food and energy security was considered necessary by 35.5% of all respondents. In comparison, almost 34.2% of the

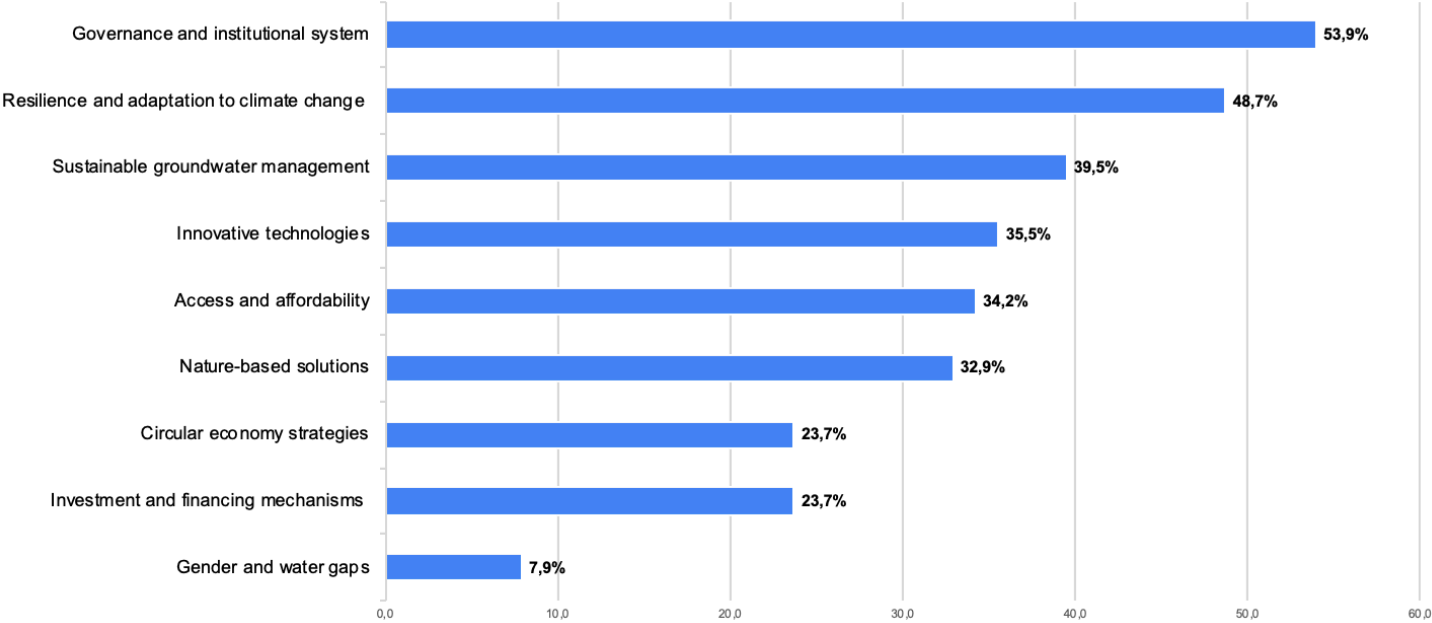




contestants considered it essential to ensure access and affordability to safely managed drinking water and sanitation. Further, 32.9% of respondents would like to incorporate nature-based solutions for the preservation of water ecosystem services, whilst 23.7% consider it a priority to promote circular economy strategies in wastewater use and to expand investment and financing mechanisms to achieve water security. Finally, the topic that aroused the least interest among the participants was addressing gender and water gaps, with only 7.9% considering it a regional priority (

Figure 2).

Figure 2. Priorities identified in the open consultation




Source: own elaboration

### Results by sector

In relation to the interests selected by the different sectors of participants, it is observed that governance issues are the highest prioritized by the public sector (with 79% of respondents from the public sector choosing the topic). At the same time, only 38% of the international organizations consider it a priority for the region. For their part, international organizations consider groundwater sustainable management to be the most important (63% consider it a main priority).

Furthermore, 67% of the contestants from NGOs believe increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change is among the most urgent topics in the Caribbean, while the respondents from the private sector prioritized this the least, with 39% of the responses. The primary importance of the private sector was placed on issues of governance and





technologies that foster water, food and energy security, with 50% of respondents choosing these two issues as their top priority.

The main topics for academia varied greatly, and equal interest was put into strengthening various issues. However, standing out from the other results is that ensuring access and affordability to safely managed drinking water and sanitation was one of the highlighted topics (only also prioritized by the civil societies), and the incorporation of nature-based solutions for the preservation of water ecosystem services, that was chosen by 44% of the sector, a topic that no other sector prioritized the most.

Regarding nature-based solutions, representatives from academia showed the most interest, while only 13% of representatives from international organizations considered it a priority for the region. Finally, 22% of the participants belonging to an NGO consider closing the gender gap a regional urgency, compared to 6% from the private sector.

### **Results by gender**

Among the women, the highest priority was given to strengthening the governance and institutional system towards IWRM, with almost 58% choosing this as a main priority. Resilience to climate change was recorded as the second most popular priority amongst women, with 47.5% of respondents selecting it as a central area of prioritization.


Governance questions are also considered one of the main preferences amongst men, with a lower percentage than for women (48.5%). Alongside governance and institutional systems, men prioritized actions like groundwater management and resilience to climate change, with 48.5% choosing these topics as main concern.

It is interesting to note that 11.4% of all men chose gender and water gaps as the leading issue to prioritize in the water sector in the Caribbean. In comparison, only 5% of women considered it significant.


Answers collected from the non-binary respondents showed that priority is laid on topics like governance and institutional systems, resilience to climate change, and access and affordability to safely managed drinking water and sanitation.

### **Final remarks**

Caribbean states are highly vulnerable due to the financial indebtedness and climate change impacts and thus must receive adequate support. This situation is clearly covered by the main identified needs, first the strengthening of water governance, that sets the stage to promote also more resilience and adaptation to climate change (identified as the second need).







## **Annex 1. Open consultation: Identification of the Caribbean priorities towards the 2023 United Nations Water Conference**

### **Personal Details**

a. Name and Surname

b. Gender

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Rather not say

c. Sector to which you belong

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Academia
- Civil society
- International organization
- NGO

d. Name of your institution

e. Country

### **Water priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean**

f. According to your opinion, select the three most important

- To strengthen the governance and institutional system towards Integrated Water Resources Management
- To ensure sustainable groundwater management
- To address gender and water gaps
- To ensure access and affordability to safely managed drinking water and sanitation
- To expand investment and financing mechanisms to achieve water security
- To promote innovative technologies towards water, food and energy security
- To promote circular economy strategies in wastewater use
- To incorporate nature-based solutions for the preservation of water ecosystem services
- To increase resilience and adaptation to climate change (extreme events and rising sea level)