



Mid-Term Review of the UNEP/GEF Project

**“PINE ISLANDS – FOREST/MANGROVE INNOVATION
AND INTEGRATION (GRAND BAHAMA, NEW
PROVIDENCE, ABACO AND ANDROS) – GEF ID: 4847”**



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Evaluation Office of UNEP

Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration
(Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros)

GEF ID: 4847

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I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special acknowledgements to Mr. Solomon Gibson, the dedicated National Project Coordinator for the BPI project, for his continued assistance during the course of the review as well as Mr. Christopher Cox, UNEP Task Manager, for his contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to all members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for their continued cooperation and participation.

The review consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalization of the current project, formulation of a next phase and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

II. ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English.

Review Type: Mid-term Review

Brief Description: This report presents the results of the Mid-term Review of the UNEP/GEF “Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros)” – GEF ID: 4847 project. The project's overall goal is to build on recent advancements in land-use planning, the forestry sector and sustainable livelihoods through the integration of biodiversity values, ecosystem services values and precepts of sustainable forest management (SFM) and land-use into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas, the improved management of the forestry sector and the development of models of sustainable livelihoods and practices. The review seeks to assess the project’s performance to date based on several performance criteria which include relevance, effectiveness and efficiency as well as to determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability.

The review has two primary purposes:

- i. to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements,
- ii. to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Small Island Developing States; SIDS; Small Islands; Sustainable Forest Management; Sustainable Land-use Planning; Forest and Mangrove Management; Forest Financing; Ecosystem Management; The Bahamas; Pine Islands ¹;

¹ This data is used to aid the internet search of this report on the Evaluation Office of UNEP Website

III. TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
II. ABOUT THE REVIEW	II
III. TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
IV. LIST OF ACRONYMS	VII
V. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE	VIII
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1.1 OVERVIEW OF MID TERM REVIEW	1
1.2 KEY FINDINGS	2
1.3 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED	6
1.3.1 KEY STRATEGIC QUESTIONS	7
1.3.2 LESSONS LEARNED	8
1.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	9
2. INTRODUCTION	10
3. PROJECT OVERVIEW	11
3.1 CONTEXT	11
3.2 OBJECTIVES AND COMPONENTS	13
3.3 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE	14
3.4 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS	16
3.5 PROJECT REVISIONS	18
3.6 PROJECT FINANCING	18
4. REVIEW METHODS	20
5. REVIEW FINDINGS	23
5.1 A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE	23
5.1.1 ALIGNMENT TO THE UNEP MTS AND POW AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	23
5.1.2 ALIGNMENT TO DONOR/PARTNER STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	24
5.1.3 RELEVANCE TO GLOBAL, REGIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES	24
5.1.4 COMPLEMENTARITY WITH EXISTING INTERVENTIONS/ COHERENCE	25

5.2 B. EFFECTIVENESS	26
5.2.1 THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW	26
5.2.2 AVAILABILITY OF OUTPUTS	31
5.2.3 ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OUTCOMES	37
5.2.4 LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT	39
5.3 C. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	40
5.3.1 ADHERENCE TO UNEP’S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	40
5.3.2 COMPLETENESS OF PROJECT FINANCIAL INFORMATION	42
5.3.3 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FINANCE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT STAFF	42
5.4 D. EFFICIENCY	43
5.5 E. MONITORING AND REPORTING	44
5.5.1 MONITORING OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	44
5.5.2 PROJECT REPORTING	45
5.6 F. SUSTAINABILITY	46
5.6.1 SOCIO-POLITICAL SUSTAINABILITY	47
5.6.2 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	48
5.6.3 INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	48
5.7 G. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES	49
5.7.1 PREPARATION AND READINESS	49
5.7.2 QUALITY OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION	50
5.7.3 STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION	51
5.7.4 RESPONSIVENESS TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUITY	51
5.7.5 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS	52
5.7.6 COUNTRY OWNERSHIP AND DRIVEN-NESS	52
5.7.7 COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	53
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54
6.1 CONCLUSION	54
6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	55
6.3 KEY STRATEGIC QUESTIONS	59
6.4 LESSONS LEARNED	60
6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS	61
ANNEX I. SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE	64
ANNEX II. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW	69
ANNEX III. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED	70
ANNEX IV. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER	73

ANNEX V. PRESENTATION OF INITIAL FINDINGS POWERPOINT	74
ANNEX VI. PROJECT LOGICAL FRAMEWORK	79
ANNEX VII. REVIEW OF PROJECT DESIGN QUALITY	82
ANNEX VIII. PROJECT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK	89
ANNEX IX. PROJECT SCHEDULE	95
ANNEX X. COMPLETED CRITERION RATING DESCRIPTION MATRIX	96
ANNEX XI. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)	97

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Overview of Project components and outputs	13
Figure 2. Project Implementation Structure	15
Figure 3: Outline of the Stages of the MTR Review Methodology.	21
Figure 4: Reconstructed Theory of Change at Review.	30
Figure 5: Public Engagement Activity- Andros Artisan Association, Red Bays (Source: Creative Nassau)	35
Figure 6: Sustainability Dependency Mitigation Matrix.	47

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Project Identification Table	viii
Table 2: Stakeholder Analysis Grid	16
Table 3: Revised Stakeholder Participation and Management Arrangements.	17
Table 4: Summary of Sources of Funding and Amounts Contributed.	18
Table 5: Summary of Funding Planned for Each Component and their Source of Funding.	19
Table 6: Summary of Funding Planned for Each Component over the Initial Project Timeframe.	19
Table 7: Summary of Available Outputs at Mid Term Review	36
Table 8: Summary of Disbursements and Expenditure Ratios for the GEF Grant Funding.	40
Table 9: Summary of Review Findings.	55

IV. LIST OF ACRONYMS

BAIC	Bahamas Agriculture and Industrial Cooperation
BAMSI	Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Sciences Institute
BD	Biodiversity
BNGISC	Bahamas National GIS Center
BPI	Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration
CARDI	Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute
CBO	Community Based Organization
DEPP	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection
DLS	Department of Lands and Surveys
DPP	Department of Physical Planning
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
FSP	Full Size Project
FU	Bahamas Forestry Unit
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
IA	Implementing Agency
LD	Land Degradation
MEH	Ministry of Environment and Housing
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid Term Review
MTS	Medium term Strategy
NEA	National Executing Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordinator
PoW	Programme of Work
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PSC	Project Steering Committee
ProDoc	Project Document
PMA	Programme Management Assistant
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TM	Task Manager
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPC	Town Planning Committee
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

V. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1: Project Identification Table

GEF Project ID:	4847		
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Environment Program	Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment, BEST Commission/ The Department of Environmental Planning & Protection
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	<p>SDG Goal 13 Climate action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries • Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning • Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning <p>SDG 15 Life on Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands. • Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed • Enhance global support for efforts by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities 		

SFM/REDD-plus (Core Results – Planned Targets and Outcomes)

Carbon stored in forest ecosystems and emissions avoided from deforestation and forest degradation from this project (Direct lifetime) - Avoided deforestation and forest degradation

22410 ha; 5661077 tonnes CO₂eq

1.1: An enhanced enabling environment within the forest sector - sector policy/regulation framework are enforced

1.2: Good forest management practices applied in existing forests –

- Area covered by forest management plans – **22531 ha**
- Restoration/rehabilitation of degraded forests – **50 ha**

2.1: Enhanced institutional capacity to account for GHG emission reduction and increase in carbon stocks - National carbon stock monitoring systems in place - monitoring information database publicly available; Area Covered (ha) 283,700.20

BD Core Indicators Objective 1: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems (Refer to Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool METT for relevant threats and assessment criteria)

Consolidated BD-1 METT Target Score: 259

BD Core Indicators Objective 2: Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors

Part II. Project Landscape/Seascape Coverage

1. What is the extent (in hectares) of the landscape or seascape where the project will directly or indirectly contribute to biodiversity conservation or sustainable use of its components

- Landscape/seascape area directly covered by the project: **Conservation Forests 22460 ha**
- Landscape/seascape area indirectly covered by the project: **Andros and New Providence Sub National Plans 627400 ha**

Part III. Management Practices Applied

Management practices employed by project beneficiaries that integrate BD considerations and the area of coverage of these management practices

4. Specific management practices that integrate BD - Sub-National Plans & Conservation Forest Management Plans; 22459.5 ha

LD Core Indicators: SLM in wider landscapes (integrated management)

i. Enhanced cross-sector enabling environment for integrated landscape management

- Framework strengthening INRM Cross-sectoral training courses

	<p>addressing cross-sectoral issues are conducted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Integrated land management plans</u> Cross-sectoral training courses addressing cross-sectoral issues are conducted • <u>Capacity strengthening</u> Initial awareness raised (e.g. workshops, seminars) 		
Expected Accomplishment(s):	<p>EA (a): Enhanced capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development planning processes;</p> <p>EA (c) Strengthened capacity of countries and regions to realign their environmental programmes to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services</p> <p>EA 3(b): Policymakers in the public and private sector test the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making</p>		
Programme of Work Output(s):	<p>Output 1: Methodologies, partnerships and tools to maintain or restore ecosystem services and integrate the ecosystem management approach with the conservation and management of ecosystems</p> <p>Output 2: Biodiversity and ecosystem values are assessed, demonstrated and communicated to strengthen decision-making by governments, businesses and consumers</p>		
GEF approval date:	8 th September 2015	UNEP approval date:	17 th November 2015
Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity Land Degradation	GEF Strategic Priority:	BD-2, LD-3, SFM/REDD-1
Project type:	Full Size Project	GEF Operational Programme #	-
Expected start date:	-	Actual start date:	23 rd February 2016
Planned completion date:	16 th November 2019	Revised completion date:	November 2021
Planned project budget at approval:	\$10,548,683.00	Actual total expenditures reported as of Dec 2020:	\$4,767,108.66
GEF grant allocation:	\$2,853,425.00	GEF grant expenditures reported as of Dec 2020:	\$840,769.22
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	\$100,000.00	Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:	\$50,000.00
Expected FSP Co-financing allocation:	\$7,695,258.00	Co-financing expenditures reported as of Dec 2020:	\$3,926,339.44

First disbursement:	23 rd February 2016	Planned date of financial closure:	30 December 2022	
No. of formal project revisions:	7	Date of last approved project revision:	N/A	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	8	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: 30 th June 2021	Next: N/A
Mid-term Review/ (planned date):	February 2021	Mid-term Review/ (actual date):	May 2021	
Terminal Review (planned date):	2 nd Quarter 2022	Terminal Review (actual date):	N/A	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Overview of Mid Term Review

1. This document presents the Midterm Review (MTR) of the UNEP/GEF Project “Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros) – GEF ID: 4847. The project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), implemented by the UN Environment (UNEP) and executed by the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP), Ministry of Environment in The Bahamas.
2. The project was initially approved for 48 months in September 2015 with an overall budget of USD 10,548,683 comprised of a GEF allocation of USD 2,853,425 and co-financing support of USD 7,695,258 from the various project partners, both cash and in-kind. The actual start of the project and first disbursement was February 2016. The project had experienced significant delays in 2017 and 2018 and this led to the relaunch and extension of the project in June 2019 with an extension of 38 months.
3. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, the Midterm Review is undertaken approximately halfway through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. MTRs are mandatory for all GEF financed Full Sized Projects (FSP) and determines the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes and impacts, including their sustainability as specified in the Project Document by assessing the performance of the project to date based on the following criteria: Strategic Relevance, Effectiveness, Financial Management, Efficiency, Sustainability as well as Factors Affecting Performance and Cross Cutting Issues.
4. The Midterm Review was conducted by an independent consultant between the period May 1st 2021 – July 31st 2021, as per the Terms of Reference provided by the executing agency. The MTR was carried out in various stages over the three (3) month period. The first stage of the MTR involved the initial desktop analysis of documents and the preparation of the inception report and finalization of the methodology of the MTR. This was followed by the MTR mission which involved interviews with stakeholders and an in-depth analysis of all available documents on the project. The third stage of the project involved the preparation and presentation of the initial MTR findings. Finally, the draft MTR report was prepared and disseminated for peer-review before the final MTR report was submitted.
5. The project essentially involves the integration of biodiversity values, ecosystem services values and concepts of Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM) and Sustainable Land-use Management (SLM) into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas as well as the expansion and improved management of the forestry and mangrove sector and the development and promotion of models for sustainable livelihoods and practices. The project encapsulates a participatory, collaborative and integrated approach with the inclusion of stakeholders on all levels ranging from central and local government to community organizations and international conservation linkages.

1.2 Key Findings

The table below provides a summary of the main findings of the Midterm Review Report.

CRITERION	SUMMARY	RATING
A. Strategic Relevance	-	HS
<i>1. Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly consistent with the UNEP's overall mandate and was aligned with the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013 and Programme of Work (PoW) relating to Ecosystems Management. - The project spans over two UN Environment Medium-Term Strategies (2014-2017 and 2018-2021) and three Biennial Programme of Works (PoWs), i.e. 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. - The project is currently aligned with the MTS 2018-2021 through Sub-programme 3: Healthy and productive ecosystems: 	HS
<i>2. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aligned with Objectives 1 and 2 of the GEF-5 Strategy for Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM/REDD+) - Aligned with Objectives 1 and 2 of the focal area strategies of Biodiversity (BD) and Objective 3 of the focal area strategy of Land Degradation (LD) 	HS
<i>3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The objectives of the project are consistent with national plans and priorities involving the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of ecosystem resources. - The project is also consistent with numerous national plans and priority activities 	HS
<i>4. Complementarity with existing interventions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project was documented to have linkages and complementarity with various GEF and non-GEF interventions. - The linkages and benefits shared by previous interventions are adequately described but there was no mention of dialogue/engagement other recent, on-going or planned interventions. 	S
B. Effectiveness	-	MS
<i>1. Availability of outputs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Out of the 9 outputs, five (5) of the midterm targets were fully delivered, three (3) were partially delivered and one (1) was undelivered. Thus, 56% of the planned midterm targets were fully delivered. - The delivery of the most important outputs to achieve outcomes, however, have met their midterm targets. - Despite the delays in project implementation, the available deliverables are of good quality and the partially delivered outputs 	MU

	and midterm targets are on route to completion.	
<i>2. Achievement of project outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The direct outcomes that are the most important to attain intermediate states, mainly being outcomes 1.1, 2 and 3 have been partially achieved. - With the exception of the assumption that a natural disaster will not significantly impact the project, most of the assumptions from project output to direct outcomes have held at this midpoint of the project implementation. - The drivers from outputs to outcomes, being the institutional and technical capacity building and the local community participation, have assisted in the partial achievement of some of the project outcomes. 	MS
<i>3. Likelihood of impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the time of the Midterm Review, none of the outcomes have been entirely achieved. - However, the outcomes that are the most important to attain intermediate states (i.e. outcomes 1.1, 2 and 3) were partially achieved. - Furthermore, the drivers support transition from outputs to outcomes but drivers from intermediate states to impacts were not entirely in place. 	ML
C. Financial Management	-	S
<i>1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project received its first GEF contribution in 2016. - Non- compliance in financial reporting due to a lack of technical resources allocated to the project resulted in a delay in the release of funding from the GEF grant in the consequent years. - Releases were obtained in 2019 and in 2021. To date, approximately 53% or of the total GEF grant funding for the project has been disbursed. - Delays in implementation in the project's early years have resulted in a low ratio of expenditure. - The project had a significant increase in technical capacity but still had a relatively low expenditure ratio for 2020. 	MS
<i>2. Completeness of project financial information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project's overall financial management plan included the preparation of annual budget plans, revised budget plan, quarterly expenditure reports and audited financial statements. - Delays in the release of payments in the past can be attributed to the untimely submittal of financial reports as well as to discrepancies in the financial information submitted to the Anubis platform. - There is currently still an issue with the timely submittal of the reports which would affect disbursements of funds but the NPC as well as project partners have indicated that there is an increased 	MS

	effort to produce the reports in a timely manner.	
<i>3. Communication between finance and project management staff</i>	- The project review verified that there was adequate communication between the NPC at the executing agency and the TM and PMA representing the implementation agency	S
D. Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project had experienced significant delays in 2017 and 2018 with little to no activities taking place and this was attributed to a number of issues from the beginning of project implementation - Since the project's extension, there has been numerous adaptive management measures to ensure that results are achieved. - The disbursement of funds has been slow for this project, owing to the prior issues with non-compliance in project reporting due to a lack in technical capacity. - The current delay in project activities is a result of the aftereffects of Hurricane Dorian as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. 	MU
E. Monitoring and Reporting		S
<i>2. Monitoring of project implementation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A detailed results framework provided in the ProDoc gave the Indicators, Baseline, Mid-Term targets and End of Project targets for each outcome and output. - Some of the indicators listed in the framework are not very specific and would be difficult to verify, measure and monitor. - The GEF core indicators for the project is measured and updated using the GEF tracking tools. However, at the time of the mid-term review, the updated GEF tracking tools were not available. - The ProDoc gives a breakdown of the costed monitoring and evaluation plan however, it should be noted that there are no specific line items in the annual budget plans that are dedicated to project monitoring specifically. - The project has been late in delivering its Mid-Term Review which is being conducted way past the initial deadline for project completion. 	MS
<i>3. Project reporting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has had many delays that have been attributed to a non-compliance of project reporting - The project has attempted to put in place several measures to facilitate the monitoring of project implementation including PIR reports, Half Year reports, quarterly expenditure reports and annual audit reports. - The timely submittal of project reports is still an ongoing issue but there has however, been a significant improvement in project reporting since 2019 with the hiring of the dedicated NPC. - There have been no evidence to suggest the formal reporting of 	S

	co- finance commitments disaggregated by component or source.	
F. Sustainability	-	ML
<i>1. Socio-political sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The continuation and further development of project direct outcomes are highly dependent on political will and social ownership. - Stakeholder consultations have indicated that there is generally a strong level of ownership, interest and commitment by government and at the community level as well. 	ML
<i>2. Financial sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the project outcomes (1.1, 1.2, 2) do not explicitly require further direct financial inputs to maintain them. Outcome 3 involving the sustainable livelihoods, however, is dependent on future funding for the benefits to be sustained. 	ML
<i>3. Institutional sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project was designed to build upon existing advancements in the land-use planning, forestry sector and sustainable livelihoods and improve the existing institutional and technical capacity. 	ML
G. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	-	S
<i>1. Preparation and readiness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has faced many challenges during its implementation but there is sufficient evidence to indicate that ample effort was given to ensure the project was ready for execution during the mobilization period. 	S
<i>2. Quality of project management and supervision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has seen many turn-over in staffs at the various agencies since its inception. - Since the project received an extension in time in 2019, communication with lead stakeholders (project focal points) which was disconnected prior, was re- established. Issues that were hindering the progress of the project were tended to and rectified. - The NPC and the executing agencies have displayed satisfactory adaptive management strategies in terms of dealing with external challenges and delays such as Hurricane Dorian and the COVID-19 	MS
<i>3. Stakeholder's participation and cooperation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There has been an increased effort to maintain stakeholder participation on the project and there is evidence to suggest that there is an increased cohesiveness and cooperation between government agencies and executing stakeholders responsible for project implementation. - There is a strong interest and ownership at the community level for the project which ensures adequate stakeholder participation. - While there have been strong efforts towards public engagement, there is still room for improvement. 	MS
<i>4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was equal gender representation the community meetings as well as throughout the training sessions that were held and that the project makes a concerted effort to ensure that there is a balanced 	S

	gender representation in the consultative processes	
<i>5. Environmental, social and economic safeguards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The initial project design completed the checklist for Environmental and Social Issues in accordance with UNEP policies and requirements. - All three (3) components of the project have been designed to include project activities that encourage community participation as well as provide monitoring to project outputs and outcomes. 	S
<i>6. Country ownership and driven-ness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project is being executed by several project partners who represent the different ministries and departments of the Government of The Bahamas who support the initiatives of the BPI Project. - The main project partners are also responsible for providing co-financing commitments both in-kind and cash, which accounts for approximately 73% of the total project budget. 	S
<i>7. Communication and public awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication lines with the executing project partners were re-established and concerted efforts have been made since to facilitate the frequent and efficient communication amongst stakeholders. - There have been specific public awareness strategies developed by each project partner for the respective component. - The general perception of the project is that the project is still very “low key”, and the objectives and benefits of the project are not effectively conveyed. There is not sufficient public awareness and dissemination of information and updates on the project. 	MS
Overall Project Rating	Using the “ <i>MTR Weightings for Ratings</i> ” Tool and the “ <i>MTR Criterion Rating Description Matrix</i> ” document. The project was given an Overall Rating of Moderately Satisfactory	MS

1.3 Summary of Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

6. The project had experienced significant delays since the beginning of project implementation and this was attributed to a number of issues ranging from a change in political administration (which resulted in a turnover in staff, administrative changes and subsequent loss of institutional knowledge), lack of disbursement of funds due to non-compliance with technical and financial reporting and the lack of technical and institutional capacity.
7. Since the project extension in 2019, there has been significant improvement in project management and progress towards the achievement of outcomes. This was facilitated by the hiring of a dedicated NPC and consultants to fill the gap in technical capacity required to complete project activities. There were also notable improvements in the communication and engagement of executing agencies through the monthly PSC meetings which encourage adaptive management of project activities and ensure project’s progress.

8. The recent issues such as the Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and the current COVID-19 pandemic, beyond the control of project management, further exacerbated the delay in project activities. Despite this, the majority of the outputs have delivered their midterm targets and the remaining outputs are on route to completion. The outcomes that are responsible for the achievement of intermediate states for the intended impacts have been partially achieved. The travel and work restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 management protocols have delayed the remaining fieldwork and public engagement activities. Given these circumstances, it is unlikely that the project will achieve its outcomes within the current specified timeframe and an extension in the technical completion date is necessary.
9. Using the “MTR Weightings for Ratings” Tool and the “MTR Criterion Rating Description Matrix” document. The project was given an Overall Rating of **Moderately Satisfactory**.

1.3.1 Key Strategic Questions

To what extent is the project following a robust theory of change and capacity building with appropriately formulated outputs, direct outcomes, intermediate states and long-term results?

10. The original Project Document did not include a Theory of Change (ToC) and thus, an initial Theory of Change was constructed at the inception of this Midterm Review using The Intervention Logic and the Results Framework within the Project Document as well as the results of the PDQ assessment. The causal pathways from outputs to outcomes to intermediate states and impacts were easily extracted from the Results Framework, as well as assumptions and drivers that support these transitions. The outputs and outcomes are clearly defined and well formulated. This initial TOC was revised based on the interviews with key stakeholders and information received along the course of the midterm review to produce a robust TOC at Review as seen in section 5.2.1.
11. The project was designed and formulated to increase the existing institutional and technical capacities through the education training within local communities and local technical expert, and the development of tools, training and methodologies.

What revisions are required to ensure that implementation can be effectively evaluated at the end of the project? This includes the consideration of whether the outcome indicators are verifiable and appropriate for recording progress towards the achievement of the development objectives.

12. The Results framework gave the Indicators, Baseline, Mid-Term targets and End of Project targets for each outcome and output. Some of the indicators listed in the framework are not very specific and would be difficult to verify, measure and monitor. The Mid Term and End Term target indicators for Outputs 1.1, 2.2 and 2.3 in particular have been noted to not be achievable within the project’s time frame and either an extension in the technical deadline or an adjustment in the endterm targets is necessary.
13. Additionally, the GEF core indicators for the project is measured and updated using the GEF tracking tools. However, at the time of the mid- term review, the updated GEF tracking tools were not available. This needs to be updated and made available for evaluation at the end of the project.

The extent to which the design and implementation of the models that are to demonstrate viable forest management (SFM) livelihoods under component 3 are meeting the intended impacts with the likelihood of sustainability and scaling-up.

14. Outcome 3 essentially involves the development of models of sustainable livelihoods and practices that incorporate principles of SFM and SLM. The intended impact is the development of sustainable livelihoods and sustainable practices at the community level. While Outcome 3 has only been partially realized, the community interest and the need for sustainable sources of income at the community level is a driving force that supports the intended impact. There has been a strong level of community interest, especially in component 3 and this can support the achievement of this overall impact.
15. The extent to which the project is playing a catalytic role is seen mostly in Component 3 where the project activities resulted in the establishment of Acklins & Crooked Island Cooperatives as well as Andros Artisan Association. At the time of the midterm review, there has been no scaling up or replication, but the monitoring of the project components will document methodologies, limitations and successes and this will ensure replication at the local, regional and international levels.

1.3.2 Lessons Learned

16. The review identified seven (7) lessons learned. A summary of these key lessons is presented below:

Lesson 1: The review identified the importance of having a dedicated NPC for the intervention as well as monthly PSC meetings. This is necessary for overseeing project progress, implementing adaptive management changes, encouraging stakeholder engagement and participation and ensuring adequate communication and an integrative approach towards the management of the project.

Lesson 2: Establishing and meeting the deadline for the submittal of financial and technical reports is integral for the timely disbursement of funds from the GEF fund grant.

Lesson 3: The project components are highly integrated, and each component requires participation by more than one project partner. As such, constant communication between the various project partners and regular updates are crucial in ensuring project progress.

Lesson 4: Public awareness and engagement is vital for ensuring the success of the project as well as the sustainability of project outcomes. It is imperative to ensure that stakeholders, especially at the community level, are regularly updated regarding the project progress.

Lesson 5: The establishment of the cooperative societies in Andros and Acklins are an example of the catalytic role of the project and this has assisted in conducting training, public engagement and awareness and the dissemination of information.

Lesson 6: The complexity and difficulty associated with inter-island travel logistics was not considered in the project design. For future projects, this needs to be addressed and reflected in the workplan and budget.

1.3.3 Recommendations

17. A summary list of recommendations based on the main findings of the Midterm Review of the BPI project is provided below and further elaborated in the Conclusions Section. The target audience for these recommendations are the key stakeholders involved in project implementation including UNEP, DEPP and members of the PSC.

Recommendation 1: Extension of technical deadline date and Budget Revision

Recommendation 2: Revision of project activities

Recommendation 3: Improvement of Public Awareness and Communication

Recommendation 4: Improved planning to account for issues with travel logistics

Recommendation 5: Improvement in the timeliness of the submittal of reports.

2. INTRODUCTION

18. This document presents the Midterm Review (MTR) of the UNEP/GEF Project “Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros)” – GEF ID: 4847, hereinafter referred to as the BPI project. The project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), implemented by the UN Environment (UNEP) and executed by the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP), Ministry of Environment in The Bahamas. The Mid-Term Review was conducted by an independent consultant during the period May 2021 to August 2021.
19. The project was initially approved for 48 months in September 2015 with an overall budget of USD 10,548,683 comprised of a GEF allocation of USD 2,853,425 and co-financing support of USD 7,695,258 from the various project partners, both cash and in-kind. The actual start of the project and first disbursement was February 2016. The project had experienced significant delays in 2017 and 2018 and this led to the relaunch and extension of the project in June 2019 with an extension of 38 months.
20. The delays in project implementation were attributed to numerous external challenges and issues from the beginning of project implementation ranging from a change in political administration (which resulted in a turnover in staff, administrative changes and subsequent loss of institutional knowledge), lack of disbursement of funds due to non-compliance with technical and financial reporting and the lack of technical and institutional capacity. The recent issues such as the Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and the current COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the delay in project activities.
21. The project essentially involves the integration of biodiversity values, ecosystem services values and concepts of Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM) and Sustainable Land-use Management (SLM) into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas as well as the expansion and improved management of the forestry and mangrove sector and the development and promotion of models for sustainable livelihoods and practices. The project encapsulates a participatory, collaborative, and integrated approach with the inclusion of stakeholders on all levels ranging from central and local government to community organizations and international conservation linkages.
22. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, the Midterm Review is undertaken approximately halfway through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. MTRs are mandatory for all GEF financed Full Sized Projects (FSP) and determines the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes and impacts, including their sustainability as specified in the Project Document by assessing the performance of the project to date based on the following criteria: Strategic Relevance, Effectiveness, Financial Management, Efficiency, Sustainability as well as Factors Affecting Performance and Cross Cutting Issues.
23. The Midterm Review provides the opportunity to record and highlight lessons learnt at the midterm point of the project and recommendations to support the adaptive management of the project for the remainder of the project. It is intended to encourage reflection and learning by the stakeholders involved in the project implementation including the UNEP (Implementation Agency), the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, DEPP (Executing Agency) and the key stakeholders involved in the execution of the various project components. To this end, the primary target audience for the review findings include the UNEP Task Manager, The National Project

Coordinator (NPC) and the members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and executing agencies and stakeholders for the various project components.

3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

3.1 Context

24. Forested land areas make up one of the largest ecosystems in the Bahamas with approximately 80% of forest resources occupying state land. The Northern Bahamas pine forests is a protected species and is considered to be the most productive of the forested vegetation types that occur on the islands. This species is mostly predominant on the islands of Grand Bahama, Great Abaco, New Providence and Andros. Approximately, 31% of the total land area of all four islands consists of forested estates.
25. Over the years, there have been numerous threats to the Pine Islands terrestrial ecosystem related to unsustainable land use planning and large-scale urban development, illegal dumping of waste and climate related impacts associated with rising sea levels and extreme weather events resulting in surges and coastal inundation. These have all contributed to the degradation of these forested areas and have adversely affected their ecological functioning. Coastal forests/Mangroves have also been experiencing several pressures from a developing island with no monitoring system in place to track the changes occurring in these precious and fragile ecosystems.
26. Baseline studies have shown that a lack of systematic integrated land use planning, in conjunction with the lack of appreciation and understanding of the ecosystem services and values have contributed to accelerated land and forest degradation. The Government of the Bahamas, in an effort to strengthen their ability to sustainably manage and protect the country's ecological resources, enacted three (3) pieces of critical legislation in 2010. These legislations include the Planning and Sub Divisions Act, The Forestry Act and amendments to the Bahamas National Trust Act. However, there was no successful implementation of these key pieces of legislation.
27. The Planning and Subdivisions Act 2010 was developed with the goal of producing comprehensive land-use plans together with stakeholder consultations to address the community's needs while conserving biodiversity of various ecosystems and allowing for sustainable development for future possibilities of economic growth. There was difficulty in the development of land-use plans in this regards and in the implementation of The Planning and Subdivisions Act 2010. The Forestry Act 2010 and Regulations was enacted for the long-term sustainable management of the forest resources through the establishment of a National Forestry Estate (NFE). It was noted, however, that the lack of technical capacity and manpower made it difficult for the implementation, monitoring and managing of the NFE. Furthermore, the forest resources offer significant potential for the development of sustainable livelihoods and small scaled forest-based industries. There had been local development of the craft sector and the promotion of small business practices but the concept of sustainable harvesting by the communities had not been entirely explored and there was the assumption of the ubiquitous availability and accessibility to the forest resources to create these products.
28. To add further complexity, there existed a disconnect and lack of cooperation amongst the associated entities (planning and forestry authorities, the private sector, NGO partners and island communities)

as it pertained to the availability of data and information which had resulted in the inability to coherently plan. The core of this issue stemmed from the gap in the technical capacity, attributed to a deficiency in both financial and human resources, minimum opportunities for training and development and the lack of access to the necessary scientific data. Decision makers thereupon, were not well equipped to effectively plan and make integrated decisions regarding land development and the long-term sustainable development of natural resources and forest ecosystems.

29. This project aims to build on recent advancements in land-use planning, the forestry sector and the development of sustainable livelihoods in The Bahamas. This involves the integration of biodiversity values, ecosystem services values and concepts of Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM) and Sustainable Land-use Management (SLM) into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas as well as the expansion and improved management of the forestry and mangrove sector and the development and promotion of models for sustainable livelihoods and practices. The project attempts to address the issues of the lack of technical and institutional capacity as well as the lack of training and public awareness by local technical experts and communities through a participatory, collaborative, and integrated approach with the inclusion of stakeholders on all levels ranging from central and local government to local communities.

3.2 Objectives and Components

30. The objectives of the BPI project are to adopt and integrate biodiversity values, ecosystem values and concepts of sustainable forest management and land use planning into enhanced land-use planning, the improved management of the forest/mangrove sector and the development of sustainable livelihoods in The Bahamas. The project has been sub divided into three technical components that aim to deliver the outcomes of the project in the context of the GEF Focal areas. These components in their entirety consists of a total of 9 outputs which contribute to the 4 outcomes. The 9 outputs are realized through the implementation of 54 activities that have been designed specifically to achieve the project’s overarching objective. Figure 1 below gives a summarized breakdown of the project’s components, outputs and outcomes. Annex VI gives a detailed listing of the project’s logical framework.

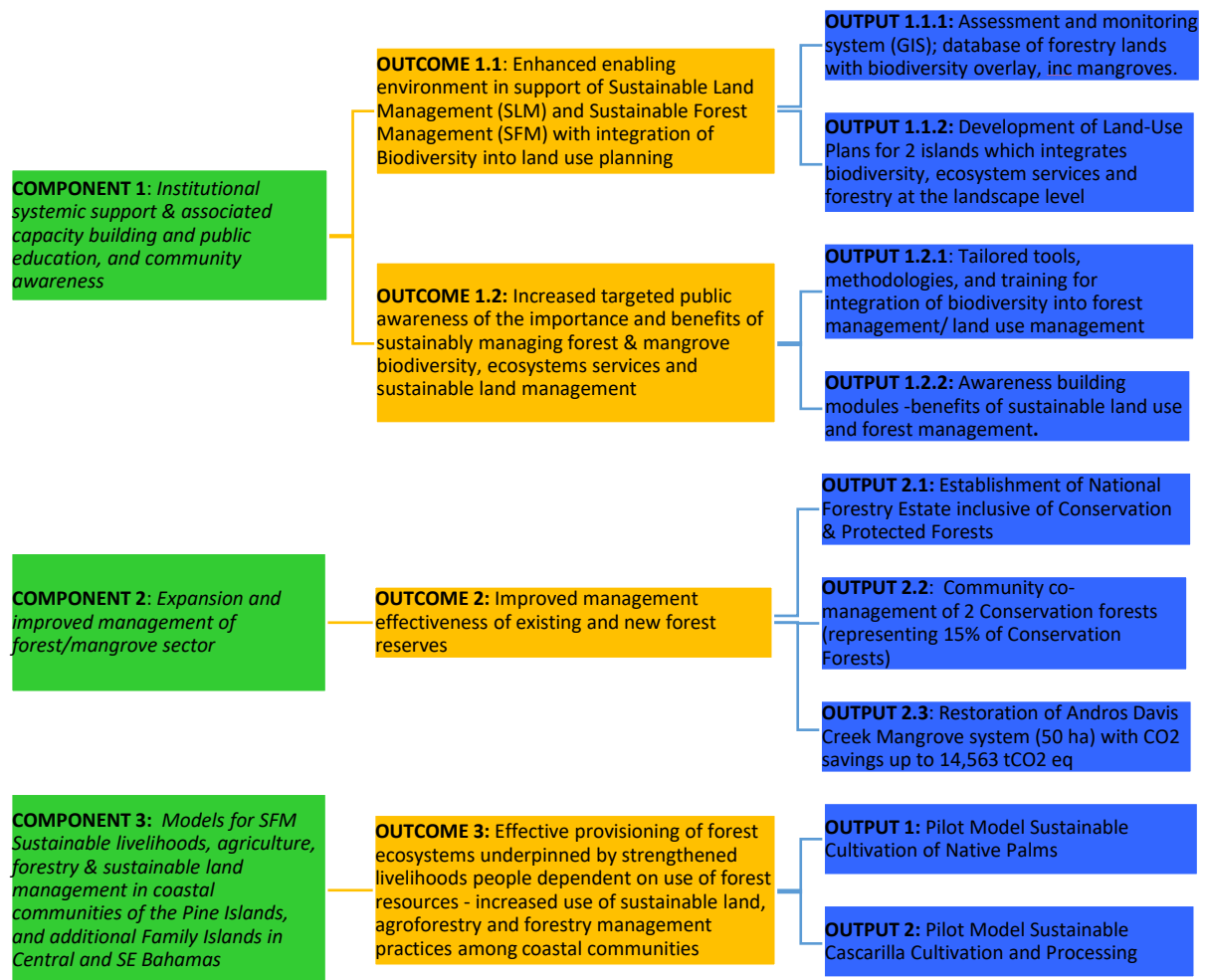


Figure 1. Overview of Project components and outputs

31. Component 1 component focuses primarily on strengthening the capacity of the enabling environment to effectively support and integrate the concepts of Sustainable Land Management (SLM), Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and Biodiversity into land use planning and seeks to raise public awareness on the ecosystem benefits associated with SLM and SFM by:
- Establishing a forestry assessment and monitoring system which reduces the technical gap by contributing biodiversity and ecosystem services values into an updated inventory of forest ecosystems in the Pine Islands while sustainably monitoring Bahamian forest change in the long term.
 - The integration of Sustainable Land-Use and Sustainable Forest Management principles into National Land-Use Planning through the development of 2 sub-national plans for Andros and New Providence, in accordance with Planning and Subdivisions Act 2010
32. Component 2 involves the expansion and improved management of the forest/mangrove sector by:
- Facilitating the gazettelement of the National Forestry Estate inclusive of Protected Forests and Conservation Forests. In addition, incremental support will be provided for the development of the National Forest Plan for the Forest Estate, and the targeted management planning for 15% of planned Conservation Forest comprising of 22,410 ha on two (2) pilot areas on Abaco and Andros using SFM/REDD+ principles of community co-management that is expected to increase the carbon sequestration up to 5,661,077 tCO₂ eq.
 - The rehabilitation of Mangrove Ecosystems in Davis Creek, Andros comprising of 50 ha to restore ecosystem services and increase carbon sequestration up to 14,563 tCO₂ eq.
33. The focus of Component 3 is to establish models of sustainable livelihoods through two (2) pilot projects: The Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palms in Andros and Grand Bahama and the Sustainable Cascarilla Cultivation and Processing on the islands of Acklins, Crooked Island, Samana Cay and Plana Cays. These pilot projects aim to enhance the capacity of local and coastal communities to engage in sustainable livelihoods and practices and effectively utilize forest resources.

3.3 Project Implementation Structure

34. The UNEP, which acts as the GEF implementing agency, provides project supervision and is responsible for ensuring that the project is consistent with both GEF and UNEP policies and procedures. The implementation of project activities is overseen in particular by the UNEP's GEF Biodiversity/Land Degradation/ Biosafety Unit of the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI). The UNEP has further assigned a dedicated Task Manager (TM) who offers guidance on the project's execution as well as assists in revising and approving both financial and technical reports.
35. The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) acts as the National Executing Agency (NEA). The NEA works in collaboration with UNEP and provides access to all relevant

information, to allow the UNEP to fulfill its responsibility as the IA accountable to GEF. The NEA is represented by a designated officer who is responsible for appointing the National Project Coordinator (NPC) and the Project Steering Committee (PSC).

36. The NPC dedicated to the project is responsible for the coordination, management and monitoring of the implementation of the BPI project. The role of the NPC further involves the planning, initiating and managing of national project activities and procedures as well as the coordination of work with the project stakeholders under the guidance of the NEA and in consultation with the UNEP TM. The NPC is tasked with preparing annual workplans, budgets, progress reports and financial reports.
37. The PSC was established to facilitate the decision-making process during the project's implementation. The committee consists of designated personnel from the UNEP, DEPP and from the various focal points. The focal points consist of the agencies and organizations that are the project's primary stakeholders and are involved in the execution of the various project activities. The PSC conducts monthly meetings with members to enable efficient project coordination and implementation.

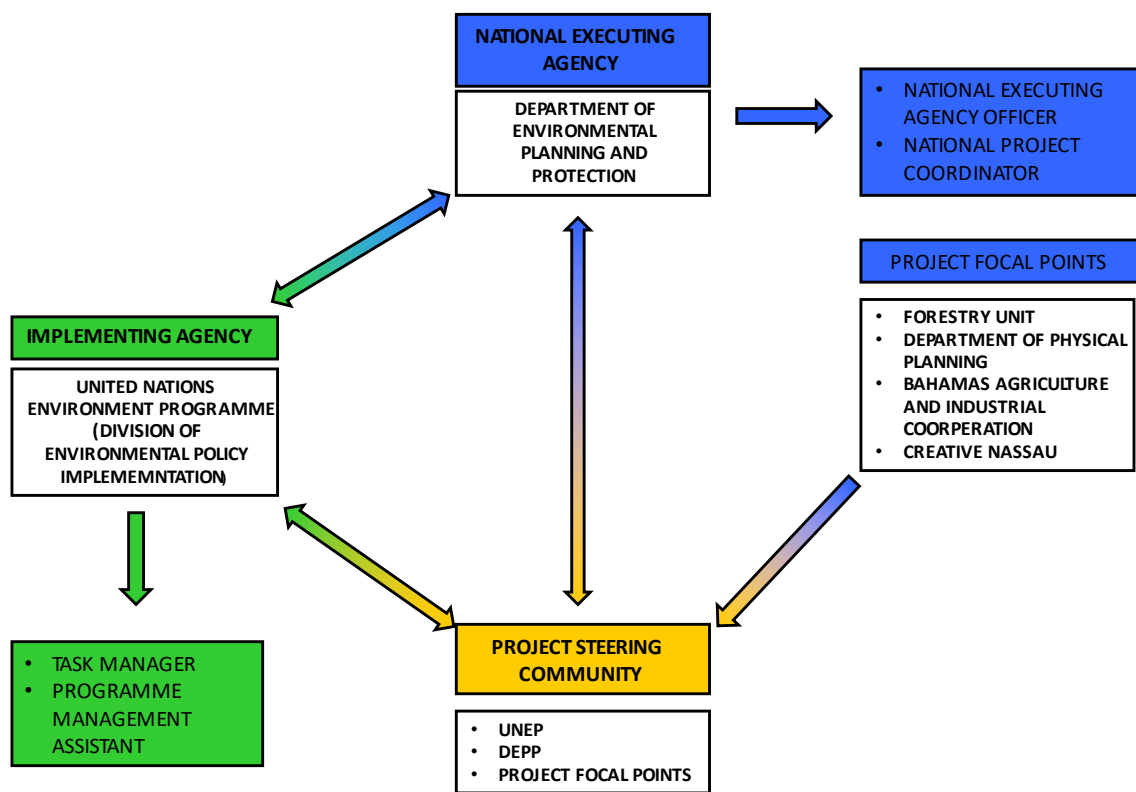


Figure 2. Project Implementation Structure

3.4 Stakeholder Analysis

38. Understanding stakeholder participation and cooperation is a major component of the review process and the degree of involvement of each stakeholder should be based on a sound analysis of all parties involved and the roles they play in bringing about change or the ways in which they are affected by change. The ProDoc identifies the different institutions and groups that would be affected by activities of the project as well as how they will benefit or participate in the project. These stakeholders were identified during the project's inception phase and included the agencies and organizations that would have the most relevant and direct impact on project activities and outcomes, as well as those who will be beneficiaries of the project's activities.
39. The list of stakeholders and their level of participation in the project was reviewed and confirmed during the MTR mission. Interviews were held with the various stakeholders that were active on the project. Of the thirteen (13) stakeholder groups that were interviewed, eight (8) belong to the public sector and consists of various departments and units of the government of The Bahamas. Three (3) can be considered as NGOs or Civic groups and two (2) are educational institutions that provide additional technical expertise to the project. Of these 13 stakeholders, 5 are considered as the main project focal points and include the DEPP, the BAIC, the FU, the DPP and Creative Nassau. Table 3 below gives an updated stakeholder analysis grid that was reconstructed based on the MTR mission findings. The table provides a rating for each stakeholder group based on their level of ownership on the project.

Table 2: Stakeholder Analysis Grid

STAKEHOLDER	OWNERSHIP			
	INTEREST	INFLUENCE	EXPERTISE	AFFECTED
PUBLIC SECTOR				
Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP), Ministry of Environment and Housing				
Bahamas Agriculture and Industrial Corporation (BAIC)				
Bahamas Forestry Unit (FU)				
Department of Physical Planning (DPP)				
Bahamas National GIS Centre (BNGISC)				
Department of Lands & Surveys (DLS)				
Bahamas Development Bank (BDB)				
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)				
NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/ CIVIC GROUPS				
Creative Nassau				
Acklin Islanders Cooperative Society				
Andros Artisan Association				

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS				
Caribbean Agriculture and Research Development Institute (CARDI)				
Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Sciences Institute (BAMSI)				

PARTICIPATORY SCALE		
Supportive/Tertiary	Secondary	Primary

40. The ProDoc initially outlined the stakeholder participation and management arrangements. This was also revised based on the MTR findings and are shown in Table 3 below. For Component 1, the FU and the DPP are the lead stakeholders responsible for the overall delivery and oversight of these project activities. BNGISC and the DEPP are co-executing stakeholders and the DLS is considered to be a participatory stakeholder. Likewise for Component 2, the lead stakeholder is the FU. The DPP and BNGISC are co-executing stakeholder that are key for the delivery of project activities and the DLS is a participatory stakeholder. For Component 3, the BAIC is the lead stakeholder. The FU and Creative Nassau are co- executing stakeholders with the latter providing support as it pertains to the community outreach activities under this component. CARDI and BAMSI are participatory stakeholders and perform in the capacity of technical institutions that provide technical assistance to project activities.

Table 3: Revised Stakeholder Participation and Management Arrangements.

COMPONENT	LEAD STAKEHOLDERS (responsible for overall delivery and oversight)	CO-EXECUTING STAKEHOLDERS (key for the delivery of activities)	PARTICIPATORY STAKEHOLDERS (key consultative and participatory role in delivery of activities)
1	Forestry Unit, Department of Physical Planning	Bahamas National GIS Center, Department of Environmental Planning and Protection	Department of Land and Surveys
2	Forestry Unit	Department of Physical Planning, Bahamas National GIS Center	Department of Land and Surveys
3	Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Cooperation	Forestry Unit, Creative Nassau	Bahamas Development Bank, Caribbean Agriculture and Research Development Institute, Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Sciences Institute

3.5 Project Revisions

41. The project has faced many delays since its inception in 2015 due to several challenges. As such, the project timeframe for completion was extended in 2019 at no additional cost. The technical deadline was shifted from November 2019 to November 2021, to facilitate the completion of outstanding project activities that were necessary to achieve the project's outcomes. The project's overall budget remained unchanged and unspent monies during the project's first four (4) years were simply reallocated to be used during the extended period.
42. Though the project's overall budget was left unaltered, six (6) budget revisions were undertaken annually for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. These rephasals highlighted the planned budget for the year, the actual revised budget for the year and the variance based on changes to spending.
43. Even with an extension in time, there have been no formal revisions to the project's logical framework to date and project outputs and outcomes remained unchanged. There has been, however, a minor adjustment to activity 2.1.3. The land classification for the designation of the forestry estates has changed from three (3) categories to two (2) (protected forests and forest reserves are now classified as one) but the estimated area of lands that will be classified remains unchanged.

3.6 Project Financing

44. The project is funded in part by the GEF and by co-financing commitments (both cash and in-kind) made by the various project partners. The total project budget amounts to \$10,548,683.00 which gives the project its classification as an FSP. Additionally, the project had an initial PPG cost of \$100,000.00. Table 4 gives a breakdown of the distribution of sources of finances for the project as initially stated in the ProDoc. Table 5 details the allocation of the funds under each of the project component.

Table 4: Summary of Sources of Funding and Amounts Contributed.

SOURCES OF FINANCING	AMOUNT	%
GEF FINANCING	\$2,853,425.00	27.05%
CO-FINANCING CASH	\$590,000.00	5.59%
Ministry of Environment and Housing- Forestry Unit	\$150,000.00	1.42%
Ministry of Public Works and Urban Development- Department of Physical Planning	\$20,000.00	0.19%
Bahamas Agriculture and Industrial Cooperation	\$400,000.00	3.79%
Department of Lands and Surveys	\$20,000.00	0.19%
CO-FINANCING IN KIND	\$7,105,258.00	67.36%
ICC	\$400,000.00	3.79%
USGS	\$200,000.00	1.90%
Ministry of Environment and Housing- Forestry Unit	\$2,161,140.00	20.49%
Ministry of Public Works and Urban Development- Department of Physical Planning	\$732,000.00	6.94%
Bahamas Agriculture and Industrial Cooperation	\$1,475,000.00	13.98%
Department of Lands and Surveys	\$788,500.00	7.47%
Bahamas National GIS Center	\$657,500.00	6.23%

Ministry of Environment and Housing- Department of Environmental Planning and Protection	\$651,118.00	6.17%
United Nations Environment Program	\$40,000.00	0.38%
GRAND TOTAL	\$10,548,683.00	100%

Table 5: Summary of Funding Planned for Each Component and their Source of Funding.

COMPONENT	AMOUNT REQUESTED FROM GEF	CO-FINANCING IN KIND	CO-FINANCING IN CASH	GRAND TOTAL PER COMPONENT
COMPONENT 1	\$962,345.00	\$2,744,580.00	\$130,000.00	\$3,836,925.00
COMPONENT 2	\$860,455.00	\$2,272,817.00	\$60,000.00	\$3,193,272.00
COMPONENT 3	\$844,125.00	\$1,584,433.00	\$400,000.00	\$2,828,558.00
PROJECT MANAGEMENT COSTS	\$186,500.00	\$503,428.00	-	\$689,928.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,853,425.00	\$7,105,528.00	\$590,000.00	\$10,548,683.00

45. The project officially began in 2016 with an expected duration of 48 months. The initial ProDoc showed Table 6 below which summarized the planned GEF budget over the four years of the project's implementation. Section 5.3 gives more details into the project's financial information.

Table 6: Summary of Funding Planned for Each Component over the Initial Project Timeframe.

COMPONENTS	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
COMPONENT 1	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$212,345.00
COMPONENT 2	\$300,000.00	\$403,748.00	\$100,000.00	\$56,707.00
COMPONENT 3	\$245,039.00	\$250,000.00	\$286,753.00	\$62,333.00
PROJECT MANAGEMENT COSTS	\$46,625.00	\$46,625.00	\$46,625.00	\$46,625.00
TOTAL	\$841,664.00	\$950,373.00	\$683,378.00	\$378,010.00

4. REVIEW METHODS

46. The methodology for the Mid-Term Review for the Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration project was guided by the TOR provided by the project’s executing agency. As mentioned previously, the MTR involves the assessment of the performance of the project to date based on the following criteria:

- i. Strategic Relevance
- ii. Effectiveness
- iii. Financial Management
- iv. Efficiency
- v. Sustainability
- vi. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross Cutting Issues

These criteria are rated using a six-point rating scale as follows:

Highly Satisfactory (HS);
Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS);
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U);
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)

47. Along with providing an evaluation of the project, the MTR also attempted to answer the broad strategic questions listed below. These are questions of interest to the UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

- To what extent is the project following a robust theory of change and capacity building with appropriately formulated outputs, direct outcomes, intermediate states and long-term results?
- What revisions are required to ensure that implementation can be effectively evaluated at the end the project? This includes consideration of whether the outcome indicators are verifiable and appropriate for recording progress towards the achievement of the development objectives.
- The extent to which the design and implementation of the models that are to demonstrate viable forest management (SFM) livelihoods under Component 3 are meeting the intended impact with the likelihood of sustainability and scaling-up.

48. The MTR is in line with both the UN Environment Evaluation Policy and the UN Environment Programme Manual which seeks to increase transparency, coherency and efficiency of projects that are being undertaken and to support accountability. This Midterm Review of the BPI project makes use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts and provides evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful.

49. The reviewer made a concerted effort to ensure a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with key stakeholders throughout the Midterm Review process. The recommendations arising from the MTR are expected to assist in ensuring that the activities scheduled for the remainder of the duration of the project are structured to maximize the project’s outcomes.

50. The Midterm Review was conducted by an independent consultant between the period May 1st 2021 – July 31st 2021, as per the Terms of Reference provided by the executing agency. The schedule and workplan for the Midterm Review of the BPI project is seen in Annex IX. The MTR process was conducted in various stages over the three (3) month period, as seen in Figure 3 below.

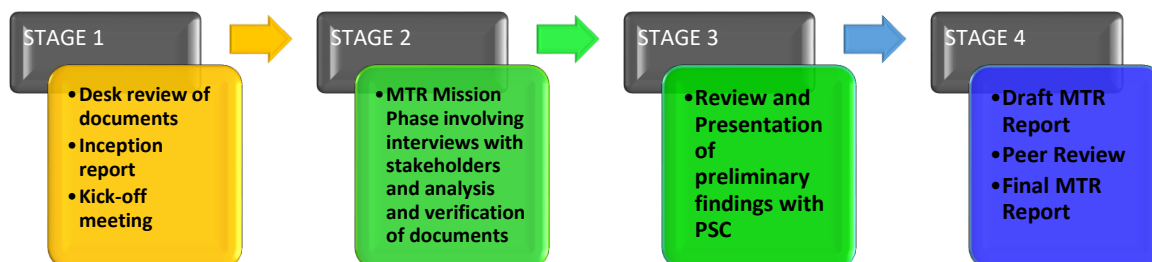


Figure 3: Outline of the Stages of the MTR Review Methodology.

51. The first stage of the process was the Inception Phase which involved an initial desk review of the ProDoc and available documents, stakeholder analysis, assessment of project design quality (PDQ) (Annex VII), the evaluation framework to guide the data collection process and the development of an initial Theory of Change at project design. An inception report was prepared, providing a detailed summary of the aforementioned components. This report and the initial analysis were presented to the key executing project stakeholders, members of the PSC and the UNEP Task Manager and the MTR process and methodology was discussed.
52. The MTR Mission phase was the second stage of the MTR and involved a series of individual interviews that were conducted with all key stakeholders to collect evidence-based information on the project’s progress to date. The Project’s Evaluation Framework matrix shown in Annex VIII contains a series of questions that are derived from the evaluation criteria and was used to guide the data collection process during the MTR mission phase. Annex II shows the list of stakeholders consulted during the MTR Mission Phase. All relevant documents including progress reports, technical reports, financial reports and project deliverables were requested and an in-depth analysis and review of these documents was done as part of the data collection and to verify the information received from the stakeholder interviews. Annex III shows a list of the documents used for the Midterm Review.
53. Given the travel and work restrictions brought about during the COVID-19 management protocols, the stakeholder interviews were conducted in groups and individually through Microsoft Teams. In instances where persons were not able to use this platform, a WhatsApp call was made. This was done mainly for the interviews with the community representatives. Twenty-two (22) stakeholders were interviewed for the purposes of the MTR. The criteria for the selection of interviewees were based on the role they played in the project as well as those that are directly impacted and affected by the project implementation and overall outcomes.
54. The review aimed to include as much as possible an appropriate representation of those involved in project implementation, those affected by project implementation as well as genders and social

groups. This, of course, was complicated by the travel restrictions and thus, representatives from the various communities and cooperative societies as well as the various focal points from the executing agencies were interviewed. Of the total number of persons interviewed, 59% of the interviewees were female and all stakeholder groups involved in the project were interviewed, including the public sector, educational institutions, NGOs and civic groups and well as local community representatives.

55. To ensure accuracy and efficiency in the data collected during these interviews, a record of all persons in attendance as well as the minutes/findings of the meetings were recorded. These documents were prepared and then forwarded to each participant at the end of the interview for their approval and verification. The review consultant made sure to inform the participants that whatever was discussed during the meeting and presented in the meeting minutes was kept confidential and used for the sole purpose of assisting the review consultant in formulating his assessment of the project. This allowed for a transparent and collaborative process amongst the stakeholders and the review consultant whilst ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.
56. The third stage of the MTR process involved a presentation of the preliminary findings as well as a report on the initial findings of the MTR Mission which was prepared and shared with the implementation agency, the executing agency and members of the PSC. The presentation of preliminary findings involved a participatory discussion on the overall findings, and this functioned as an additional feedback mechanism to guide the completion of the final draft MTR report.
57. The final stage of the MTR process involved the preparation of the draft Midterm Review report. The findings of the MTR review report were based on in-depth document analyses as well as stakeholder interviews. The above criteria were rated using the six-point scale as per the TOR for the Midterm Review. The GEF MTR tools provided by the UNEP Task Manager was used to guide in the rating of the criteria and the overall scores (Annex X). Recommendations for adaptive management of the project implementation were given based on the review findings and lessons learned were recorded. This draft MTR report was submitted for peer review by the various stakeholders and their comments and concerns are addressed.

Limitations of MTR

58. Given the travel restrictions due to the current COVID-19 management protocols, field visits and in person interviews were unable to be conducted. This meant that all the interviews were conducted virtually. The remoteness and ruralness of the communities affected by the project implementation made it difficult to contact multiple members from the communities and this was further complicated by the travel restrictions. As a result, a representative from the communities were interviewed and their thoughts, opinions and insight were obtained.

5. REVIEW FINDINGS

5.1 A. Strategic Relevance

5.1.1 Alignment to the UNEP MTS and POW and Strategic Priorities

59. The review involves an assessment of the project's relevance with regards to the UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. At the initial project design stage, the project was highly consistent with the UNEP's overall mandate and was aligned with the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013 and Programme of Work (PoW) relating to Ecosystems Management through:
- i. Expected Accomplishment (a) Enhanced capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development planning processes; Output 1: Methodologies, partnerships and tools to maintain or restore ecosystem services and integrate the ecosystem management approach with the conservation and management of ecosystems
 - ii. Expected Accomplishment (c) Strengthened capacity of countries and regions to realign their environmental programmes to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services; Output 2: Biodiversity and ecosystem values are assessed, demonstrated and communicated to strengthen decision-making by governments, businesses and consumers.
60. Since implementation, the project spans over two UN Environment Medium-Term Strategies (2014-2017 and 2018-2021) and three Biennial Programme of Works (PoWs), i.e., 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. The project is currently aligned with the MTS 2018-2021 through Sub-Programme 3: Healthy and productive ecosystems:
61. Expected Accomplishment 3(b): Policymakers in the public and private sector test the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making; Indicator: (i) Increase in number of countries that have tested the incorporation of the health and productivity of marine and terrestrial ecosystems in their financial allocation frameworks.
62. The project is expected to be aligned with the Mid Term Strategy 2022 – 2025 and its associated Programme of Work under the broad Thematic Programme of Nature Action in which the UNEP will engage in strategic actions involving the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of nature resources.
63. The project essentially involves the integration of biodiversity values and precepts of sustainable forestry management into enhanced land use planning, as well as the use of forestry resources for the sustainable livelihoods in The Bahamas with particular focus on the Pine Island communities. As such, since design, the project has been consistent with the UNEP strategic priorities.
64. The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology and Capacity Building (BSP) and the South- South Cooperation (S-SC) are not explicitly described within the project documents but the design of the project promotes institutional and technical capacity building and the integration of new technologies and methodologies for sustainable forestry management. A major aspect of the project involves capacity building, training and public awareness within the local communities and local technical

experts with respect to sustainable land use planning, sustainable forestry management, the development of a forestry assessment and monitoring system and an open-source framework accessible to all agencies, mangrove restoration and sustainable livelihoods. The project acts as a vehicle for the further implementation of the duties of Forestry Act and Forestry Regulations 2014 as well as other national priorities.

65. With respect to the S-SC, the project components address issues that are characteristics of Small Island Developing States (SIDs). The monitoring of the project components will document methodologies, limitations and successes and this will ensure replication at the local, regional and international levels. Policies, plans and strategies developed through the project will also serve as examples for other countries to replicate. The capacities developed will include increased skill sets for planners at the local and national levels, facilitating replication at the inter-island and national levels.

Rating: Highly Satisfactory (HS)

5.1.2 Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

66. The project is aligned with Objectives 1 and 2 of the GEF-5 Strategy for Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM/REDD+) with a focus on outcome 1.1 – Enhanced enabling environment within the forest sector and outcome 2.1 - Enhanced institutional capacity to account for GHG emission reduction and increase in carbon stocks. The project is also aligned with Objectives 1 and 2 of the focal area strategies of Biodiversity (BD) and Objective 3 of the focal area strategy of Land Degradation (LD) with a focus on outcome 3.1: Enhanced cross-sector enabling environment for integrated landscape management.

Rating: Highly Satisfactory (HS)

5.1.3 Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

67. The project is expected to deliver global environmental benefits in terms of sustainable forestry management and sustainable livelihood practices and as such, will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 and SDG 15. The benefits are also aligned to the core indicator targets of the GEF-5 focal area strategies of Biodiversity, Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management (BD, LD, SFM) mentioned previously.
68. While there is no UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Bahamas, the project objectives are aligned with priority 4 ‘A Sustainable and Resilient Caribbean’ in which the expected outcome involves sustainable solutions for conservation, restoration and use of ecosystems and natural resources.
69. The objectives of the project are consistent with national plans and priorities involving the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of ecosystem resources. For instance, the Forestry Act Amendments and Forestry Regulations 2014 allows for the sustainable development and

conservation of the forest resources of the Bahamas, and this is an integral aspect of component 2 the project.

70. Component 1 of the project involving the incorporation of biodiversity values and concepts of sustainable forestry management into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas is aligned with the need for the development of general land use plans for The Bahamas. Component 3 of the project involving the promotion of sustainable livelihoods is especially relevant in the post Covid-19 environment where there are opportunities for income generation at the community level and this is directly in alignment with the Ministry of Agriculture's mandate which calls for economic diversification and development of the agricultural sector.
71. The project is also consistent with national plans and priority activities including: The 1999 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) involving a multi-disciplinary approach to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services; The National Action Program to Combat Land Degradation in The Bahamas; The National Development Plan (NDP) for sustainable development in the domestic economy; National Environmental Management and Action Plan; The National Climate Change Policy and the National Invasive Species Strategy and National Environmental Management and Action Plan among others.

Rating: Highly Satisfactory (HS)

5.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

72. The project was documented to have linkages and complementarity with various GEF and non-GEF interventions. At the regional level, the project is complementary with The Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (GEF-IWEco Project) which is implemented through a network of international, regional and national partners. The Bahamas intervention of IWEco will address problems of land degradation and ecosystem degradation in Grand Bahama.
73. At the national level, the project is aligned with previously implemented GEF interventions: 'Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected Area Network' which aims to support management of protected areas including those created within forest sector and 'Strengthening Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in The Bahamas' which aims to create and apply enabling conditions for fair and equitable access and effective benefit sharing.
74. With respect to non-GEF interventions, the project builds upon previous interventions such as the 'Forest Management and Training Pilot in Abaco' conducted between the FAO and the Government of the Bahamas to build capacity on forest management and the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA) in which a review of the Bahamas protected areas management categories was conducted.
75. The linkages and benefits shared by previous interventions are adequately described but there was no mention of dialogue/engagement other recent, ongoing or planned interventions.

Rating: Satisfactory (S)

Overall Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory (HS)

5.2 B. Effectiveness

5.2.1 Theory of Change at Review

76. The original Project Document did not include a Theory of Change (ToC) and thus, an initial Theory of Change was constructed at the inception of this Midterm Review using The Intervention Logic and the Results Framework within the Project Document as well as the results of the PDQ assessment. The TOC is a concept that should be considered as dynamic and subject to changes along the course of the Midterm Review and as such, this initial TOC was reconstructed and revised based on the interviews with key stakeholders and information received along the course of the midterm review to produce a robust TOC at Review.
77. Figure 4 presents the reconstructed ToC at Review, outlining the causal pathways from outputs through direct outcomes and other ‘intermediate states’ towards project impacts. These causal pathways are the logical sequence of intended changes and shows the linkages between changes at different results levels and the various factors affecting these changes. It essentially demonstrates how activities within a project intervention produces outputs and results that consequentially contributes to achieving the intended impacts of the project. The causal pathways within the Theory of Change require certain ‘assumptions’ to hold and may be facilitated by certain ‘drivers. The former refers to conditions that are beyond the direct control of the intervention and the latter refers to supporting actions or conditions that provide a degree of control and can significantly influence the achievement of project goals.
78. The causal pathways defined in the Project Document and in the Results Framework are logical and consistent and the reconstructed ToC is representative of the Results Frameworks, as seen in Figure 4. The overall intended impacts of the project were to build on recent advancements in land-use planning, the forestry sector and sustainable livelihoods by:
- i. The integration of biodiversity values, ecosystem services values and precepts of sustainable forest management and land-use into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas
 - ii. The expansion and improved management of the forest and mangrove sector in the Bahamas using principles of SFM and SLM, thereby reducing the vulnerability of forest ecosystems to climate change and other human-induced impacts.
 - iii. The development of sustainable livelihoods while promoting sustainable practices at the community level as well as the improved provision of forest ecosystem goods and services.
79. It is expected that the delivery of 9 outputs through the undertaking of 53 project activities would lead to the achievement of 4 direct outcomes. These 4 outcomes should produce intermediate states which

eventually lead towards the desired long-term impacts. These impacts would be effectively achieved if a number of assumptions and drivers are held. Nine assumptions and two drivers have been identified based on the Results Framework within the Project Document. The assumptions that are extracted from the Results Framework within the Project Document are detailed and robust and are most applicable for changes between the Outputs and Outcomes. Project specific drivers have also been identified and included in the Theory of Change between the transition from Outputs to Outcomes.

Outputs to Outcomes:

Component 1: Institutional and systemic support & associated capacity building and public education, and community awareness.

80. For component 1, the deliverance of 4 outputs lead to the achievement of two outcomes which are expected to result in the implementation of land use plans which integrate biodiversity values, ecosystem services values and precepts of sustainable forest management and land-use into enhanced land-use planning in the long-term impact. Outcome 1.1 - Enhanced enabling environment in support of SLM and SFM with integration of Biodiversity into land use planning is achieved through the establishment of the Forestry Monitoring System Output 1.1.1 which aims to address the lack of forestry and biodiversity inventories and monitoring systems as well as the limited national technical capacity in responsible agencies and local communities. This outcome is also achieved through the development of 2 sub-national land use plans for Andros and New Providence that integrate BD and SFM (Output 1.1.2). With the expected achievement of Outcome 1.1, however, there are the assumptions that there is available data for the establishment of Forestry Monitoring System and that the decision makers want progressive sustainable development of communities. The driving force behind the achievement of Outcome 1.1 is the institutional and technical capacity building that is associated with the activities undertaken for the accomplishment of Outcome 1.1
81. The second outcome under component 1 involved Increased targeted public awareness of the importance and benefits of sustainably managing forest & mangrove biodiversity, ecosystems services and sustainable land management (Outcome 1.2). This outcome is achieved by the development of tools, methodologies, and training for integration of biodiversity into forest management/land use management (Output 1.2.1) and increased targeted public awareness of the importance and benefits of sustainably managing forest & mangrove biodiversity, ecosystems services and sustainable land management (Output 1.2.2). Both outputs involve promoting and mainstreaming the importance of SFM and SLM and the conservation of biodiversity and consequentially aims to achieve Outcome 1.2.
82. There are clear and evident linkages between the project components, the outputs of these components and their expected outcomes as well as pathways that connect outputs and outcomes of different components. For instance, Output 1.1.1 is used as the input for Output 2.1 and subsequently to achieve both Outcome 1.1 and Outcome 2. Outputs 1.2.1 and Output 1.2.2 provide the inputs for Outcome 1.2 as well as Outcome 3.

Component 2: Expansion and improved management of forest/mangrove sector

83. There is one main outcome under component 2 and this is Outcome 2. Improved management effectiveness of existing and new Forest Reserves. The achievement of Outcome 2 involves the establishment and gazettement of the National Forestry Estate (Output 2.1) for the enhanced conservation and protection of forest ecosystems, the Community co-management of 2 Conservation

forests (Output 2.2) using principles of SFM and SLM as well as the Restoration of Andros Davis Creek Mangrove (Output 2.3) which demonstrates the benefits of ecosystem services including that of carbon sequestration. The assumptions with the achievement of Outcome 2 are that there are no major natural disasters, adequate community buy in and internal control mechanism are created and improved regulatory framework can be enforced where the internal control does not apply.

Component 3: Sustainable Livelihoods

84. Under component 3, there is Outcome 3. Effective provisioning of forest ecosystems underpinned by strengthened livelihoods people dependent on use of forest resources - increased use of sustainable land, agroforestry and forestry management practices among coastal communities. This outcome is to be achieved through two pilots: Output 3.1 Pilot Model Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palm and Output 3.2 Pilot Model Sustainable Cascarilla Cultivation and Processing aimed at developing sustainable livelihoods while promoting sustainable practices. For this pathway, it is assumed that a market exists for the products and that the products are economically feasible. The willingness of the communities serves as a driver to influence the achievement of this outcome.

Outcomes to Intermediate States to Impacts:

85. The outcomes of the intervention do not directly produce the intended impacts mentioned previously and thus produces intermediate states. Outcome 1.1 would lead to the development of two (2) sub national land Use Plans that integrate SLM and SFM and biodiversity values and a Carbon and Forestry Monitoring System. Outcome 1.2 would result in tools and training and enhanced institutional capacity as well as public awareness on benefits of SLM, forest ecosystem services and biodiversity values and this would result in the integration of SFM and SLM into land use planning in The Bahamas in the long-term.
86. Outcome 2 would lead to the Establishment of the National Forestry Estate and associated management plans using SFM/REDD+ principles and the restoration of Andros Davis Creek Mangrove system. This would provide improved ecosystem health and functionality and consequentially enhance mitigation efforts against climate change, conservation of carbon stocks and a reduction in emissions from forest deforestation and degradation, thereby achieving the expansion and improved management of the forest and mangrove sector in The Bahamas.
87. Outcome 3 (Effective provisioning of forest ecosystems, strengthened livelihoods and increased use of sustainable land, agroforestry and forestry) would lead to the establishment of sustainable livelihoods and practices through the two pilot projects as the intermediate state. This is intended to lead to the development of sustainable livelihoods while promoting sustainable practices at the community level as well as the improved provision of forest ecosystem goods and services.

Assumptions and Drivers:

88. It is important to note that the change from output to outcome and outcome to intermediate states to impacts are facilitated by a number of assumptions and drivers. The assumptions and drivers from the Results Framework were incorporated into the reconstructed ToC at Review. The majority of the assumptions and drivers map the transition from direct outputs to outcomes but drivers from intermediate states to impacts were not entirely in place.
89. The assumptions for the transition from output to outcomes include the availability of data for the forestry monitoring system which will contribute to the achievement of Outcome 1.1. The

institutional and technical capacity building which forms an integral aspect of the project is a driving force towards the achievement of this outcome. The assumption for the achievement of Outcome 1.2 is that there is willingness to partake in training and that there are participating stakeholders in communities. There are also assumptions for the achievement of Outcome 2 in which there are no major natural disasters and there is adequate community participation. For component 3, the local community interest and willingness is a driver to encourage the achievement of Outcome 3.

90. For the Outcomes to Intermediate States, the major assumption is that the gazettelement of the NFE will be accepted and approved by cabinet which is beyond the control of the project. For the movement from Intermediate States to Impact, there is the assumption that the market exists for the products produced at the community level and that the sustainable harvesting methods are economically feasible and profitable. To achieve the overall impact of the integration of biodiversity The integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services values and precepts of SFM and land-use into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas, there is the underlying assumption that the decision-makers want progressive sustainable development of communities.

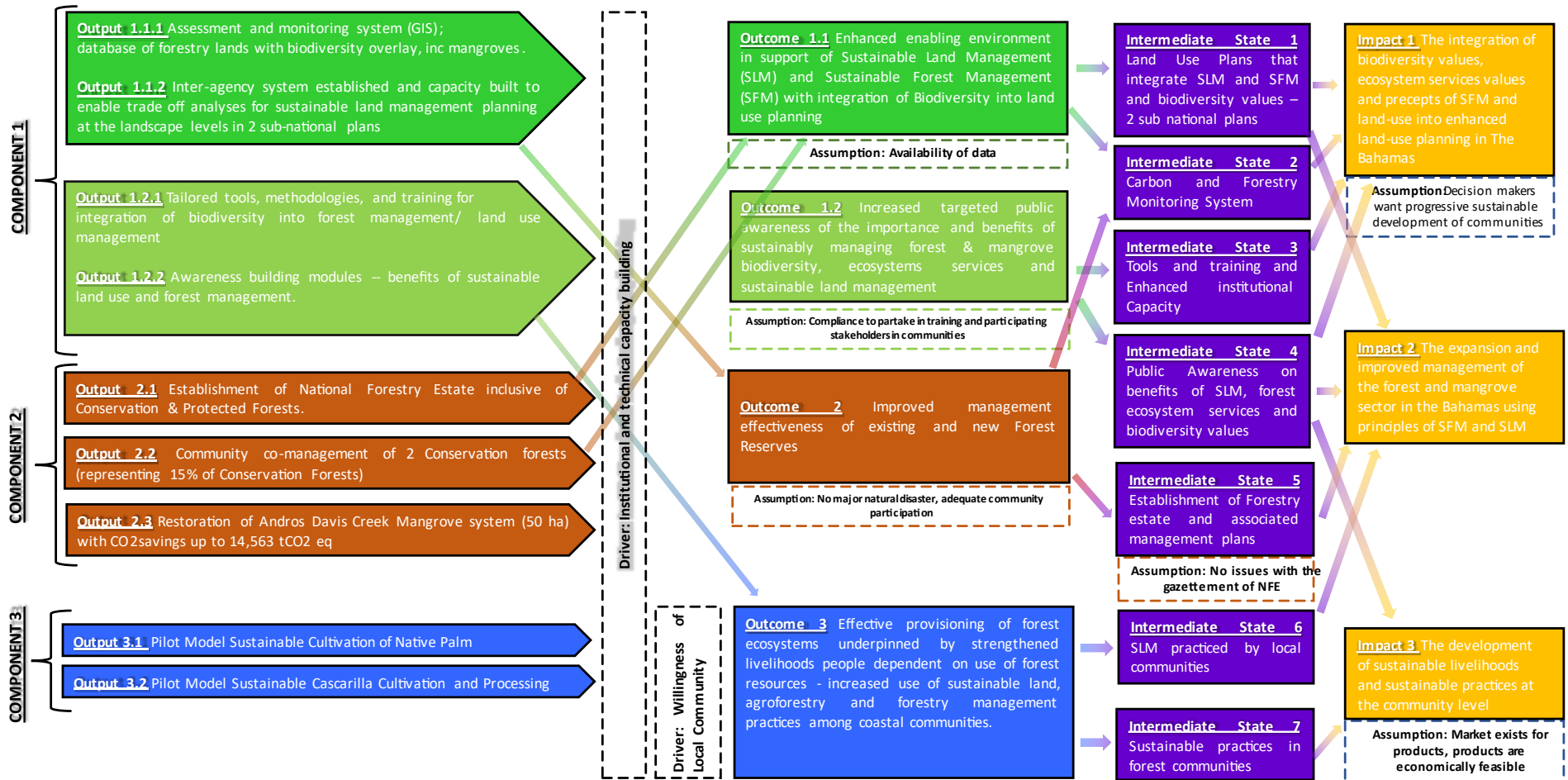


Figure 4: Reconstructed Theory of Change at Review.

5.2.2 Availability of Outputs

91. This section of the review incorporates an overview and analysis of the status of the project outputs by component and the project's achievement in producing the intended outputs and midterm targets and milestones at the time of the Midterm Review. The delivery of the outputs is assessed in terms of quantity and quality as well as the usefulness and timeliness of their provision. The assessment on the availability of the outputs is based on the midterm targets specified in the results framework and validated against the results of the project implementation to date (including PIRs, technical reports) with due consideration of the insight provided by interviews with key stakeholders.
92. Since the project inception, there have been delays in the undertaking of activities in each of the project components. These delays have been attributed to a number of issues from the beginning of project implementation ranging from a turnover in staff/ administrative changes, lack of disbursement of funds due to non-compliance with technical and financial reporting to the lack of technical and institutional capacity, leading to the relaunch and extension of the project in June 2019. The recent issues such as the Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and the current COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the delay in project activities.
93. Based on the information presented in the PIRs, HYPRs and interviews with the project stakeholders and focal points, however, most of the outputs under this component seems to be back on track towards achieving the respective outcomes as well as meeting the intended midterm targets and milestones.

Component 1: Institutional systemic support and associated capacity building and public education, and community awareness.

94. At the time of this Midterm Review, draft land use plans for Andros and New Providence have been produced and submitted for approval and continued development, thereby meeting the Midterm Target specified in the results framework. With regards to the other activities under Output 1.1.2: Development of Land-Use Plans for 2 islands which integrates biodiversity, ecosystem services and forestry at the landscape level, there has been an extensive review of materials such as National Planning and Development Policies for The Bahamas and stakeholder engagement has been initiated in Andros.
95. The delay in the production of the drafts of land use plans for both Andros and New Providence arises from an issue since the inception of the project implementation where there was a conflict in schedule for the DPP. The DPP was mandated to prepare comprehensive land use plans in accordance with the Planning and Subdivision Act in 2010 and was unable to provide the manpower and resources necessary to undertake activities under the project. This was rectified in 2019 by the engagement of an urban planning consultant to increase the technical capacity and to provide the necessary assistance to complete the obligations under the project.
96. For Output 1.1.1: Develop Assessment and monitoring system (GIS), the workplan was developed and the datasets from all available sources have been collected and collated as per the Midterm target for this output. The demarcation of the boundaries and the field work are on route to completion and the 1986 forestry maps have been digitized and the new forest layers have been created for the forestry estates. With regards to the tracking of Carbon Sequestration, however, it has been discovered that those rates are established over a longer period of data collection. This is unlikely to be completed within the project's timeframe and some reformulation of End of Project targets may be necessary for

this output.

97. The development of the forestry maintenance plan and open-source framework for the forestry dataset has been delayed due to contractual issues with the collaborating technical partners. However, a Natural Resource Consultant was hired to address these issues by revising the contracts to consolidate gaps so that the progress for these activities can be continued. A technical extension may be required in this regard based on the finalized timeframe for completing those deliverables.
98. Policy reports providing tools and policy strategies for the integration of BD into SLM/SFM for New Providence and Andros have been written for Output 1.2.1. The policies, tools and methodologies for Andros have been discussed with several stakeholders in Andros and their feedback has been incorporated, in line with the Midterm target for this output. A more comprehensive stakeholder consultation is needed, but this is limited by restrictions due to the current COVID-19 situation.
99. With respect to the public awareness on the benefits of sustainable land use and forest management (Output 1.2.2), a framework for capacity building and awareness has been developed. There have been specific public awareness strategies developed by each project partner for the respective component. An example of this is Forestry awareness week which is carried out by the Forestry Unit on an annual basis as part of co finance to raise awareness of SFM. Infomercials and documentaries have also been created and disseminated to promote awareness, learning and sharing of experiences.

Component 2: Expansion and improved management of forest/mangrove sector

100. Component 2 essentially involves the establishment of the National Forestry Estate (NFE) through the gazettelement of two categories of Forest Reserves and Conservation Forests, the community co-management of 2 management plans for 15% Conservation forests in Andros and Abaco and the restoration of Mangrove system (50 ha) – Davis Creek, Andros which demonstrates the benefits of ecosystem services including that of carbon sequestration.
101. Similarly, to component 1, this component was affected by issues at the beginning of the project implementation such as change in political administration and focal points, lack of technical and institutional capacity as well as the more recent Hurricane Dorian and COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a delay in the project activities and outputs. With Hurricane Dorian and the severe impact to Abaco and Grand Bahama, priorities were redirected and focused mainly on rescue and rehabilitation efforts in these islands. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic would have significantly delayed project activities through inter-island travel and work restrictions which would have limited the fieldwork aspect of component 2 of the project.
102. Despite these challenges and delays, several outputs for component 2 have been produced at the time of the Midterm Review. The boundaries for the National Forestry Estate have been drafted and are awaiting verification from the Department of Lands & Surveys and this is in line with the midterm target for Output 2.1. Given the unpredictability of the current COVID-19 situation and the inability to engage in the necessary fieldwork, there may be further delay in the achievement of the end term targets.
103. The National Forest Plan as per Forest Act 2010 is under review by the Forestry Unit and nearing completion and this is a vital aspect of the project. The Midterm Target for Output 2.2, however, is the gazettelement of target forest areas and community consultations. The new draft Forestry Bill 2020 which will repeal and replace the Forestry Act 2010 has been submitted and is expected to empower

Minister Responsible for forestry to establish the National Forestry Estate. However, the gazettelement of the National Forest Estate is a legal mandate that requires approval from cabinet and is dependent on processes beyond the scope of the project. Given that the project is nearing the terminal completion date, the gazettelement of the National Forest Estate and target forest areas may not be completed within the current project timeframe and some readjustment of the end term targets and may be necessary.

104. The National Forest Inventory (NFI) methodology was finalized with a reference manual produced as one of the project's deliverables and NFI Certifications were accomplished. Monitoring activities have been carried out within Conservation Forest areas in Abaco and Andros as per activity 2.2.11. The damage assessment after Hurricane Dorian also served as a monitoring opportunity to assess the current status of the forests. With regards to the public awareness aspect of component 2, there have been efforts towards public awareness on SFM. The 'Forestry Awareness Week' carried out on an annual basis is one such effort by the Forestry Unit as part of their co-financing contribution. In addition, town meetings were held on Andros and New Providence for the promotion of the National Forest Estate. The challenge, however, lies moving forward after the consecutive impacts of Hurricane Dorian and COVID-19. The impact of Hurricane Dorian was immense and has interrupted engaging stakeholders on the affected islands and COVID-19 has resulted in travel and work restrictions. It is difficult for these communities to prioritize a project when they are still recovering from the effects of these two events.
105. There has been relatively little progress with respect to Output 2.3 Restoration of Andros Davis Creek Mangrove system. A Draft Plan for the implementation of the activities within Output 2.3 by a consultant for review. Fieldwork to complete the baseline studies was undertaken in January 2021 but issues in accessing a lab locally to test the samples created a challenge. Another trip was undertaken in May 2021 to retake the samples to complete the baseline study. The lack of progress with respect to Output 2.3 is attributed to delays caused by Hurricane Dorian and the COVID-19 pandemic which was beyond the control of project management.

Component 3: Sustainable Livelihoods

106. The focus of Component 3 is to establish models of sustainable livelihood through two (2) pilot projects: The Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palms in Andros and Grand Bahama and the Sustainable Cascarilla Cultivation and Processing on the islands of Acklins, Crooked Island, Samana Cay and Plana Cays. The Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC) is primarily responsible for component 3 with support from the Forestry Unit, BAMSI and Creative Nassau.
107. At the beginning of the project implementation, component 3 suffered significant delays due to administrative and technical personnel changes in BAIC. This was further complicated by travel logistics in which there are limited flights to the family islands resulting in trips being less cost effective and often canceled. More recently, delays have been caused by the travel and work restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 management protocols.
108. However, component 3 gained momentum after 2019 and the establishment of the steering committee by the BAIC with a renewed focus on implementation of activities under component 3. To date, there has been significant progress under component 3, especially with regards to Output 3.2 Pilot Model Sustainable Cascarilla Cultivation and Processing and the activities relating to resource assessments, sample collection, the development of educational materials, and the promotion of sustainable livelihood management.

109. The preliminary resource assessment was done in November 2019 in conjunction with the Forestry unit, the botanist consultant as well as personnel from BAMSI. This activity was scheduled for completion in March 2020 but was delayed due to travel restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 situation. The resource assessment was completed in February 2021 and provided insight on the management practices which are conducive to a successful growth rates and sustained yield of the cascarilla. The data collected is expected to allow for the estimation of the current Cascarilla stocks and volumes in the forest systems of the southern islands, which is necessary to develop sustainable management and harvesting practices.
110. Numerous technical reports regarding the resource assessment, harvesting and propagation of Cascarilla as well as the results of the socio-economic and gender surveys were made available to the reviewer. A draft community management plan for the sustainable harvesting and monitoring of the Cascarilla on Acklins and Crooked Island was among the documents provided to the reviewer.
111. Town meeting were held in Acklins and Crooked Island in 2020 to raise awareness and promote the sustainable harvesting of cascarilla. As a result of these meeting the Acklins & Crooked Island Cooperatives were established. In an effort to adapt to the current situation, BAIC's communication partner was utilised to create the video documentary which has been completed to date and is scheduled to be launched.
112. Significant progress has also been made with activity 3.2.3 Develop Industry Education System to Build Capacity. There were numerous trips to bring an educational awareness to the community and training was provided for the Acklins Islanders cooperative society. A temporary nursery (20ft x 20ft) was established on the island to teach different methods to propagate the seedlings (air layering, cutting seeds) and 23 persons from the cooperative society were trained on how to propagate with seeds and cuttings. Furthermore, in November 2020, training on the extraction of the Cascarilla oil took place and this involved the establishment of a mini distillation plant and education on the process of steam distillation.
113. An application for a land grant seeking 100 acres of land for the establishment of a formalized plantation was submitted to the office of the Prime Minister. This activity was significantly delayed as it was dependent on receiving the necessary approvals. The design and layout of the plantation are currently being formulated.
114. Oil samples taken from the resource assessment activity were sent for analysis to the University of the West Indies and is expected to provide insight into its characteristics. This characterization will be used to influence marketing strategies and specific market targets. Plans are being made for the initial processing for Cascarilla oil on Acklins in conjunction with Bahamas Development Bank (BDB). The socio-economic survey was conducted in Acklins during October and November 2020 with a focus on the on gender, age and economic status of the residents of Acklins better understand the long-term economic opportunities associated with the cascarilla cultivation on Acklins.
115. Despite the initial delay in progress with regards to component 3, as well as the limitations associated with COVID-19, there has been notable progress with respect to Output 3.2. However, the current restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic may hinder continued progress and the achievement of the end term targets within the specified timeframe.
116. There has been a similar level of progress with Output 3.1 Pilot Model Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palms. The resource assessment for Andros began in January 2020 and for Grand Bahama in

December 2020 and is approaching completion. The fieldwork has been completed and the report is being formulated as one of the project deliverables. In terms of developing industry education awareness for palm cultivation and as well as the promotion of sustainable harvesting of silver top & cabbage palm, meetings were held with the communities whereby the project was introduced and sustainable harvesting methods relayed to them. The mini documentary was also developed in January showing sustainable harvesting techniques of Silver Top and a business training meeting via zoom was hosted for the Andros Association.



Figure 5: Public Engagement Activity- Andros Artisan Association, Red Bays (Source: Creative Nassau)

117. Similarly, to other project components, the rest of the project activities under output 3.1 have been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. Limited work was done on the promotion of the indigenous craft trade and the establishment of the plantation for the silver top palms is yet to be achieved. Despite the progress made since the project implementation, the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic may result in further delay in the achievement of the end term targets for Output 3.1 within the current specified project timeframe.

Summary of Outputs

Table 7: Summary of Available Outputs at Mid Term Review

OUTPUTS		SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/EVIDENCE	DELIVERY OF MID-TERM TARGET
COMPONENT 1			
Output 1.1.1	Assessment and monitoring system (GIS); database of forestry lands with biodiversity overlay, inc mangroves.	-Workplan was developed and the datasets from all available sources have been collected and collated as per the Midterm target for this output. -Tracking of Carbon Sequestration is unlikely to be completed within the project's timeframe and some reformulation End of Project targets may be necessary for this output.	<i>Partially delivered</i>
Output 1.1.2	Development of Land-Use Plans for 2 islands which integrates biodiversity, ecosystem services and forestry at the landscape level	-Draft land use plans for Andros and New Providence have been produced and submitted for approval and continued development, thereby meeting the Midterm Target specified in the results framework. -Extensive review of materials such as National Planning and Development Policies for The Bahamas and stakeholder engagement has been initiated in Andros.	<i>Delivered</i>
Output 1.2.1	Tailored tools, methodologies, and training for integration of biodiversity into forest management/ land use management	Policy reports providing tools and policy strategies for the integration of BD into SLM/SFM for New Providence and Andros have been written for and discussed with several stakeholders in Andros and their feedback has been incorporated	<i>Delivered</i>
Output 1.2.2	Awareness building modules -benefits of sustainable land use and forest management.	- A framework for capacity building and awareness has been developed. -There have been specific public awareness strategies developed by each project partner for the respective component e.g. Forestry awareness week, Infomercials and documentaries have also been created	<i>Delivered</i>
Output 2.1	Establishment of National Forestry Estate inclusive of Conservation & Protected Forests	The boundaries for the National Forestry Estate have been drafted and are awaiting verification from the Department of Lands & Surveys	<i>Delivered</i>
Output 2.2	Community co-management of 2 Conservation forests (representing 15% of Conservation Forests)	The National Forest Plan as per Forest Act 2010 is under review by the Forestry Unit and nearing completion	<i>Partially Delivered</i>
Output 2.3	Restoration of Andros Davis Creek Mangrove system (50 ha) with CO2 savings up to 14,563 tCO2 eq	A Draft Plan for the implementation of the activities within Output 2.3 by a consultant for review. The lack of progress with respect to Output 2.3 is attributed to delays caused by Hurricane Dorian and the COVID-19 pandemic	<i>Not delivered</i>
Output 3.1	Pilot Model Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palms	- The resource assessment for Andros is approaching completion. -The fieldwork has been completed - Meetings were held with the communities and mini documentary was also developed -A business training meeting via zoom was hosted for the Andros Association. -The rest of the project activities under output 3.1 have been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions.	<i>Partially Delivered</i>
Output 3.2	Pilot Model Sustainable Cascarilla Cultivation and Processing	-The preliminary resource assessment was done - Town meeting were held in Acklins and Crooked Island in 2020 to raise awareness and promote the sustainable harvesting of cascarilla. - Educational awareness to the community and training was provided for the Acklins Islanders cooperative society - The socio-economic survey was conducted in Acklins	<i>Delivered</i>

118. Table 7 shows a summary table of the project outputs and the status of the delivery of the Midterm targets/Milestones. Out of the 9 outputs, five (5) of the midterm targets were fully delivered, three (3) were partially delivered and one (1) was undelivered. Thus, 56% of the planned midterm targets were

fully delivered. The delivery of the most important outputs to achieve outcomes, however, have met their midterm targets. Despite the delays in project implementation, the available deliverables are of good quality and the partially delivered outputs and midterm targets are on route to completion.

Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)

5.2.3 Achievement of Project Outcomes

119. This section aims to evaluate the extent to which the anticipated outcomes of the project are likely to be achieved, thus contributing to the intermediate states identified in the TOC above and ultimately to the project's intended impact. The progress of the outputs discussed above, together with the discussion and logic of the TOC at Review, form the framework upon which this assessment of achievement of direct outcomes is based.

Outcome 1.1 - Enhanced enabling environment in support of SLM and SFM with integration of Biodiversity into land use planning.

120. Based on the discussions presented in the revised ToC, the achievement of Outcome 1.1 is dependent on Outputs 1.1.1 and Output 1.1.2. Draft land use plans for Andros and New Providence have been produced and submitted for approval and continued development which is one of the deliverables at the midterm point. The acceptance of the land use plans by the government, however, is beyond the realm of control of the project as it is the role of the government to put in place and legalize the policy and the project cannot guarantee that the policies will be created by the government. This may affect the achievement of this particular outcome.
121. There has been progress in the establishment of the Forestry Monitoring System. The challenge with the delivering this output lies with ground truthing and verification of boundaries so that they can become legal. This is a major undertaking that requires a lot of manpower and resources which may not be feasible within the project timeframe and current restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. With regards to the tracking of Carbon Sequestration aspect of Output 1.1.1, however, it has been discovered that those rates are established over a longer period of data collection. This is unlikely to be completed within the project's timeframe and some reformulation of the End of Project targets may be necessary for this output in order to achieve Outcome 1.1. As mentioned in the ToC discussion, Output 1.1.1 is used as the input for Output 2.1 and subsequently to achieve both Outcome 1.1 and Outcome 2.

Outcome 1.2 - Increased targeted public awareness of the importance and benefits of sustainably managing forest & mangrove biodiversity, ecosystems services and sustainable land management

122. Policy reports providing tools and policy strategies for the integration of BD into SLM/SFM for New Providence and Andros have been written and these the policies, tools and methodologies for Andros have been discussed with several stakeholders in Andros. The challenge with the achievement of this outcome is conducting community engagement, awareness and education under the current COVID-19 restrictions. Alternative communication strategies can be developed to engage the public.

Outcome 2. Improved management effectiveness of existing and new Forest Reserves

123. Outcome 2 is achieved through the delivery of Outputs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 as discussed in the ToC. The boundaries for the National Forestry Estate have been drafted and are awaiting verification which requires the necessary fieldwork. Given the current work and travel restrictions, this output may be delayed.
124. The gazettelement of the National Forest Estate and National Forest Plan is a legal mandate that requires approval from cabinet and is dependent on processes beyond the scope of the project. Given that the project is nearing the terminal completion date, the gazettelement of the National Forest Estate and target forest areas may not be completed within the current project timeframe and some readjustment of the end term targets or the project timeframe may be necessary.
125. The draft plan for the implementation of the Restoration of the Davis Creek Mangrove System has been made. Given, the current work and travel restrictions and the nature of the fieldwork activities associated with the activities under this Output, there may be significant delays with the delivery of this particular output and achievement of the overall outcome.

Outcome 3 - Effective provisioning of forest ecosystems underpinned by strengthened livelihoods people dependent on use of forest resources - increased use of sustainable land, agroforestry and forestry management practices among coastal communities.

126. There has been significant progress in the implementation of activities under Outputs 3.1 and 3.1 which directly lead to the achievement of Outcome 3. There has been progress in the areas of resource assessments, sample collection, the development of educational materials, and the promotion of sustainable livelihood management for both pilot models. The biggest challenge, based on stakeholder consultations, is the lack of technical capacity and manpower as well as the logistics of travelling to the different islands which is exacerbated by the COVID-19 restrictions.
127. Data collection, fieldwork and community engagement are still ongoing and the current restrictions may result in the outcome not being achieved in the current specified project timeframe. Furthermore, it was found that Silver Top palms are rarely harvested from Grand Bahama and that a substantial amount of the palms on the island are established on privately owned lands, based on the stakeholder interviews and the information within the PIRs. Despite these issues, there seems to be a strong interest at the community level which serves as a driver for the achievement of Outcome 3.
128. The direct outcomes that are the most important to attain intermediate states, mainly being outcomes 1.1, 2 and 3 have been partially achieved. With the exception of the assumption that a natural disaster will not significantly impact the project, most of the assumptions from project output to direct outcomes have held at this midpoint of the project implementation. The drivers from outputs to outcomes, being the institutional and technical capacity building and the local community participation, have assisted in the partial achievement of some of the project outcomes.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.2.4 *Likelihood of Impact*

129. The likelihood of the intended positive impacts of the project becoming a reality was assessed based on the articulation of longer-term effects in the reconstructed Theory of Change at Review - i.e. from direct outcomes to intermediate states to impact. For this section, the Likelihood of Impact was assessed using the criteria from the 'Likelihood of Impact' GEF MTR tool. The approach follows the project outcomes to the impacts and takes into account the assumptions and drivers identified in the revised ToC. This section also attempts to identify any unintended negative effects brought about by the intervention.
130. At the time of the Midterm Review, none of the outcomes have been entirely achieved. However, the outcomes that are the most important to attain intermediate states (i.e. outcomes 1.1, 2 and 3) were partially achieved. Furthermore, the drivers support transition from outputs to outcomes but drivers from intermediate states to impacts were not entirely in place. Outcome 1.1 leads to the intermediate state where there are 2 sub national plans that incorporate SLM and SFM and biodiversity values which lead to the integration of biodiversity values, ecosystem services values and precepts of SFM and land-use into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas. In order to achieve the aforementioned impact, there is the assumption that the land use plans are accepted by the Government and the decision makers want progressive and sustainable development of the communities. Based on interviews with stakeholders at all levels, there is evidence to suggest that there is some level of governmental awareness and interest to attain this overall impact.
131. Outcome 2 leads to the Establishment of Forestry estate and associated management plans as the intermediate state and the expansion and improved management of the forest and mangrove sector in the Bahamas as the long-term impact. Once the National Forestry Estate is approved and gazetted and there has been some delivery of Output 2.3, the achievement of this long impact is likely to occur, provided that there is continued interest and development after the project's closure.
132. The achievement of Outcome 3 results in SLM and SFM practiced by local communities and sustainable practices in forest communities as intermediate states. The intended impact is the development of sustainable livelihoods and sustainable practices at the community level. While Outcome 3 has only been partially realized, the community interest and the need for sustainable sources of income at the community level is a driving force that supports the intended impact. There has been a strong level of community interest, especially in component 3 and this can support the achievement of this overall impact.
133. The extent to which the project is playing a catalytic role is seen mostly in Component three where the project activities resulted in the establishment of Acklins & Crooked Island Cooperatives as well as Andros Artisan Association. At the time of the midterm review, there has been no scaling up or replication but the monitoring of the project components will document methodologies, limitations and successes and this will ensure replication at the local, regional and international levels.
134. No negative unexpected impacts at the time of the Midterm Review have been identified. The project was designed to have positive environmental, economic and social impacts through the establishment of the national forestry estate, the creation of sustainable conservation forest areas, promotion of sustainable harvesting methods and livelihoods at the community level.

Rating: Moderately Likely (ML)

Overall Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.3 C. Financial Management

5.3.1 Adherence to UNEP's Policies and Procedures

135. At the project's inception, funding was deemed to be adequate with financial contributions being made from both the GEF grant funding as well as from co-financing sources. The budget at project design detailed the allocations and annual expected expenditure under each project component and further indicated the source of the funding as seen in Section 3.6 (i.e. GEF grant funding or Co- financing source)
136. The project received its first GEF contribution in 2016 amounting to \$416,332.00. The responsibility of managing the project budget was overseen by the NPC. This role however, incurred various turnover in personnel with the initial project coordinator resigning early in the project's timeline. The position was passed on to another individual in the interim, but conflicts arose as it pertained to executing their duties as an employee of the DEPP and their duties associated with the BPI project including project reporting.
137. Non- compliance in financial reporting due to a lack of technical resources allocated to the project resulted in a delay in the release of funding from the GEF grant. The PIRs for 2017 and 2018 indicate that no financial reporting was undertaken for these periods. Project reporting challenges were rectified with the recruitment of a dedicated NPC in 2019 and another disbursement of \$464,038.00 was received.

Table 8: Summary of Disbursements and Expenditure Ratios for the GEF Grant Funding.

	DISBURSEMENTS FROM GEF GRANT FUNDING	PLANNED ANNUAL EXPENDITURE FROM GEF GRANT FUNDING AT PROJECT INCEPTION	ACTUAL ANNUAL EXPENDITURE FROM GEF GRANT FUNDING	EXPENDITURE RATIO (ACTUAL/PLANNED)
2016	\$416,332.00	\$841,664.00	\$339,609.00	40.3
2017		\$950,373.00	\$31,469.00	3.3
2018		\$683,378.00	\$25,513.00	3.7
2019	\$464,038.00	\$378,010.00	\$208,893.00	55.3
2020		\$1,301,608.96 ²	\$235,285.22 ³	18.1
2021	\$642,653.00	-	-	-

² Planned budget for 2020 after the project received an extension in time.

³ Expenditure taken from Q4 Quarterly Expenditure report as the Audit Report for 2020 is still in progress.

138. The total expenditure from the GEF grant up to December 2020 is seen to be \$840,769.22. Delays in implementation in the project's early years have resulted in a low ratio of expenditure. For the first year, the expenditure ratio was 40.3 There was a significant decrease in the second and third year to 3.3 and 3.7 respectively.
139. In 2019, many of the issues that were creating constraints in the project's implementation were resolved and spending on project activities increased. The project received an extension in time in 2019 and the expected date for financial closure was moved from the 31st December 2020 to the 30th December 2022 with no additional cost to the project's budget being reflected in the financial documents. The planned budget for 2020 was significantly larger than the previous years and exceeded the unspent balance of the disbursed funds at that point in time. The project had a significant increase in technical capacity but still had a relatively low expenditure ratio for 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic would have caused delays in completing project activities for the year.
140. By the end of 2020, there was a significant drawdown in project resources and the further disbursement of funds from the GEF grant would have required the submittal of an audited report for the previous year which was delayed. This resulted in a complete drawdown in budget for the first few months of 2021. Several project partners were able to allow some level of continuity with the project activities by dipping out of their personal budgets for funding. Reimbursements were then applied for when disbursements from GEF were approved. In May 2021, the project received its third disbursement from the GEF amounting to \$642,653.00. To date, approximately 53% or \$1,523,023.00 of the total GEF grant funding for the project has been disbursed.
141. Co-financing commitments amounting to \$3,926,339.44 have been made as of December 2020 according to the budget plans that were made available to the reviewer. This accounts for approximately 51% of the total co-financing commitments that were allocated to the project budget at project implementation. Prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many government agencies who had pledged their commitment to co-financing, have undergone budget cuts. This has resulted in some issues when it come to the cash co- financing. The in- kind payments have been reported by the NPC to be sufficient and are being met.
142. The project has been delayed in spending as well as in receiving disbursements which is owed to the many challenges that the project has faced. Overall, the project has in place several mechanisms that contribute to the proper management of the financials. The annual budget plans are broken into various expenditure items including Project Personnel, Subcontract Component, Training Component, Equipment and Premises Component and Miscellaneous Component. The plans give a detailed breakdown of the actual budget envisioned for the year as well as shows any revisions that may have taken place due to expenditure variations. At the time of the MTR, there was no evidence however to show that the budget allocations for each project component was being tracked and it is thus difficult to determine the amount of spending under the various project components.

Rating for Adherence to UNEP's Policies and Procedures: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.3.2 Completeness of Project Financial Information

143. The project's overall financial management plan included the preparation of annual budget plans, revised budget plan, quarterly expenditure reports and audited financial statements.
144. Audited Financial statements for 2017, 2018 and 2019 were completed. At the time of the Mid- Term Review, the statement for 2020 was being prepared. The statements for 2017 and 2018 were conducted in accordance with the IFRS and the ISA and did not indicate the presence of any financial issues. The statements on income and expenditure presented the recorded yearly expenditure fairly. The statement for 2019 was conducted in accordance with the IPSAS and the ISA. The statement reflected a few minor discrepancies including an overpayment of an audit fee by \$500.00 for 2018 and an additional bank charge on the DEPP's account in 2019 that was not reflected in the quarterly expenditure report to the UNEP. Both these issues were sorted and solved moving forward.
145. Quarterly expenditure reports for three quarters of 2020 were seen and verified (Q1, Q2, Q4) by the reviewer. These reports provided information on the approved budget, the expenditure incurred under both the GEF funds and Co-financing funds as well as unspent balances. The first quarter expenditure report for 2021 has been populated but is awaiting approval by the finance management team at the UNEP before the report is accepted and funding released. Evidence of co-financing payments, both cash and in-kind have been verified for all three components.
146. Delays in the release of payments in the past can be attributed to the untimely submittal of financial reports as well as to discrepancies in the financial information submitted to the Anubis platform and the submitted audited reports which would have been tedious and time consuming to resolve. It should be noted that there is currently still an issue with the timely submittal of the reports which would affect disbursements of funds but the NPC as well as project partners have indicated that there is an increased effort to produce the reports in a timely manner.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.3.3 Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

147. The financial management of the GEF funding resources is performed in strict collaboration between the executing agency and the implementation agency. The NPC is responsible for allocating money to the various project components and preparing and submitting all financial reports including annual budgets, quarterly expenditure reports and financial audit reports. Interviews held with the TM and PMA have indicated that these reports are reviewed when received and then sent to the UNEP headquarters for further processing and approval of cash releases from the GEF funds.
148. The project review verified that there was adequate communication between the NPC at the executing agency and the TM and PMA representing the implementation agency. Both parties involved were aware of the project financials. Financial reports are prepared by the NPC and then reviewed by the TM and PMA who facilitates the requests for cash advances.
149. The NPC has displayed a great deal of aptitude since his commencement on the project in 2019. Prior

to this, there was no dedicated personnel filling the role of NPC at the DEPP which resulted in a backlog of project/ financial reporting. There is evidence to suggest that the quality and timeliness of reports have increased. The NPC has since prepared 3 quarterly expenditure reports and 2 annual budget plans to date that can be verified by the evaluator.

Rating: Satisfactory (S)

Overall Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory (S)

5.4 D. Efficiency

150. The evaluation of the efficiency of the project implementation assesses the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This includes the extent to which the project extensions were justified or could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions.
151. Based on the project documents, the project was initially approved for 48 months in September 2015 with the first disbursement in February 2016. The project had experienced significant delays in 2017 and 2018 with little to no activities taking place and this was attributed to a number of issues from the beginning of project implementation ranging from a turnover in staff/ administrative changes, lack of disbursement of funds due to non-compliance with technical and financial reporting to the lack of technical and institutional capacity, leading to the relaunch and extension of the project in June 2019. The project has been extended by 38 months. This extension has been made necessary in order for the project to garner the time required to achieve the outputs and outcomes.
152. Since the project's extension, there has been numerous adaptive management measures to ensure that results are achieved. A dedicated NPC was assigned to the project and additional personnel have been brought on board to assist project partners and build the institutional capacity of the agencies. This included the hiring of an Urban Planner at the DPP and a Natural Resource Consultant at the Forestry Unit. There was also a designated focal point for the BAIC, in charge of component 3 of the BPI project.
153. The increase in technical capacity has ensured that better project reporting is being undertaken. The frequency of PSC meetings has been increased and full participation by all focal points are ensured. There is evidence of 8 PSC meetings being held since 2019. These meetings allow for project progress to be tracked and to ensure that the efficient planning of tasks and that deadlines that are set for deliverables are met.
154. Though the DEPP attempted to resolve the prior issues on the project that were hindering progress, recent issues that were unforeseen such as the Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and the current COVID-19 pandemic created further delays in project activities and minimal progress was achieved in 2019 and 2020. With Hurricane Dorian and the severe impact to Abaco and Grand Bahama, there were changes to project's budget and priorities were redirected. Focus was shifted to executing the other project

activities whilst rehabilitation efforts were being carried out on these islands.

155. With COVID-19 and the lockdown, there were further delays. Apart from the country being placed under lockdown where non-essential workers were not allowed to go to work, many of the project activities were hindered. Travelling to the various islands to carry out project activities became even more difficult. Planned community meetings and stakeholder training and workshops had to be reworked and undertaken virtually. The project management team is in the process of updating their workplans particularly to adjust for Covid- 19 protocols which was not foreseen to last for this lengthy duration.
156. The disbursement of funds has been slow for this project, owing to the prior issues with non-compliance in project reporting due to a lack in technical capacity. Over the first 48 months of the project's implementation, only 21% of the GEF grant funding budget and 36% of the co- financing budget was utilized. The project extension did not result in an increase in the overall project budget but rather the unspent balances in the budget were redistributed to ensure project activities are undertaken.
157. For 2019 and 2020, the expenditure ratios were still considerably low (55.3 and 18.1 respectively). The project has a technical completion date scheduled for November 2021 but given that progress on many of the activities are yet to be completed, an additional extension in time may be required. The current delay in project activities is a result of the aftereffects of Hurricane Dorian as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. These represent circumstances that are beyond the control of the project management and an extension in time for this case would be justified.

Overall Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)

5.5 E. Monitoring and Reporting

5.5.1 Monitoring of Project Implementation

158. Since the project's inception, a detailed results framework was provided in the ProDoc. The framework gave the Indicators, Baseline, Mid-Term targets and End of Project targets for each outcome and output. Possible sources of verification were also noted and risks and assumptions were mentioned in the results framework. These verification sources include producing gender disaggregated surveys and technical reports. There is evidence to suggest that baseline surveys were undertaken prior to project implementation as the frameworks gives the baseline for each output and outcome.
159. Some of the indicators listed in the framework are not very specific and would be difficult to verify, measure and monitor. The Mid Term and End Term target indicators for Outputs 1.1, 2.2 and 2.3 in particular have been noted to not be achievable within the project's time frame and should be adjusted to reflect a more reasonable target. The midterm target indicators for Outputs 3.1 and 3.2 were not very specific and it was unclear if the midterm target consisted of a particular deliverable. Additionally, the BPI project specifically seeks to achieve several GEF core indicator targets that relate directly to the project's focal areas. The initial results framework has listed the mid- term and end of project targets for each indicator. The GEF core indicators for the project is measured and updated using the GEF tracking tools. However, at the time of the mid- term review, the updated GEF tracking tools were not

available.

160. Methodologies outlining the data collection process for monitoring are not explicitly stated, however a costed monitoring and evaluation plan outlined in the ProDoc gives the frequency of data collection as well as the personnel responsible for the various monitoring activities. Project Steering Committee meetings are held regularly with project partners to determine accurately, the progress of the project's implementation. This progress is captured in the PIR reports and a percentage is presented based on the progress of implementation towards the delivery of outputs.
161. Additionally, Output 4.1 of the project relays directly to Monitoring and Evaluation and lists 6 specific activities that contribute to the project's monitoring system. All 6 of these activities saw no progress in 2017 and 2018 and minimal progress in 2019 with the finalization and dissemination of the project monitoring and evaluation framework (Activity 4.1.1), the establishment of a reporting plan (Activity 4.1.3) and the submittal of project and financial reports to GEF (Activity 4.1.4). As of June 2020, there has been a significant increase in the progress of these activities and Activity 4.1.2- Implement participatory Monitoring and Evaluation plan, tools, and methods with targeted communities, including necessary training has been fully completed.
162. The project has been late in delivering its Mid- Term Review which is being conducted way past the initial deadline for project completion. The initially planned date for the review was scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2018 and albeit there was very little progress on project activities prior to the extension of time and amendments to project staffing in 2019, conducting the Mid Term Review at the formerly scheduled date would have proven beneficial in identifying and implementing the corrective actions that were needed to ensure the project achieves it outcomes and outputs in a timelier manner.
163. The ProDoc gives a breakdown of the costed monitoring and evaluation plan however, it should be noted that there are no specific line items in the annual budget plans that are dedicated to project monitoring specifically. Line items exists for Project reporting, but it was unclear as to whether or not this included the costs to undertake the Mid Term Review and the Terminal Evaluation and there exists no other line items to address these costs.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.5.2 Project Reporting

164. The project has attempted to put in place several measures to facilitate the monitoring of project implementation including PIR reports, Half Year reports and PSC meetings. Financial monitoring is undertaken using Quarterly expenditure reports. In the past, the project has had many delays that can be attributed to a non- compliance of project reporting. There have been delays in the disbursements of funds from the GEF due to the late submittal of the relevant financial reports. The timely submittal of project reports is still an ongoing issue but there has however, been a significant improvement in project reporting since 2019 with the hiring of the dedicated NPC. There is now frequent communication with project focal points to obtain the data required to formulate the reports which are submitted to the TM for review and comments after they are prepared. This feedback is then relayed to

all project partners during PSC meetings.

165. PIR's for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 were available. The progress of the implementation of the various activities were noted and reflected as a percentage along with justification for the progress rating and an expected completion date. This assisted in gauging the rate at which the progress was being executed as well as the activities that require additional resources to move forward. Two HYPR was seen for the period July to December of 2018 and 2020. Financial reports were also made available (refer to Section?? For more details). Since the project received its extension in time in 2019, there have been evidence of eight (8) PSC meetings being held. There have been no evidence to suggest the formal reporting of co- finance commitments disaggregated by component or source but there is an overall breakdown that is available in the annual (and revised) budget plans and receipts and invoices for several months from agencies who have pledged co-financing (both cash and in-kind) have been seen by the evaluator.

Rating: Satisfactory (S)

Overall Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory (S)

5.6 F. Sustainability

166. This section assesses the long-term maintenance of the project outcomes and consequent impacts and identification of the key conditions or factors that can possibly undermine or contribute to the continuation of benefits at the outcome level. The assessment considers:
- i. The level of ownership, interest and commitment from the governmental level to the community level – Socio-political Sustainability.
 - ii. The extent to which the project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits to be sustained – Financial Sustainability.
 - iii. The extent to which the sustainability of the project outcomes is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance.

		DEPENDENCY					
DEPENDENCY	HIGH	HU	HU	U	MU	MS	S
	MODERATE	HU	U	MU	MS	S	HS
	LOW	U	MU	MS	S	HS	HS
	NONE						HS
		NONE	0-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75-100%	100%
		MITIGATION					

Figure 6: Sustainability Dependency Mitigation Matrix.

167. The Sustainability of the project outcomes are rated using the dependency-mitigation matrix in Figure 6 above. The vertical axis shows the level of dependency to the sustainability on a scale from low to high. The horizontal axis shows the degree of mitigation measures put in place to ensure sustainability, on a scale from None to 100%. This matrix is used to guide the rating of the criteria of Sustainability.

5.6.1 Socio-political Sustainability

168. The continuation and further development of project direct outcomes are highly dependent on political will and social ownership. Stakeholder consultations have indicated that there is generally a strong level of ownership, interest and commitment by government and at the community level as well. The project and all its components are designed with providing positive environmental, economic and social impacts in mind and as such, there is a general agreement that the project objectives and outcomes are beneficial to The Bahamas. The project has, however, been affected by changes in political administrations in the past and there is the underlying risk that a new political administration may not have the same appreciation for the sustainable progressive development achieved through the project outcomes.

169. The stakeholder perception of the project is crucial in ensuring the continued participation and investment into the project and thus its sustainability. The willingness of the community to participate in training and project activities is a driver that encourages the achievement of the project outcomes. This is especially important for component 3 of the project and the development of models for sustainable livelihoods and practices which relies heavily on the participation and co-operation of the community members.

170. Stakeholder interviews have elucidated that there is the general consensus that there has not been sufficient public awareness and dissemination of information regarding the project objectives as well as updates on the project. The current stakeholder perception of the project is that the project is still very

“low key” and the objectives and benefits of the project is not effectively conveyed.

171. There has been public awareness, education and capacity building within local communities and local technical experts in the areas of sustainable forestry management as well as training and education on sustainable livelihoods and practices but there is room for improvement with regards to public awareness on the public objectives and new methods and channels of communication must be developed to adapt to the current COVID-19 management protocols. This is vital to ensure continued interest even after project closure.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.6.2 Financial Sustainability

172. Some of the project outcomes (1.1, 1.2, 2) do not explicitly require further direct financial inputs to maintain them. Outcome 3 involving the sustainable livelihoods, however, is dependent on future funding for the benefits to be sustained. There is still significant development of the Cascarilla and Silver Palm industry that is necessary after project closure to ensure the achievement of the intended long-term impacts.
173. Discussions and plans are being made to begin initial processing for Cascarilla oil on the island of Acklins in conjunction with Bahamas Development Bank (BDB) and marketing plans are being developed to ensure the successful promotion of the sustainable products. The project is securing wider financial support and co-financing from private sector engagement to ensure that the long-term benefits from the pilot project are actualized. There has been no evidence of marketing plans for the Silver Top Palms and this needs to be developed to ensure the financial sustainability of this aspect of Component 3.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.6.3 Institutional Sustainability

174. The project was designed to build upon existing advancements in the land-use planning, forestry sector and sustainable livelihoods and improve the existing institutional and technical capacity. Component 1 essentially builds upon The Planning and Subdivisions Act 2010 in an effort to integrate concepts of biodiversity values and ecosystem services values into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas. Component 2 involves the improved management of the Forestry sector and builds upon the Forestry Act 2010 and Regulations through the establishment of the National Forestry Estate. As such, the project outcomes have a high dependency on institutional support.
175. The project design encouraged institutional and technical capacity building and thus the institutional sustainability is ensured through:
 - i. The education and technical capacity building and training within local communities and local

technical experts in each of the respective project components.

- ii. The gazettement of the National Forestry Estate and associated management plans.
- iii. The development of tools, training and methodologies,
- iv. The implementation of the various co-operative groups such as the Acklins & Crooked Island Cooperatives and the Andros Association.
- v. The development and use of open-source framework and forestry monitoring system for accessibility to the national forestry estate and land-use plans and maps for the relevant departments and greater community.
- vi. The integrative approach and cohesiveness between government agencies as it relates to the execution of project activities.

Rating: Moderately Likely (ML)

Overall Rating for Sustainability: Moderately Likely (ML)

5.7 G. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

5.7.1 Preparation and Readiness

176. The project received approval from the GEF on the 8th September 2015 and from the UNEP on the 17th November, 2015. The actual start date of the project however was on the 23rd February 2016 which was when the project received its first disbursement from the GEF grant fund. There is evidence of an Inception workshop being held in February 2016 as well as local town meetings with residents to discuss the project goals and objectives.
177. An initial assessment of the Project Design Quality (PDQ) was performed at the inception stage of the midterm review to assess the initial project design and implementation. Overall, the Project Design was rated 'Highly Satisfactory' in terms of completeness and quality of content. There were no obvious or substantial weakness in the project's design. The ProDoc gave a clear understanding of the situational context, problem analysis and identification of stakeholders within the project document. It included a detailed results framework, a costed monitoring and evaluation plan as well as institutional and implementation arrangements at the time of inception. A work plan was included but was not costed.
178. The capacity and expertise of partners were identified in the stakeholder analysis section of the ProDoc. With SIDs in general, there is a general deficit in technical capacity when it comes to government agencies which affects projects like these. The project acknowledged the lack of technical and institutional capacity and was designed to address and improve the capacity of the local experts and

communities.

179. The project has faced many challenges during its implementation but there is sufficient evidence to indicate that ample effort was given to ensure the project was ready for execution during the mobilization period.

Rating: Satisfactory (S)

5.7.2 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

180. The project is implemented by the UNEP and executed by the DEPP. The task manager who is designated on behalf of the UNEP is responsible for assisting the executing agency in organizing and developing the concept at the projects inception and assisting in obtaining the funds required for the project during implementation. The project is executed by the DEPP who designates an NPC. The NPC has oversight over all project activities and is directly responsible for all financial and project reporting.
181. The project has seen many turn-over in staffs at the various agencies since its inception inclusive of changes in respect to the role of the task manager assigned to the project. Early on the project's lifetime, there was a major change in the government due to an election and all Ministries involved underwent changes at the directorship level. Changes in staff were also unavoidable and many key positions including that of the NPC saw several changes. This has been attributed as one of the major causes for delays in implementation as the process of handing over was poorly conducted which made it difficult for new personnel to familiarize themselves with the project and carry out their duties. There has been some consistency in staffing since 2019 as additional effort was placed on hiring dedicated staff and consultants to perform duties specific to the BPI project.
182. The initial project documents indicated the stakeholder participation and level of involvement of each as it pertained to the execution of each of the project components. Lead stakeholders which include the DEPP, the DPP and the FU were responsible for the overall delivery and oversight of the project components. Co-executing stakeholders that were key for the delivery of activities were also listed but several of these entities have not been active on the project since its inception. All of the participatory stakeholders listed in the ProDoc are no longer involved in the project.
183. Since the project received an extension in time in 2019, communication with lead stakeholders (project focal points) which was disconnected prior, was re- established. Issues that were hindering the progress of the project were tended too and rectified. The staff at key executing stakeholder agencies was supplemented with the addition of consultants who were capable of augmenting the technical capacity of the agency to better carry out activities under the BPI project.
184. The NPC and the executing agencies have displayed satisfactory adaptive management strategies in terms of dealing with external challenges and delays such as Hurricane Dorian and the COVID-19 pandemic which is beyond the control of the project management. Monthly PSC meeting are now held with the executing stakeholders that enable project activities to be better coordinated. The reviewer has seen meeting minutes for each of these PSC meetings. The Project reporting has also improved considerably among the stakeholders involved in carrying out project activities.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.7.3 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

185. The ProDoc provided a detailed list of stakeholders and their level of support and contribution to the project. The initial list included a wide range of stakeholders that represented government ministries, statutory bodies, non- governmental organizations and community-based organizations. This stakeholder listing has not been maintained during the project implementation and many stakeholders who had initially pledged support to the project have since left. Several had to be re-engaged after the restart and extension of the project in 2019.
186. There has now been an increased effort to maintain stakeholder participation on the project and there is evidence to suggest that there is an increased cohesiveness and cooperation between government agencies and executing stakeholders responsible for project implementation. PSC meetings are conducted monthly to engage executing stakeholders and ensure continuous progress is being made on the project.
187. Component 3 is heavily reliant on the participation of NGO's such as Creative Nassau and CBO's. There has been significant effort towards community engagement in Andros and Acklins with respect to the pilot models involving the Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palm and Sustainable Cascarilla Cultivation and Processing. The Andros Artisan Association was formed with persons from Red Bays as well as persons from Central Andros and the Acklins Islanders Cooperative Society was also established. There is a strong interest and ownership at the community level for the project which ensures adequate stakeholder participation. There is also strong effort being made to ensure equitable gender participation and representation at public engagement activities and training.
188. While there have been strong efforts towards public engagement, there is still room for improvement. It is generally expressed by stakeholders, especially those at the community level, that there is not sufficient public awareness and dissemination of information and updates on the project. Furthermore, with the COVID-19 pandemic, stakeholder interaction and engagement has become difficult and there is a need for the development of new methods of community engagement to adapt to the current situation.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.7.4 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

189. This section assesses the extent to which the project has included gender considerations and analysis at the design stage, identified actions and applied adaptive management measures to ensure that Gender Equity and Human rights are taken into account. The activities under Component 3 of the project have been designed specifically to ensure equitable gender participation and benefits. This includes surveys with gender disaggregated data to provide insight into the possible gender inequalities in access to, and

control over the resources.

190. Component 3 of the project seeks to empower those at the community level who depend on the forest resources. The stakeholder interviews and PIRs have indicated that there was equal gender representation the community meetings as well as throughout the training sessions that were held and that the project makes a concerted effort to ensure that there is a balanced gender representation in the consultative processes so that there is equitable gender engagement in the livelihood opportunities.

Rating: Satisfactory (S)

5.7.5 Environmental and Social Safeguards

191. The project has been designed and is envisaged to have positive environmental, economic and social impacts. It aspires to ensure equitable gender participation and benefits. The project promotes mainstreaming of environmental considerations into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas through integrated land-use plans that integrate biodiversity and concepts of SLM and SFM (Component 1), the establishment of the National Forestry Estate and sustainable conservation forest areas (Component 2) and the development of models of sustainable livelihoods and practices (Component 3).
192. Component 3 in particular involves the implementation of two (2) pilot site projects that are geared towards providing socio-economic benefits through the commercialization of non-timber forest products. This component is highly dependent on the involvement of the community and has triggered the formation of the Acklins & Crooked Island Cooperatives and the Andros Association in Red Bays.
193. All three (3) components of the project have been designed to include project activities that encourage community participation as well as provide monitoring to project outputs and outcomes. Output 1.2.2 specifically aims to achieve greater public awareness through the achievement of various activities. Generating greater public awareness and encouraging community involvement is also captured in other project activities under outputs 2.2 and 2.3.
194. The initial project design completed the checklist for Environmental and Social Issues in accordance with UNEP policies and requirements.

Rating: Satisfactory (S)

5.7.6 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

195. Based on stakeholder consultation, the various ministries and agencies involved in the project have indefinitely expressed their interest and commitment to the project moving forward. The project is being executed by several project partners who represent the different ministries and departments of the Government of The Bahamas who support the initiatives of the BPI Project. The project partners are directly responsible for the carrying out of project activities (Table 3) and are essential in moving the

project outputs to direct outcomes.

196. The main project partners are also responsible for providing co- financing commitments both in-kind and cash, which accounts for approximately 73% of the total project budget. To date, the in-kind commitments are being met but financial constraints restrict the cash commitments in most cases.

Rating: Satisfactory (S)

5.7.7 Communication and Public Awareness

197. The project itself has faced many issues and many of the project partners have indicated that there was a gap in communication amongst the various agencies involved during the former years of the project (prior to 2019). There is evidence however to suggest that this issue has been rectified. With the project being granted an extension in time in 2019, communication lines with the executing project partners were re-established and concerted efforts have been made since to facilitate the frequent and efficient communication amongst stakeholders.
198. There have been specific public awareness strategies developed by each project partner for the respective component. An example of this is Forestry awareness week which is carried out by the Forestry Unit on an annual basis as part of co finance to raise awareness of SFM as well as infomercials and documentaries on sustainable harvesting methods have also been created and disseminated to promote awareness, learning and sharing of experiences.
199. Based on stakeholder consultations, however, the general perception of the project is that the project is still very “low key” and the objectives and benefits of the project are not effectively conveyed. There is not sufficient public awareness and dissemination of information and updates on the project. In the past, a lack of communication and cohesion between the various agencies resulted in delays in the project implementation. While there has been increasing efforts to maintain communication and engagement of the key stakeholders, as evident by the monthly PSC meetings, there is still room for improvement.
200. The COVID-19 restrictions make the public awareness strategies difficult to implement and as such. New methods of public engagement and awareness under COVID-19 restrictions and management protocols and new channels of communication for the dissemination of project information need to be developed.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross Cutting Issues: Satisfactory (S)

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

201. The UNEP/GEF Project “Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros) project was adequately designed and formulated to address the existing situational problems in The Bahamas and to build on the recent advances in land-use planning, the forestry sector and the development of sustainable livelihoods and practices.
202. The project had experienced significant delays since the beginning of project implementation and this was attributed to a number of issues ranging from a change in political administration (which resulted in a turnover in staff, administrative changes and subsequent loss of institutional knowledge), lack of disbursement of funds due to non-compliance with technical and financial reporting and the lack of technical and institutional capacity.
203. Since the project extension in 2019, there has been significant improvement in project management and progress towards the achievement of outcomes. This was facilitated by the hiring of a dedicated NPC and consultants to fill the gap in technical capacity required to complete project activities. There were also notable improvements in the communication and engagement of executing agencies through the monthly PSC meetings which encourage adaptive management of project activities and ensure project’s progress.
204. There has been strong effort towards the public engagement and awareness of the project objectives but there is room for improvement. The willingness of the community to participate in project activities function as a driver towards the achievement of project outcomes. One example of the catalytic role of the project is the establishment of the Acklins & Crooked Island Cooperatives as well as Andros Artisan Association. Given the current circumstances, new methods of public engagement need to be developed.
205. The recent issues such as the Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and the current COVID-19 pandemic, beyond the control of project management, further exacerbated the delay in project activities. Despite this, the majority of the outputs have delivered their midterm targets and the remaining outputs are on route to completion. The outcomes that are responsible for the achievement of intermediate states for the intended impacts have been partially achieved. The travel and work restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 management protocols have delayed the remaining fieldwork and public engagement activities. Given these circumstances, it is unlikely that the project will achieve its outcomes within the current specified timeframe and an extension in the technical completion date is necessary.
206. Using the “MTR Weightings for Ratings” Tool and the “MTR Criterion Rating Description Matrix” document. The project was given an Overall Rating of **Moderately Satisfactory**.

6.2 Summary of Findings

Table 9: Summary of Review Findings.

CRITERION	SUMMARY	RATING
B. Strategic Relevance	-	HS
<i>1. Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly consistent with the UNEP's overall mandate and was aligned with the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013 and Programme of Work (PoW) relating to Ecosystems Management. - The project spans over two UN Environment Medium-Term Strategies (2014-2017 and 2018-2021) and three Biennial Programme of Works (PoWs), i.e., 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. - The project is currently aligned with the MTS 2018-2021 through Sub-programme 3: Healthy and productive ecosystems: 	HS
<i>2. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aligned with Objectives 1 and 2 of the GEF-5 Strategy for Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM/REDD+) - Aligned with Objectives 1 and 2 of the focal area strategies of Biodiversity (BD) and Objective 3 of the focal area strategy of Land Degradation (LD) 	HS
<i>3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The objectives of the project are consistent with national plans and priorities involving the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of ecosystem resources. - The project is also consistent with numerous national plans and priority activities 	HS
<i>4. Complementarity with existing interventions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project was documented to have linkages and complementarity with various GEF and non-GEF interventions. - The linkages and benefits shared by previous interventions are adequately described but there was no mention of dialogue/engagement other recent, on-going or planned interventions. 	S
B. Effectiveness	-	MS
<i>1. Availability of outputs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Out of the 9 outputs, five (5) of the midterm targets were fully delivered, three (3) were partially delivered and one (1) was undelivered. Thus, 56% of the planned midterm targets were fully delivered. - The delivery of the most important outputs to achieve outcomes, however, have met their midterm targets. - Despite the delays in project implementation, the available deliverables are of good quality and the partially delivered outputs and midterm targets are on route to completion. 	MU

<p><i>2. Achievement of project outcomes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The direct outcomes that are the most important to attain intermediate states, mainly being outcomes 1.1, 2 and 3 have been partially achieved. - With the exception of the assumption that a natural disaster will not significantly impact the project, most of the assumptions from project output to direct outcomes have held at this midpoint of the project implementation. - The drivers from outputs to outcomes, being the institutional and technical capacity building and the local community participation, have assisted in the partial achievement of some of the project outcomes. 	<p>MS</p>
<p><i>3. Likelihood of impact</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the time of the Midterm Review, none of the outcomes have been entirely achieved. - However, the outcomes that are the most important to attain intermediate states (i.e. outcomes 1.1, 2 and 3) were partially achieved. - Furthermore, the drivers support transition from outputs to outcomes but drivers from intermediate states to impacts were not entirely in place. 	<p>ML</p>
<p>C. Financial Management</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>S</p>
<p><i>1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project received its first GEF contribution in 2016. - Non-compliance in financial reporting due to a lack of technical resources allocated to the project resulted in a delay in the release of funding from the GEF grant in the consequent years. - Releases were obtained in 2019 and in 2021. To date, approximately 53% of the total GEF grant funding for the project has been disbursed. - Delays in implementation in the project's early years have resulted in a low ratio of expenditure. - The project had a significant increase in technical capacity but still had a relatively low expenditure ratio for 2020. 	<p>MS</p>
<p><i>2. Completeness of project financial information</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project's overall financial management plan included the preparation of annual budget plans, revised budget plan, quarterly expenditure reports and audited financial statements. - Delays in the release of payments in the past can be attributed to the untimely submittal of financial reports as well as to discrepancies in the financial information submitted to the Anubis platform. - There is currently still an issue with the timely submittal of the reports which would affect disbursements of funds but the NPC as well as project partners have indicated that there is an increased effort to produce the reports in a timely manner. 	<p>MS</p>

3. Communication between finance and project management staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project review verified that there was adequate communication between the NPC at the executing agency and the TM and PMA representing the implementation agency 	S
D. Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project had experienced significant delays in 2017 and 2018 with little to no activities taking place and this was attributed to a number of issues from the beginning of project implementation - Since the project's extension, there has been numerous adaptive management measures to ensure that results are achieved. - The disbursement of funds has been slow for this project, owing to the prior issues with non-compliance in project reporting due to a lack in technical capacity. - The current delay in project activities is a result of the aftereffects of Hurricane Dorian as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. 	MU
E. Monitoring and Reporting		S
2. Monitoring of project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A detailed results framework provided in the ProDoc gave the Indicators, Baseline, Mid-Term targets and End of Project targets for each outcome and output. - Some of the indicators listed in the framework are not very specific and would be difficult to verify, measure and monitor. - The GEF core indicators for the project is measured and updated using the GEF tracking tools. However, at the time of the mid-term review, the updated GEF tracking tools were not available. - The ProDoc gives a breakdown of the costed monitoring and evaluation plan however, it should be noted that there are no specific line items in the annual budget plans that are dedicated to project monitoring specifically. - The project has been late in delivering its Mid-Term Review which is being conducted way past the initial deadline for project completion. 	MS
3. Project reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has had many delays that have been attributed to a non-compliance of project reporting - The project has attempted to put in place several measures to facilitate the monitoring of project implementation including PIR reports, Half Year reports, quarterly expenditure reports and annual audit reports. - The timely submittal of project reports is still an ongoing issue but there has however, been a significant improvement in project reporting since 2019 with the hiring of the dedicated NPC. - There have been no evidence to suggest the formal reporting of co-finance commitments disaggregated by component or source. 	S
F. Sustainability	-	ML

<p><i>1. Socio-political sustainability</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The continuation and further development of project direct outcomes are highly dependent on political will and social ownership. - Stakeholder consultations have indicated that there is generally a strong level of ownership, interest and commitment by government and at the community level as well. 	<p>ML</p>
<p><i>2. Financial sustainability</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the project outcomes (1.1, 1.2, 2) do not explicitly require further direct financial inputs to maintain them. Outcome 3 involving the sustainable livelihoods, however, is dependent on future funding for the benefits to be sustained. 	<p>ML</p>
<p><i>3. Institutional sustainability</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project was designed to build upon existing advancements in the land-use planning, forestry sector and sustainable livelihoods and improve the existing institutional and technical capacity. 	<p>ML</p>
<p>G. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>S</p>
<p><i>1. Preparation and readiness</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has faced many challenges during its implementation but there is sufficient evidence to indicate that ample effort was given to ensure the project was ready for execution during the mobilization period. 	<p>S</p>
<p><i>2. Quality of project management and supervision</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has seen many turn-over in staffs at the various agencies since its inception. - Since the project received an extension in time in 2019, communication with lead stakeholders (project focal points) which was disconnected prior, was re-established. Issues that were hindering the progress of the project were tended too and rectified. - The NPC and the executing agencies have displayed satisfactory adaptive management strategies in terms of dealing with external challenges and delays such as Hurricane Dorian and the COVID-19 	<p>MS</p>
<p><i>3. Stakeholder's participation and cooperation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There has been an increased effort to maintain stakeholder participation on the project and there is evidence to suggest that there is an increased cohesiveness and cooperation between government agencies and executing stakeholders responsible for project implementation - There is a strong interest and ownership at the community level for the project which ensures adequate stakeholder participation. - While there have been strong efforts towards public engagement, there is still room for improvement. 	<p>MS</p>
<p><i>4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was equal gender representation the community meetings as well as throughout the training sessions that were held and that the project makes a concerted effort to ensure that there is a balanced gender representation in the consultative processes 	<p>S</p>

5. <i>Environmental, social and economic safeguards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The initial project design completed the checklist for Environmental and Social Issues in accordance with UNEP policies and requirements. - All three (3) components of the project have been designed to include project activities that encourage community participation as well as provide monitoring to project outputs and outcomes. 	S
6. <i>Country ownership and driven-ness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project is being executed by several project partners who represent the different ministries and departments of the Government of The Bahamas who support the initiatives of the BPI Project. - The main project partners are also responsible for providing co-financing commitments both in-kind and cash, which accounts for approximately 73% of the total project budget. 	S
7. <i>Communication and public awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication lines with the executing project partners were re-established and concerted efforts have been made since to facilitate the frequent and efficient communication amongst stakeholders. - There have been specific public awareness strategies developed by each project partner for the respective component. - The general perception of the project is that the project is still very “low key”, and the objectives and benefits of the project are not effectively conveyed. There is not sufficient public awareness and dissemination of information and updates on the project. 	MS
Overall Project Rating	Using the “ <i>MTR Weightings for Ratings</i> ” Tool and the “ <i>MTR Criterion Rating Description Matrix</i> ” document. The project was given an Overall Rating of Moderately Satisfactory	MS

6.3 Key Strategic Questions

To what extent is the project following a robust theory of change and capacity building with appropriately formulated outputs, direct outcomes, intermediate states and long-term results?

207. The original Project Document did not include a Theory of Change (ToC) and thus, an initial Theory of Change was constructed at the inception of this Midterm Review using The Intervention Logic and the Results Framework within the Project Document as well as the results of the PDQ assessment. The causal pathways from outputs to outcomes to intermediate states and impacts were easily extracted from the the Results Framework, as well as assumptions and drivers that support these transitions. The outputs and outcomes are clearly defined and well formulated. This initial TOC was revised based on the interviews with key stakeholders and information received along the course of the midterm review to produce a robust TOC at Review as seen in section 5.2.1.
208. The project was designed and formulated to increase the existing institutional and technical capacities through the education training within local communities and local technical expert, and the development of tools, training and methodologies.

What revisions are required to ensure that implementation can be effectively evaluated at the end of the project? This includes the consideration of whether the outcome indicators are verifiable and appropriate for recording progress towards the achievement of the development objectives.

209. The Results framework gave the Indicators, Baseline, Mid-Term targets and End of Project targets for each outcome and output. Some of the indicators listed in the framework are not very specific and would be difficult to verify, measure and monitor. The Mid Term and End Term target indicators for Outputs 1.1, 2.2 and 2.3 in particular have been noted to not be achievable within the project's time frame and either an extension in the technical deadline or an adjustment in the end term targets is necessary.
210. Additionally, the GEF core indicators for the project is measured and updated using the GEF tracking tools. However, at the time of the mid- term review, the updated GEF tracking tools were not available. This needs to be updated and made available for evaluation at the end of the project.

The extent to which the design and implementation of the models that are to demonstrate viable forest management (SFM) livelihoods under component 3 are meeting the intended impacts with the likelihood of sustainability and scaling-up.

211. Outcome 3 essentially involves the development of models of sustainable livelihoods and practices that incorporate principles of SFM and SLM. The intended impact is the development of sustainable livelihoods and sustainable practices at the community level. While Outcome 3 has only been partially realized, the community interest and the need for sustainable sources of income at the community level is a driving force that supports the intended impact. There has been a strong level of community interest, especially in component 3 and this can support the achievement of this overall impact.
212. The extent to which the project is playing a catalytic role is seen mostly in Component 3 where the project activities resulted in the establishment of Acklins & Crooked Island Cooperatives as well as Andros Artisan Association. At the time of the midterm review, there has been no scaling up or replication, but the monitoring of the project components will document methodologies, limitations and successes and this will ensure replication at the local, regional and international levels.

6.4 Lessons learned

213. Below presents some of the key lessons that have emerged from the Midterm Review of the BPI project.

Lesson 1: The early stages of project implementation saw numerous delays which were attributed mainly to changes in political administration and subsequent administrative changes and turnover in staff. There was no dedicated NPC and there was a loss of institutional knowledge of the project, cohesion and communication between project partners. The changes in the management approach since then has served to highlight the importance of having a dedicated NPC for the intervention and monthly PSC meetings. This has been beneficial in overseeing project progress, implementing adaptive management changes, encouraging stakeholder engagement and participation and ensuring adequate

communication and an integrative approach towards the management of the project.

Lesson 2: The delay and non-compliance with reporting deadlines led to a delay in the release of funds and minimal progress for the period 2017-2018. The importance of establishing and meeting the deadline for the submittal of financial and technical reports required for the disbursement of funds from the GEF fund grant has been recognized.

Lesson 3: The project components are highly integrated, and each component requires participation by more than one project partner. As such, constant communication between the various project partners and regular updates are crucial in ensuring project progress. The monthly PSC meetings have been useful in maintaining communication with project partners and providing updates and a forum for adaptive management.

Lesson 4: Public awareness and engagement is vital for ensuring the success of the project as well as the sustainability of project outcomes. The public perception of the project and their understanding of the project objectives and benefits affects their participation and co-operation which in turn functions as a driver for the achievement of project outcomes. It is imperative to ensure that stakeholders, especially at the community level, are regularly updated regarding the project progress.

Lesson 5: The establishment of the cooperative societies in Andros and Acklins are an example of the catalytic role of the project and this has assisted in conducting training, public engagement and awareness and the dissemination of information.

Lesson 6: The complexity and difficulty associated with inter-island travel logistics was not considered in the project design. For future projects, this needs to be addressed and reflected in the workplan and budget.

6.5 Recommendations

214. A list of recommendations based on the main findings of the Midterm Review of the BPI project is provided below. The target audience for these recommendations are the key stakeholders involved in project implementation including UNEP, DEPP and members of the PSC.

Recommendation 1: Extension of technical deadline date and Budget Revision

215. The current expected technical completion date is November 2021. Given the delays and travel and work restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 management protocols, an extension to the technical deadline date may be necessary to complete the fieldwork and community engagement aspects of each component of the project. Under the current unpredictable pandemic situation, it is highly unlikely that these activities will be completed within the current specified project timeframe.

216. The NPC should develop a fully justified proposal for a project extension of 8 to 12 months taking into account the realistic estimates from the co-executing partners on the completion dates for technical and field activities and documentation and reporting activities. This should be discussed as soon as possible in the next PSC meeting. Following this proposal, a workplan should be developed with participation from the PSC members to complete the remaining project activities in order to maximize the delivery of outcomes as originally planned. It is also recommended that the NPC undertake a comprehensive budget revision together with the co-executing agencies and guidance from the Task Manager, in order

to accommodate the project extension and the reallocation of the funds and resources where necessary.

Recommendation 2: Revision of project activities

217. With particular attention to Activity 1.1.1.3: *Conduct remote sensing analysis to determine true Carbon sequestration values and sensing analysis of forestry lands*, it has been discovered that those rates are established over a longer period of data collection which goes beyond the current specified project timeframe. As a result, alternative methods to determine the Carbon sequestration values must be explored. In the event that the activity is unlikely to be achieved within the project timeframe, the deliverable for this activity needs to be re-evaluated.
218. With regards to Output 3.1: *Pilot Model Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palms* and its associated activities, the initial resource assessment and stakeholder consultations with members of the straw industry revealed that Silver Top palms are rarely harvested from Grand Bahama and that a substantial amount of the palms on the island are established on privately owned lands. There should be a subsequent assessment to determine the feasibility of the establishment of the plantation on Grand Bahama and if resources should be reallocated and better utilized elsewhere.
219. The gazettement of the National Forest Estate is a legal mandate that requires approval from cabinet and is dependent on processes beyond the scope of the project. Given that the project is nearing the terminal completion date, the gazettement of the National Forest Estate and target forest areas may not be completed within the current project timeframe. Therefore, a technical extension may be needed in order to realize this outcome. If this cannot be achieved within the extended project timeframe, this end term target must be revised and scaled back to produce a deliverable that is achievable within the expected timeframe.

Recommendation 3: Improvement of Public Awareness and Communication

220. There is the general consensus by the participating stakeholders including those responsible for project implementation as well as those at the community level that there is not sufficient public awareness and dissemination of information and updates on the project. In the past, a lack of communication and cohesion between the various agencies resulted in delays in the project implementation. While there has been increasing efforts to maintain communication and engagement of the key stakeholders, as evident by the monthly PSC meetings, there is still room for improvement. There should be a professional dedicated to the dissemination and publication of information, results achieved and updates on the project. This will ensure that stakeholders at all levels including various government agencies as well as those directly affected by the project implementation are kept updated at all times.
221. New methods of public engagement and awareness under COVID-19 restrictions and management protocols and new channels of communication for the dissemination of project information need to be developed. Virtual training sessions and online learning platforms can be further explored for this purpose. The new public engagement activities and awareness building should be designed and developed to have an effectiveness that is comparable to the public engagement under normal circumstances to ensure the same quality of outcome is achieved. The stakeholders, especially at the community level, should be kept informed regularly of project updates to ensure that there is continued interest and participation.
222. The community's perception of the project affects participation and cooperation, and this is crucial in the success of the project and the sustainability of the project outcomes. Community members should

be updated regularly on the status of the project as well as the purpose and objectives of the data collection and fieldwork aspects of the project. This will serve to increase transparency, build trust within the local community, and dispel any negative connotations regarding the project and its objectives.

Recommendation 4: Improved planning to account for issues with travel logistics

223. Stakeholder consultations as well as the information presented in the PIRs suggest that there have been significant delays as a result of the unavailability of inter-island flights and the complexity associated with travel logistics and conducting the fieldwork. This is further complicated by the current COVID-19 management protocols in which there exists travel restrictions.
224. In order to adapt to the current situation and proactively prepare for future fieldwork endeavors, fieldwork and travel to the other islands should be prepared well in advance. Flights should be booked at the earliest possible time and all possible travel arrangements should be made. As a potential cost-saving mechanism, all the fieldwork as well as public engagement activities for a particular location should be planned carried out on that trip to avoid multiple trips to a particular location. Furthermore, the community members should be informed in advance of the objectives of the fieldwork and data collection to ensure their continued trust and co-operation.

Recommendation 5: Improvement in the timeliness of the submittal of reports.

225. As recorded in the PIRs and stakeholder interviews, a delay in the submittal of technical and financial reports in the early stages of the project resulted the late disbursement of funds from the GEF grant funding. It is imperative that financial and technical reports are submitted by the deadline specified by the NPC to ensure that they are processed and funds are released in a timely manner.



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND PROTECTION

1. Overview of Agency

- The Mandate of The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) is to provide for the prevention or control of pollution, the regulation of activities and the administration, conservation and sustainable use of the environment and for connected purposes. The Department also manages multilateral environmental agreements.

The Department also manages research permit applications for scientific investigations involving or affecting natural resources within The Bahamas. In addition, the Department is responsible for the development and implementation of policies, programmes and plans for the effective management and conservation of the physical environment within The Bahamas.

2. Role in Project

The DEPP is the executing agency for the BPI project

3. Point of Contact

- Project Manager- Solomon Gibson
- Director- Rochelle Newbold



4. Interview Questions

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Can you briefly describe what the DEPP's role in this project involves and more so, what do your roles (as PM and Director) entail as it relates to the execution of this project?
2. It is stated that the DEPP/ BEST commission is the lead stakeholder for component 2 as well as the co executing stakeholder for component 1, can you tell me what does this task entail?

Effectiveness

3. The project is long past its mid-term as well as its planned completion date which was initially supposed to be 2019. This delay has been attributed to many implementation issues but in particular to a turn over in staff at the DEPP as well as with project partners in 2016. Can you go a bit deeper into this issue and explain to me how the situation was resolved and the lead up to the relaunch (extension) of the project in June 2019?
4. The project has a well-defined list of outputs and outcomes and the intended activities to be undertaken to achieve these, can you discuss some of the main activities that have been undertaken to date and what outputs have been achieved thus far?
5. From the project's inception to date, has there been any changes in the outcomes/outputs?
6. Would you say that the project been effective in achieving its expected outputs/outcomes and objectives to date? What is the likelihood of the project achieving its targets within the specified project timeframe?
7. From the DEPP's point of view, what changes do you foresee must be implemented to ensure all project outcomes are achieved going forward?
8. Would you say the project goals and specified targets continue to be aligned with local and national development policies and priorities and do they remain relevant considering any changes in context since start-up?



Financial Management

- 9 What are the financial management issues/risks (if any) that have affected or are foreseen to affect the timely delivery of the project or the quality of the project's performance?
- 10 Are co-financing (cash and in-kind) commitments being efficiently upheld by project partners?
- 11 Are all financial reports up to date and readily available to all parties involved in the project?

Efficiency

- 12 Are the project's planned activities being delivered according to the expected (re-established) timeframes that have been set?
- 13 What are the mitigation measures that are being employed to address delays or obstacles (if any) during the project implementation to date?

Monitoring and Reporting

- 14 Can you briefly discuss the M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives?
- 15 Have all the PIR reports, CEO endorsement reports, tracking tools and financial reports currently updated? Have progress reports been produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?
- 17 To what extent did the project engage key stakeholders in the design and implementation of monitoring and which stakeholders were involved?

Sustainability

- 18 Are there sufficient government and other key stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to ensure sustained benefits after the project's closure?



- 19 Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts?
- 20 Was capacity building conducted for key stakeholders?
- 21 How dependent is the sustained benefits of the project outcomes on future funding? Are there any foreseen financial risks that may negatively impact the project's progress towards completion?
- 22 Can the existing institutional framework capacity adequately support the continued deliverance of the associated project benefits after the project's closure?

Factors affecting performance and cross cutting issues

- 23 What operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project tried to overcome these problems?
- 23 Another issue that has been attributed to the delay in the implantation of this project is an inability to bring the diverse stakeholder group together for planning and dialogue.
 - a) Would you agree/disagree that the capacities of executing agencies were properly considered when the project was designed?
 - b) I understand that a lack of technical resource in the Bahamas is a major issue but how has this been dealt with in terms of moving forward with the project's execution?
- 24 What operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project tried to overcome these problems?
- 25 Creative Nassau and the Bahamas Development bank has been listed in the TOR as part of the project steering committee but were not listed in the initial project documents. Can you briefly explain to me their roles on this project, in particular, how are they incorporated into each components' execution?



- 26 Why is the Bahamas National Trust no longer a stakeholder on the project? Given that the BNT is an agency which forms part of the NISP (National Implementation Support Programme) are the Nature Conservancy and the Department of Marine Resources still considered to be stakeholders.
- 27 To what extent does the project design take into consideration:
- a. Possible gender inequalities in access to, and the control over natural resources?
 - b. Specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups to environmental degradation or disasters?
 - c. The role of woman in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation?
- 28 To what extent have the Government of the Bahamas assumed responsibility for the project and have provided adequate support to project execution?
- 29 What is the effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project to communicate the project's objective, progress, outcomes and lessons?
- 30 What changes will be made with respect to the project implementation and adaptive management strategies to address the current COVID-19 pandemic.
What changes are being made with respect to stakeholder consultations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

ANNEX II. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

ORGANIZATION	NAME	POSITION	GENDER
United Nations Environment Program	Mr. Christopher Cox	Task Manager	Male
United Nations Environment Program	Ms. Gloritzel Frangakis	Programme Management Assistant	Female
Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, Ministry of Environment and Housing	Mr. Solomon Gibson	National Project Coordinator	Male
Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, Ministry of Environment and Housing	Mr. Jamil Jilbrilu	Interim NPC (prior to 2019)	Male
Bahamas Forestry Unit, Ministry of Environment and Housing	Mr. Christopher Russel	Director	Male
Bahamas Forestry Unit, Ministry of Environment and Housing	Ms. Danielle Hanek-Culmer	Senior Forest Officer	Female
Bahamas Forestry Unit, Ministry of Environment and Housing	Ms. Sharrah Moss	Natural Resource Consultant	Female
Department of Physical Planning, Ministry of Public Works	Mr. Michael Majors	Lead Consultant	Male
Department of Physical Planning, Ministry of Public Works	Ms. Kimberly Stuart	Consultant	Female
Department of Physical Planning, Ministry of Public Works	Ms. Chanel Williams	Urban Planning Consultant	Female
Department of Physical Planning, Ministry of Public Works	Mr. Javon Nixon	Consultant	Male
Bahamas Agriculture and Industrial Cooperation	Mrs. Taneko Adams	BAIC Focal Point	Female
Creative Nassau	Mrs. Pamela Burnside	President	Female
The Bahamas Development Bank	Ms. Sumayyah Cargill	BDB Focal Point	Female
The Bahamas Development Bank	Ms. Paige Bastien	Assistant	Female
Ministry of Agriculture	Ms. Garnell Pelicanos	MoA Focal Point	Female
Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Sciences Institute	Mr. Said Ponda	Consultant	Male
Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Sciences Institute	Ms. Deandra Deveaux	Consultant	Female
Caribbean Agriculture and Research Development Institute	Dr. Michele Singh	Consultant	Female
Caribbean Agriculture and Research Development Institute	Mr. Timothy Chambers	Botanist	Male
Acklins Cooperative Society	Mr. Phillip Williamson	Member	Male
Andros Artisan Association	Mrs. Norma Jane Knowles	Member	Female

ANNEX III. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project Design Documents

- Project Document
- Mid Term Review- Terms of Reference
- Request for CEO Endorsement
- Project Identification Form
- Project Review Sheet

Mid Term Review Guidance Documents

- Evaluation Office of UNEP- Evaluation Policy
- Evaluation Office of UNEP- Evaluation Criteria and Ratings Table
- Evaluation Office of UNEP- Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations
- Evaluation Office of UNEP- Guidance on the Structure and Contents of the Main Review Report
- Evaluation Office of UNEP- Stakeholder Analysis in the Mid Term Review Process
- Evaluation Office of UNEP- Examples of Possible Evaluation Questions by Criteria

Technical Documents on Global, Regional and National Policies

- UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013
- UNEP Programme of Work for 2010-2011 and Programme of Work for 2012-2013;
- GEF-5 Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Focal Area
- GEF- 5 Tracking Tool for Land Degradation Focal Area - Portfolio Monitoring and Assessment Tool
- GEF- 5 Tracking Tool for SFM/REDD+ Projects
- GEF Policy on Co-Financing
- GEF Guidelines on Co-Financing
- GEF Policy on Gender Equality

- GEF Guidelines on Gender Equality
- GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards
- GEF Policy on Monitoring
- GEF Policy on Stakeholder Engagement

Project Implementation Document

- Project Implementation Report (PIRs)
 - 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020
- Half Year Project Report (HYPR)
 - July- December 2018
 - July- December 2020
 - Forestry Unit HYPR (January- December 2020)
- Annual Project Work Plan for 2020.
- Minutes of Project Steering Committee Meetings.
 - 30th October 2019
 - 20th November 2019
 - 21st January 2020
 - 27th February 2020
 - 27th March 2020
 - 30th September 2020
 - 30th November 2020

Financial Reports

- Quarterly Expenditure Reports
 - Q1 2020, Q2 2020, Q3 2020
- BPI Audit Reports

- 2017, 2018, 2019
- Bahamas Pine Islands/FSP- #6 Rephasal end 2020 Budget Revision
- BAIC Co- finance Reports
 - 23rd- 30th November 2019
 - 30th January – 6th February 2020
- FU Unit Co- finance Reports
 - Q4 2020- Co- finance (Cash and In- Kind)

Technical Reports

- Cascarilla Report – BAMSI
- Draft Land Use Plans for Andros and New Providence
- Draft Implementation and Monitoring Plans for Davis Creek Mangrove Restoration in Andros
- Ground Truthing Report- National Forestry Estate
- NFE Maps (New Providence, Grand Bahama, Andros, Abaco)
- NFE Boundary Allocations
- NFI Methodology
- Red Bays Brochure
- Resource Assessment of Silver Top Palms
- Resource Assessment of Cascarilla and Socio-Economic Survey in Acklins
- Revised National Forest Bill 2020

ANNEX IV. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name: Avinash Boodoo

Profession: Coastal Engineering and Management Consultant

Nationality: Trinidad and Tobago

Place of Birth: Nassau, Bahamas

Formal Education

Sep 2019 – Dec 2020

MSc. Coastal Engineering and Management (Distinction)

The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Sep 2015 – May 2018

BSc. (Hons) Petroleum Geoscience

The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

Department of Chemical Engineering (Upper Seconds)

Short biography

Mr. Avinash Boodoo is a Geoscientist and Coastal Engineering Consultant with a unique blend of geological, engineering, technical skills and consulting experience with a specialization in Numerical Modelling of the coastal environment, Computational Fluid Dynamics and the assessment of Coastal Nature-Based Solutions (NBSs). His previous roles include a Geophysicist at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, a Geoscientist Consultant, and a Coastal Engineering specialist with a focus on numerical modelling of the coastal environment for environmental impact assessments.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Geological and geophysical data collection and processing
- Environment Impact Assessments
- Computational Fluid Dynamics, Numerical modelling of Nature Based Solutions (NBSs)
- Coastal data collection, processing and analysis
- Shoreline Management Consultancy services

Relevant experiences

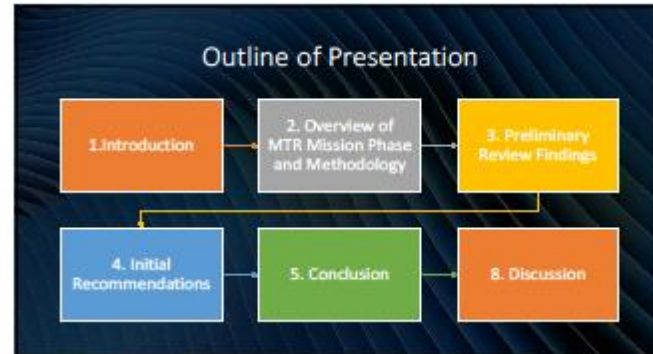
- Geological and geophysical data collection, processing and analysis (UWI)
- Determining the Hydrocarbon potential of the North Marine Block, Gulf of Paria
- Numerical modelling of the Hydrodynamic and Wave conditions of the Buccoo Reef, Tobago.

ANNEX V. PRESENTATION OF INITIAL FINDINGS POWERPOINT

29/06/2021



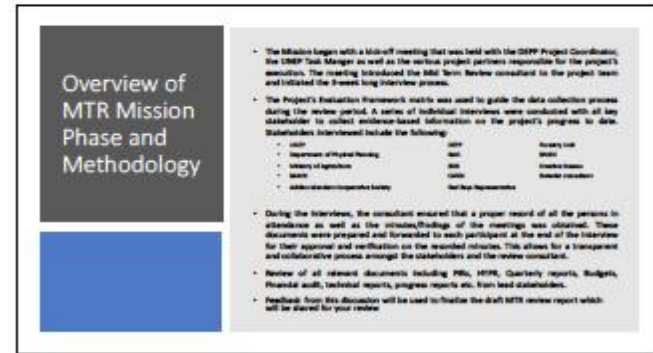
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3



4

Preliminary Review Findings

5

Strategic Relevance

- Alignment to the UNEP MTS and POW and Strategic Priorities
- Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities
- Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities
- Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

6

Effectiveness

- Theory of Change at Review
- Availability of Outputs
- Achievement of Outcomes
- Likelihood of Impact

7

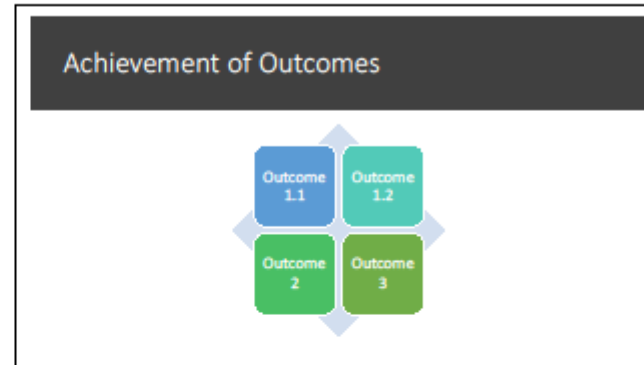


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Availability of Outputs

Output	Output Description	Availability of the Output
Output 1	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 2	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 3	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 4	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 5	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 6	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 7	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 8	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 9	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available
Output 10	Development of a Strategic Action Plan for the protection and management of the Pine Islands Forest/Mangrove Ecosystem	Available

9



10

Likelihood of Impact

At the time of the Midterm Review, none of the outcomes have been entirely achieved. However, the outcomes that are the most important to attain intermediate states (i.e. outcomes 1.1, 2 and 3) were partially achieved.

The extent to which the project is playing a catalytic role is seen mostly in Component three

No negative unexpected impacts at the time of the Midterm Review have been identified.

11

Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Policies and Procedures

	PLANNED BUDGET	ACTUAL APPROPRIATE EXPENDITURE	UNEXPENDED BALANCE
2017	1,000,000	800,000	200,000
2018	1,000,000	900,000	100,000
2019	1,000,000	950,000	50,000
TOTAL	3,000,000	2,650,000	350,000

- The UNFIC is responsible for ensuring money to the various project components and adhering to financial reports.
- Open compliance in financial reporting does not lack of financial resources allocated to the project and/or in order to the extent of funding from the UNFIC.
- Taking into account the UNFIC's financial situation, the total expenditure for the project has been determined to be complete.
- The total expenditure from the UNFIC for the duration of the project is 2,650,000 USD, which is approximately 88% of the total amount of 3,000,000 USD of the total amount of funds allocated.
- On the other hand, according to the UNFIC's financial reports, the total expenditure for the project is 2,650,000 USD, which is approximately 88% of the total amount of funds allocated.
- This accounts for approximately 88% of the total amount of funds allocated to the project, which is approximately 88% of the total amount of funds allocated to the project.

12

Financial Management

- The project's overall financial management plan included the preparation of annual budget plans, monthly budget plans, quarterly expenditure reports and annual financial statements.
- Annual financial statements for 2017, 2018 and 2019 were completed in the time of the 2019 Terms Review; the statements for 2020 are being prepared.
- Quarterly expenditure reports for three quarters of 2020 were sent and verified (90, 10, 100%) to the reviewer. These reports provided information on the approved budget, the expenditure incurred under both the GEF Funds and Co-Funding funds as well as project activities.
- Delays in the release of payments in the past are attributed to the untimely submission of financial reports as well as to discrepancies in the financial information submitted to the bank's platform.
- Efforts to speed up the process to identify all accounts and the commitment of the reports will ensure that the commitment of funds remains high, as well as project partners being informed that there is an increased effort to produce the reports in a timely manner.

Completeness of Project Financial Information

13

Financial Management

- The project review verified that there was adequate communication between the IFC's private consulting agency and the ICR and FAO representing the implementation agency.
- Both parties involved were aware of the project financials. Financial reports are prepared by the ICR, activities reviewed by the ICR and FAO who facilitates the release of the cash advance.
- The IFC has displayed a great deal of vigilance since its commencement on the project in 2015. Prior to this, there was no dedicated personnel (the role of the IFC as the O&M which resulted in a backlog of project financial reporting).
 - There is evidence to suggest that the quality and timeliness of reports have increased. The IFC has also prepared 3 quarterly expenditure reports and 2 annual budget plans as it relates to the project's financial management.

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

14

Efficiency

- Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and the current COVID-19 pandemic created further delays in project activities and minimal progress was achieved in 2019 and 2020.
- With Hurricane Dorian and the severe impact to Abaco and Grand Bahama, there were changes to project's budget and priorities were redirected. Focus was shifted to ensuring the other project activities whilst rehabilitation efforts were being carried out on these islands.
- With COVID-19 and the lockdown, there were further delays:
 - Health and its associated costs for our project activities became more complicated.
 - Several necessary meetings and activities have to be carried out overseas annually.
 - The program manager remains in the process of getting their activities primarily to open for local or private work due to issues to be in the right places.
- The disbursement of funds has been slow for this project, owing to the prior issues with non-compliance in project reporting due to a lack in technical capacity.
- Over the first 48 months of the project's implementation, only 27% of the GEF grant funding budget and 8% of the co-funding budget was utilized. The project extension did not result in an increase in the overall project budget but rather the unspent balance in the budget were reallocated to ensure project activities are undertaken.
- For 2019 and 2020, the expenditure ratios were still considerably low (34.9 and 28.1 respectively). The project has a technical completion date scheduled for November 2021 but given that progress on some of the activities are yet to be completed, an additional extension in time may be required.

15

Monitoring and Reporting

- A detailed results framework was provided since the start.
- The 2017 Terms and Conditions for budget 1, 2, 3 and 4 in particular have been revised to not be activities within the project in that time and should be adjusted to reflect a more transparent report.
- The GEF were indicators for the project's management and reported on the GEF reporting forms.
- Component 4 of the project stays directly in monitoring and evaluation and has 8 specific activities that contribute to the project's monitoring system.
- As of December 2019, 62% of the budget for each report has been utilized but there were no changes under the line item for Evaluation, Monitoring, Implementation and Reporting Costs.
- The project has been late in following its 2016 Terms Review which is being conducted and set the initial deadline for project completion.

Monitoring of Project Implementation

16

Monitoring and Reporting

Project Reporting

- The project has maintained the results framework throughout its implementation and has adopted several other measures to facilitate the monitoring of project implementation including:
 - its reports,
 - and the reported PM meetings.
 - Periodic monitoring to understand why/where/when/whether reports are not being prepared.
- There is frequent communication with project local points to obtain the data required to formulate the reports which are submitted to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared. This feedback is then relayed to all project partners during PMC meetings.
- PMR's for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 were available and accurately information of the project. The progress of the implementation of the various activities were noted and reflected as a percentage along with justification for the progress rating and an expected completion date. This assisted in gauging the rate at which the progress was being executed as well as the activities that require additional resources to move forward.
- Two PMR's were seen for the period July to December of 2019 and 2020. An annual workshop for 2020 was also available.

17

Sustainability

- Socio Political Sustainability
- Financial Sustainability
- Institutional Sustainability

18

Factors Affecting Performance and Cross Cutting Issues

Preparation and Readiness	Quality of Project Management and Supervision	Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation	Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity
Environmental and Social Safeguards	Country Ownership and Driven-ness	Communication and Public Awareness	

19

Preliminary Recommendations

1. Further enhance capacity building to ensure PMR's are prepared and submitted to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared.	2. When the data provided are not complete, PMR's should be prepared and submitted to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared.	3. The TSD should continue to provide support and guidance to project partners in the preparation and submission of PMR's to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared.	4. When the data provided are not complete, PMR's should be prepared and submitted to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared.
5. The TSD should continue to provide support and guidance to project partners in the preparation and submission of PMR's to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared.	6. The TSD should continue to provide support and guidance to project partners in the preparation and submission of PMR's to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared.	7. The TSD should continue to provide support and guidance to project partners in the preparation and submission of PMR's to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared.	8. The TSD should continue to provide support and guidance to project partners in the preparation and submission of PMR's to the TSD for review and comments after they are prepared.

20

ANNEX VI. PROJECT LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

PROJECT COMPONENTS	OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES	PROJECT OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES	PROJECT OUTCOMES
COMPONENT 1	Output 1.1.1	Assessment and monitoring system (GIS); database of forestry lands with biodiversity overlay, inc mangroves.	Outcome 1.1 - Enhanced enabling environment in support of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with integration of Biodiversity into land use planning
	Activity 1.1.1.1	Development of work plan and acquirement of geospatial data for proceeding activities for entire project	
	Activity 1.1.1.2	Identification and demarcation of boundaries through field assessments, GPS coordinates and utilizing GIS to update 1986 forestry maps to create maps of the forest estate (demarcation will require legal action and gazetting of the proposed boundaries).	
	Activity 1.1.1.3	Conduct remote sensing analysis to determine true Carbon sequestration values and sensing analysis of forestry lands	
	Activity 1.1.1.4	Develop Forestry Maintenance Plan for Forestry dataset	
	Activity 1.1.1.5	Develop Forestry Monitoring system within the established Forestry Estate	
	Activity 1.1.1.6	Develop and implement open-source framework accessible to all agencies, using data developed in previous activities	
	Output 1.1.2	Development of Land-Use Plans for 2 islands which integrates biodiversity, ecosystem services and forestry at the landscape level	
	Activity 1.1.2.1	Review of the National Planning and Development Policies	
	Activity 1.1.2.2	Collate and update selected species and ecosystems baseline for incorporation into the tools	
	Activity 1.1.2.3	Development of 2- sub national plans for Andros and New Providence	
	Activity 1.1.2.4	Public consultation/review process of the proposed land-use plans for Andros and New Providence	
	Activity 1.1.2.5	Approval of the Land-use plans	
	Output 1.2.1	Tailored tools, methodologies, and training for integration of biodiversity into forest management/ land use management	Outcome 1.2 - Increased targeted public awareness of the importance and benefits of sustainably managing forest & mangrove biodiversity, ecosystems services and sustainable land management
	Activity 1.2.1.1	Identification of tools, methodologies and training programs to be used for the integration of BD into SLM/SFM at DPP/TPC, FU, DLS and Local Government levels	
	Activity 1.2.1.2	Review and Selection of appropriate tools, methodologies and training programs at meeting with Stakeholders	
	Activity 1.2.1.3	Development of integrated Land Use Planning Materials	
	Activity 1.2.1.4	Feedback on developed tools from agencies	
Activity 1.2.1.5	Integration into policy framework and follow-up of tools with stakeholders and Local Administrators		

	Output 1.2.2	Awareness building modules -benefits of sustainable land use and forest management.	
	Activity 1.2.2.1	Development of Awareness and Communication strategies	
	Activity 1.2.2.2	Develop action plan, including training programme, to build capacity and awareness of strategy and policy options and mainstreaming tools and disseminate relevant information widely	
	Activity 1.2.2.3	Strengthen public awareness, learning and sharing experiences at local, regional and national levels using appropriate multi-media methods	
COMPONENT 2	Output 2.1	Establishment of National Forestry Estate inclusive of Conservation & Protected Forests	Outcome 2 - Improved management effectiveness of existing and new forest reserves
	Activity 2.1.1	Obtain GIS dataset layers developed in Activity 1.1.1.2	
	Activity 2.1.2	Collaborative efforts over the finalization of boundaries with Forestry Unit, DPP, Town Planning Committee, Depts. Of Lands & Surveys, and BNGIS Centre	
	Activity 2.1.3	Collaboration with DPP for insight and cooperation in the land classification designations	
	Activity 2.1.4	Submit boundaries to Parliament and proceed through the approval processes Public Consultations, Cabinet approvals) for the Gazettal of the National Forestry Estate	
	Output 2.2	Community co-management of 2 Conservation forests (representing 15% of Conservation Forests)	
	Activity 2.2.1	Obtain GIS dataset layers developed in Activity 1.1.1.2	
	Activity 2.2.2	Develop a National Forest Plan as per Forestry Act 2010 Part II 5: (1) (a) – (e)	
	Activity 2.2.3	Submit the national forest plan for review to the Minister of Environment & Housing, and Public Consultation in communities as per Forestry Act 2010 Part II 5: (2)	
	Activity 2.2.4	as per Forestry Act 2010 Part II 5: (3) after the Minister has approved a national forest plan, the plan shall be tabled in Parliament and subsequently Gazetted	
	Activity 2.2.5	Develop a Forest Management Plan for 2 Conservation Forest areas as per Forestry Regulations, 2014 Part V- (19) (1) (a) – (e)	
	Activity 2.2.6	Collaborative efforts over the finalization of boundaries with Forestry Unit, DPP, Town Planning Committee, Depts. Of Lands & Surveys, and BNGIS Centre; In addition to developing partnerships with community-based associations for the management of Forest Areas	
	Activity 2.2.7	Conduct Public Consultation of the Proposed Management for Conservation Forest areas.	

	Activity 2.2.8	Develop a Sustainable Financial Plan for the 2 Conservation Forest Areas in Abaco and Andros	
	Activity 2.2.9	After consultation, the Minister shall grant formal approval of the 2 Conservation Forest Areas in Abaco and Andros	
	Activity 2.2.10	Implementation of Conservation Forest Areas in Abaco and Andros	
	Activity 2.2.11	Monitoring of activities within Conservation Forest areas	
	Activity 2.2.12	Strengthen public awareness, learning and sharing experiences at local, regional and national levels using appropriate multi-media methods (ref. to activity 1.2.2.3)	
	Output 2.3	Restoration of Andros Davis Creek Mangrove system (50 ha) with CO2 savings up to 14,563 tCO2 eq	
	Activity 2.3.1	Conduct specific site assessment and determine baseline analysis	
	Activity 2.3.2	Develop and commence implementation of Participatory based Site-Specific Management Plans based on the SFM principles for restoring/rehabilitating degraded mangroves	
	Activity 2.3.3	Develop and implement a community-based monitoring of the rehabilitated mangrove site	
	Activity 2.3.4	Research and Monitoring programme established for indicator species	
COMPONENT 3	Output 3.1	Pilot Model Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palms	Outcome 3 - Effective provisioning of forest ecosystems underpinned by strengthened livelihoods people dependent on use of forest resources - increased use of sustainable land, agroforestry and forestry management practices among coastal communities.
	Activity 3.1.1	Resource assessment of silver top and cabbage palms	
	Activity 3.1.2	Develop Industry Education awareness for Palm Cultivation	
	Activity 3.1.3	Promotion of Sustainable harvesting of silver top & cabbage palms	
	Activity 3.1.4	Promotion of Indigenous Craft trade (using harvested Palm tops)	
	Activity 3.1.5	Establish a formalized plantation of palms for ornamental landscape market	
	Activity 3.1.6	Develop Marketing Promotion Strategy of Indigenous Craft trade (using harvested palm tops)	
	Activity 3.1.7	Establish formalized plantation of palms for ornamental landscape market	
	Output 3.2	Pilot Model Sustainable Cascarilla Cultivation and Processing	
	Activity 3.2.1	Resource assessment of cascarilla on Acklins, Crooked Island, Planna and Samana Cays.	
	Activity 3.2.2	Promotion of Sustainable harvesting of cascarilla	
	Activity 3.2.3	Develop Industry Education system to build capacity	
	Activity 3.2.4	Establish a formalized plantation	
	Activity 3.2.5	Develop Marketing Plan for Promotion of Cascarilla products (bark and oil)	
Activity 3.2.6	Conduct socioeconomic background baseline to the communities by focusing on gender, age, economic status		

ANNEX VII. REVIEW OF PROJECT DESIGN QUALITY

A.	Operating Context	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:	
1	Does the project document identify any unusually challenging operational factors that are likely to negatively affect project performance?	i)Ongoing/high likelihood of conflict?	NO	The Bahamas is not known to have any conflict issues. There is, however, a lack of institutional capacity and coordination between executing agencies. This was well documented in the PRODOC	5
		ii)Ongoing/high likelihood of natural disaster?	NO	Risk and Mitigation measures identified for dry weather patterns leading to fires. The Bahamas is vulnerable to the effects of hurricanes, but the likelihood of the occurrence of hurricanes and storm events vary. This was mentioned in the Results framework as well as the Midterm TOR but can be discussed further. The COVID-19 Pandemic will affect the implementation of the project and the design must be adapted to accommodate this change.	
		iii)Ongoing/high likelihood of change in national government?	YES	General elections occur every five (5) years and staff turnover with a change of government may be a challenge. This was documented in the Midterm TOR and in the Results Framework	
B.	Project Preparation	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:	
2	Does the project document entail clear and adequate problem and situation analyses?	YES	There is a clear and detailed discussion and analysis of the problems, baseline, context, threats, barriers, policies and proposed benefits in the PRODOC (Section 2)	6	
4	Does the project document include a clear and adequate stakeholder analysis, including by gender/minority groupings or indigenous peoples?	YES	There is a detailed stakeholder analysis and mapping in section 2.5 of the PRODOC which identifies the key stakeholders involved in the intervention and their degree of influence and interest. There are plans for stakeholder engagement for the local communities involved in the intervention in Section 3 and Section 5 of the PRODOC.		

5	<i>If yes to Q4: Does the project document provide a description of stakeholder consultation/participation during project design process? (If yes, were any key groups overlooked: government, private sector, civil society, gendered groups and those who will potentially be negatively affected)</i>	YES	The is a clear and detailed description of the roles and participation of the various stakeholders in the public sector, civic groups and private sector. There are plans for community engagement for the local communities within the sphere of influence of the intervention		
6	Does the project document identify concerns with respect to human rights, including in relation to sustainable development? (e.g. integrated approach to human/natural systems; gender perspectives, rights of indigenous people.	YES	The PRODOC identifies the economic realities of the local communities that rely on the forest resources and the project seeks to facilitate sustainable livelihoods which have traditionally been dominated by women for the local communities through two pilot projects (Component 3 Section 3.2 PRODOC).		
C	Strategic Relevance	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:	
7	Is the project document clear in terms of its alignment and relevance to:	i) UN Environment MTS and PoW	YES	The project will contribute and is directly related to the UNEP PoW regarding Ecosystem Management through Expected Accomplishment (a) and (c) in the PRODOC	6
		ii) UN Environment /GEF/Donor strategic priorities (including Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation)	YES	Linkages to GEF-5 Strategic objectives BD-2, LD-3, SFM/REDD-1 as seen in the PRODOC. The PRODOC, however, does not mention linkages with Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation	
		iii) Regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities?	YES	There is consistency and alignment with national policies and plans such as the NBSAP, National Wetlands Policy, National Action Program to combat Land Degradation in The Bahamas (Section 2.4, 3.6 PRODOC)	
		iv. Complementarity with other interventions	YES	Linkages with other GEF and non-GEF interventions at the regional and national levels are described in the PRODOC (Section 2.7)	
D	Intended Results and Causality	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:	
8	Is there a clearly presented Theory of Change?	NO	There is no clearly defined Theory of Change presented in the PRODOC . However, the outputs, outcomes and impacts were easily extracted from the Results Framework and Intervention logic in the PRODOC		

9	Are the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long term, collective change of state) clearly and convincingly described in either the log frame or the TOC? <i>(NOTE if there is no TOC in the project design documents a reconstructed TOC at Evaluation Inception will be need)</i>	YES	While there is no ToC presented in the PRODOC, relationships and causal pathways between the project outputs and project outcomes are discussed throughout the PRODOC and can be extracted from the Results Framework (Section 3). A robust ToC can be constructed to provide more insight into the causal pathways and the impacts	5	
10	Are impact drivers and assumptions clearly described for each key causal pathway?	YES	No detailed ToC but is extracted from the PRODOC and Project Results Framework.		
11	Are the roles of key actors and stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, clearly described for each key causal pathway?	YES	Roles of key actors and stakeholders discussed throughout the PRODOC and in Section 4 of the PRODOC		
12	Are the outcomes realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention?	YES	The outcomes are realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention based on Appendix 5: Workplan and Timeframe in the PRODOC. However, the COVID-19 pandemic may delay project activities due to restrictions.		
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:	
13	Does the logical framework ...	i)Capture the key elements of the Theory of Change/ intervention logic for the project?	YES	This can be understood from the results framework as well as section 3.4 PRODOC	6
		ii)Have appropriate and ‘SMART’ results at output level?	YES	The midterm and end of project targets are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and can be achieved within the time frame.	
		iii)Have appropriate and ‘SMART’ results at outcome level?	YES	The project outcomes indicators are also specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and can be achieved within the time frame.	
		iv)Reflect the project’s scope of work and ambitions?	YES	The results framework is an accurate representation of the projects intended outcomes and goals as well as risks and assumptions.	
14	Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?	YES	There is baseline data for comparison against project outputs at the midterm and end of project targets		
15	Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outputs and outcomes?	YES	All indicators have both midterm and end of project targets		

16	Are the milestones in the monitoring plan appropriate and sufficient to track progress and foster management towards outputs and outcomes?	YES	The midterm targets and end of project targets, in conjunction with the 'Key Deliverables and Benchmarks' in Appendix 6 are appropriate milestones for adaptive management and to track progress towards outputs and outcomes	
17	Have responsibilities for monitoring activities been made clear?	YES	Responsibilities for monitoring activities made clear in section 6 PRODOC	
18	Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress?	YES	Appendix 7: Cost M&E plan shows the budget allocation for monitoring the project progress	
19	Is the workplan clear, adequate and realistic? (<i>eg. Adequate time between capacity building and take up etc</i>)	YES	The activities in the workplan and timetable are organised in a logical and sequential manner and is achievable within the timeframe. However, there may be delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:
20	Is the project governance and supervision model comprehensive, clear and appropriate? (<i>Steering Committee, partner consultations etc. </i>)	YES	This is described in section 4: Institutional Framework and Implementation Arrangements as well as Appendix 9 which shows the organizational structure.	6
21	Are roles and responsibilities within UNEP clearly defined? (<i>If there are no stated responsibilities for UNEP Regional Offices, note where Regional Offices should be consulted prior to, and during the evaluation</i>)	YES	This is described in section 4: Institutional Framework and Implementation Arrangements as well as Appendix 9 which shows the organizational structure.	
G	Partnerships	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:
22	Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed? (<i>CHECK if partner capacity was assessed during inception/mobilisation where partners were either not known or changed after project design approval</i>)	YES	The capacity and expertise of partners has been stated in section 2.5 in the stakeholder analysis. The lack of institutional and technical capacity has also been stated throughout the PRODOC	5
23	Are the roles and responsibilities of external partners properly specified and appropriate to their capacities?	YES	The roles and responsibilities of partners has been stated in section 4 and 5	
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:
24	Does the project have a clear and adequate knowledge management approach?	YES	A clear understanding of the management approach is seen in section 4 and 5 and the outputs and outcomes reflect an understanding of the objectives of the project. The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders are discussed.	

25	Has the project identified appropriate methods for communication with key stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, during the project life? <i>If yes, do the plans build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders?</i>	YES	The project has described methods of communication with key stakeholders, including local communities within the Intervention Strategy in Section 3. However, a more detailed communication strategy can be done. Furthermore, communication strategies may have to be altered to adapt to the current COVID-19 pandemic.	5
26	Are plans in place for dissemination of results and lesson sharing at the end of the project? <i>If yes, do they build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks?</i>	YES	There are plans for Public consultations as well as proposed channels of communication for the dissemination of project results and outputs within the Implementation Strategy within section 3, 3.9 of the PRODOC	
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:
27	Are the budgets / financial planning adequate at design stage? <i>(coherence of the budget, do figures add up etc.)</i>	YES	The budget is based on project components and by year based on section 7 and Appendix 3 in the PRODOC. No deficiencies could be observed based on the financial analysis in the PRODOC	6
28	Is the resource mobilization strategy reasonable/realistic? <i>(E.g. If the expectations are over-ambitious the delivery of the project outcomes may be undermined or if under-ambitious may lead to repeated no cost extensions)</i>	YES	The project budget consists of co-financing from various sources including GEF projects, bilateral sources, multilateral sources, The GoB and the private sector	
J	Efficiency	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:
29	Has the project been appropriately designed/adapted in relation to the duration and/or levels of secured funding?	YES	Project budget is based on the project components and is adapted based on the funding.	6
30	Does the project design make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?	YES	Project involves participation of numerous stakeholders and governmental agencies as mentioned in section 2.5, pre-existing data on the forestry resources from the FAO, survey maps as well as other interventions in section 2.7	
31	Does the project document refer to any value for money strategies (i.e. increasing economy, efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness)?	YES	Section 7.2 in the PRODOC identifies components of the project which ensure the cost-effective use of the GEF funds.	
32	Has the project been extended beyond its original end date? <i>(If yes, explore the reasons for delays and no-cost extensions during the evaluation)</i>	YES	The project was extended in June 2019 due to issues faced in the implementation phase as discussed in the Midterm Review TOR	
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:

33	Are risks appropriately identified in both the TOC/logic framework and the risk table? <i>(If no, include key assumptions in reconstructed TOC at Review Inception)</i>	YES	Risks and mitigation measures are identified in section 3.5 in the PRODOC as well as in the results framework for each outcome. The COVID-19 pandemic can be incorporated as a risk and mitigation measures can be discussed	5
34	Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the project identified and is the mitigation strategy adequate? <i>(consider unintended impacts)</i>	YES	The expected social and economic impacts are positive and are identified throughout section 3. Any perceived negative impacts are identified in section 3.5 with associated mitigation measures.	
35	Does the project have adequate mechanisms to reduce its negative environmental foot-print? <i>(including in relation to project management and work implemented by UNEP partners)</i>	YES	There are no perceived negative environmental footprints produced as a result of project implementation.	
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:
39	Did the design address any/all of the following: socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental sustainability issues?	YES	Section 3.8, 3.11 in the PRODOC elaborated on strategies for institutional, social and environmental sustainability. The UNEP checklist for environmental and social issues was completed.	5
36	Was there a credible sustainability strategy and/or appropriate exit strategy at design stage?	YES	Section 3.8 in the PRODOC describes the strategy for achieving sustainability after completion of the project.	
38	Does the project design present strategies to promote/support scaling up, replication and/or catalytic action? <i>(if yes, capture this feature in the reconstructed TOC at Review Inception)</i>	YES	Section 3.9 in the PRODOC identifies strategies for replication, sharing lessons learned and scaling up through increased technical capacity at the national and international levels	
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design	Section Rating:
40	Were recommendations made by the PRC adopted in the final project design? If no, what were the critical issues raised by PRC that were not addressed.	YES	Recommendations made in the Project Review sheet with respect to the project framework and budget were identified were addressed	6

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting)
A	Operating Context	5	0.4	2.0
B	Project Preparation	6	1.2	7.2
C	Strategic Relevance	5	0.8	4.0
D	Intended Results and Causality	5	1.6	8.0
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	6	0.8	4.8
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	6	0.4	2.4
G	Partnerships	5	0.8	4.0
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	0.4	2.0
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	6	0.4	2.4
J	Efficiency	6	0.8	4.8
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	5	0.8	4.0
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	5	1.2	6.0
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	6	0.4	2.4
			TOTAL SCORE :10	54

1 (Highly Unsatisfactory)	< 1.83	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)	>=3.5 <=4.33
2 (Unsatisfactory)	>= 1.83 < 2.66	5 (Satisfactory)	>4.33 <= 5.16
3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)	>=2.66 <3.5	6 (Highly Satisfactory)	> 5.16

ANNEX VIII. PROJECT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

EVALUATION CRITERIA	QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	SOURCES
STRATEGIC RELEVANCE			
Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities	How does UNEP’s overall mandate and policies/GEF focal area on biodiversity, land degradation and sustainable forest management relate to the project?	Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and the UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Project Document – Mid Term Review-Terms of Reference, Request for CEO Endorsement – Project Review Sheet – Interviews – GEF focal areas strategies and documents
	How does the project contribute to the UNEP’s Programme of Works and the UNEP strategic priorities inclusive of the BSP and S-SC?		
Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities	Is the project aligned with Donor/ Partner Strategic Priorities?	Level of alignment and complementarity with partner/donor priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Project Documents – Project Review Sheet – Interviews
Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities	How does the project goals and specified targets align with local and national development policies and priorities and do they remain relevant considering any changes in context since start-up?	Degree to which the project supports National environmental objectives Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - National policies and strategies - Interviews
	Does the Project adequately take into account the national realities, both in terms of institutional capacity and legal and policy frameworks?	Reported institutional and technical capacity and effectiveness of policies and strategies	
Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence	Does the project create effective linkages with other GEF and Non- Gef interventions on both the regional and national scale?	Level of complementarity with GEF and non-GEF interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Other GEF and Non-GEF project documents - Interviews with PM
EFFECTIVENESS			

Availability of Outputs	Were the project outputs clearly and accurately stated in the ProDoc?	Coherence of project outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Results Framework - Interviews with PM and stakeholders - Request for CEO Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - GEF tracking tools
	Are the project outputs aligned with the project's objectives?	Alignment of outputs with project objectives	
	What expected outputs have been achieved thus far?	Extent to which indicators in the Results Framework have been achieved	
Achievement of Project Outcomes	Are the project outcomes aligned with the project's objectives and are they consistent with the UNEP guidelines?	Degree of Alignment of outcomes with project objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project document - Results Framework - Request for CEO Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - GEF tracking tools - Interviews
	Has the project been effective in achieving its expected outputs/outcomes and objectives	Extent to which indicators in the Results Framework have been achieved (Midterm and End term Targets and benchmarks)	
	Are some outcomes more advanced than others in their implementation?		
	What is causing delays (if any) in the implementation in particular outputs for the project?		
	What changes (if any) must be implemented to ensure all project outcomes are achieved within the stipulated timeframe?		
Likelihood of Impact	How has the project contributed to the expected impact with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment - Economic wellbeing of the country - Other socio-economic aspects 	Analysis of results, project activities, respondent perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Document - Results Framework - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
	Can the results of this project be applied across the country or in other geographic areas?	Sustainability, replication and feedback mechanisms	
	How can the country benefit from the results and lessons learned from the project?		
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT			
Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures	Is the rate of spending for the project consistent with the project's length of implementation to date, the agreed workplan and the delivery of the outputs?	Project Financing and Budget, interview responses	
	Are all financial reports up to date and readily available to all parties involved in the project?	Financial reports, Interview responses	

Communication between finance and project management staff	Are auditing requirements being met consistently and to the adequate standards by all parties involved? Are Audits conducted independently?	Interviews, PIRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Document - PIRs - Financial Reports - Budget revisions - Project Review sheet - Interviews
	Are co-financing (cash and in-kind) commitments being efficiently upheld by project partners?	PIRs, Financial Reports, Interviews	
	What are the financial management issues/risks (if any) that have affected or are foreseen to affect the timely delivery of the project or the quality of the project's performance?	PIRs, Financial Reports, Interviews	
EFFECIENCY			
Efficiency	Are the project's planned activities being delivered according to the expected timeframes that have been set?	Extent of accomplishments of midterm and endterm targets, interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Document - Results Framework - Financial Reports - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - GEF tracking tools - Interviews
	Are planned project activities properly sequenced to ensure that efficiency in execution of the project?	PIRs, Interview, Project workplan and timetable	
	Have any cost saving mechanisms been applied to the project to ensure results are achieved within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe?	Interviews, intervention logic, incremental cost analysis, PIRs	
	What are the mitigation measures that are being employed to address delays or obstacles (if any) during the project implementation to date?	PIRs, Interviews, risk analysis	
MONITORING AND REPORTING			
Monitoring of project design and implementation	Did the project have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives?	M&E plan, Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project document - Results Framework - Request for CEO Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs
	Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined and data sources and data collection instruments appropriate?		
	Does the project's logical framework easily identify and track the specific targets and the specific indicators for each project output?	Project Results Framework, Interviews with PM	

	Are there specific indicators in the log frame for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?	The extent to which indicators are SMART in the Results Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GEF tracking tools - Interviews
	To what extent did the project engage key stakeholders in the design and implementation of monitoring and which stakeholders were involved?	M&E plan, Interviews	
Project reporting	Have all the PIR reports, CEO endorsement reports, tracking tools and financial reports been completed?	Document analyses, interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project document - Request for CEO Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - GEF tracking tools - Interviews
	Have progress reports been produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?		
SUSTAINABILITY			
Socio-political sustainability	Did the project conduct 'succession planning' and implement this during the life of the project?	Document analyses, results framework, interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project document - Results Framework - Request for CEO Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
	Are there sufficient government and other key stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to ensure sustained benefits after the project's closure?		
	Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts?		
	Was capacity building conducted for key stakeholders?		
Financial sustainability	Has the project's financial and economic sustainability in the medium to long run been accounted for?	PIRs, Financial Reports, Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Document - PIRs - Financial Reports - Budget revisions - Project Review sheet - Interviews
	How dependent is the sustained benefits of the project outcomes on future funding?		
	Are there any foreseen financial risks that may negatively impact the project's progress towards completion?		
Institutional sustainability	Is the existing institutional framework capacity adequate to support the implementation of the project components?	Documental analysis, interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project document - Results Framework - Request for CEO

	Can the existing institutional framework capacity adequately support the continued deliverance of the associated project benefits after the project's closure?		Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE AND CROSS CUTTING ISSUES			
Preparation and Readiness	Are the project's components and associated outputs and outcomes, practical and feasible to be accomplished within the project's timeframe?	Document analyses, interviews, level of achievement of objectives and outcomes	- Project document - Results Framework - Request for CEO Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
	Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the project was designed?		
	Were the potential threats and barriers to the project implantation identified?		
	Were project stakeholders adequately identified and were they sufficiently involved in project development?		
Quality of Project Management and Supervision	To what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project milestones, outputs and outcomes?	Achievement of Output and Outcomes, Document Analyses, Interviews	- Project document - Results Framework - Request for CEO Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
	What operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project tried to overcome these problems?		
	What is them effectiveness and efficiency of project management and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project.		
Stakeholder's participation and cooperation	What is the level of stakeholder ownership during implementation and what approaches are being used to engage the project's stakeholders?		- Project document - Results Framework

	Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the project's long-term objectives?	Document analyses, Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request for CEO Endorsement - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Is the project in line with the UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and Environment?	Surveys with gender disaggregated data based on project outcome 3, interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project document - Surveys - Results Framework - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
	To what extent does the project design take into consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Possible gender inequalities in access to, and the control over natural resources? 2) Specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups to environmental degradation or disasters? 3) The role of woman in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation? 		
Country ownership and driven-ness	To what extent have the Government of the Bahamas assumed responsibility for the project and have provided adequate support to project execution?	Timeliness of co-financing contributions, level of commitment and participation by government institutions, interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project document - Results Framework - Financial Reports - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
Communication and public awareness	What is the effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project to communicate the project's objective, progress, outcomes and lessons?	Level of public awareness, communication and stakeholder engagement, document analyses, interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project document - Results Framework - Project Review Sheet - PIRs - Interviews
	Did the project identify and make use of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders and provide feedback channels?		

ANNEX IX. PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT MILESTONE	TENTATIVE DATE
Pre-Inception Report Meeting	3 rd May, 2021
Submittal of Inception Report to Project Manager	14 th May, 2021
Project Kick Off Meeting	20 th May, 2021
Commencement of MTR Mission	21 st May, 2021
End of MTR Mission	11 th June, 2021
Presentation of Preliminary Findings	25 th June, 2021
Submittal of Draft MTR Report to Project Manager	9 th July, 2021
Draft Report shared with the wider group of Stakeholders	16 th July, 2021
Submittal of Final Main Review Report	23 rd July, 2021
Final Main Review Report shared with all respondents	30 th July, 2021

ANNEX X. COMPLETED CRITERION RATING DESCRIPTION MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria	Rating	Score	Weight	Weighted Score
Strategic Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	6	6	0.3
<i>Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities</i>	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.5	
<i>Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities</i>	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.5	
<i>Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national issues and needs</i>	Highly Satisfactory	6	2.5	
<i>Complementarity with existing interventions</i>	Satisfactory	5	2.5	
Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory	4	49	1.8
<i>Availability of outputs</i>	Moderately Unsatisfactory	3	20	
<i>Achievement of project outcomes</i>	Moderately Satisfactory	4	20	
<i>Likelihood of impact</i>	Moderately Likely	4	9	
Financial Management	Satisfactory	5	5	0.2
<i>Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures</i>	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
<i>Completeness of project financial information</i>	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
<i>Communication between finance and project management staff</i>	Satisfactory	5		
Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory	3	10	0.3
Monitoring and Reporting	Satisfactory	5	5	0.2
<i>Monitoring of project implementation</i>	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
<i>Project reporting</i>	Satisfactory	5		
Sustainability	Moderately Likely	4	20	0.8
<i>Socio-political sustainability</i>	Moderately Likely	4		
<i>Financial sustainability</i>	Moderately Likely	4		
<i>Institutional sustainability</i>	Moderately Likely	4		
Factors Affecting Performance	Satisfactory	5	5	0.2
<i>Preparation and readiness</i>	Satisfactory	5		
<i>Quality of project management and supervision</i>	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
<i>Stakeholder participation and cooperation</i>	Moderately Satisfactory	4		
<i>Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity</i>	Satisfactory	5		
<i>Environmental, social and economic safeguards</i>	Satisfactory	5		
<i>Country ownership and driven-ness</i>	Satisfactory	5		
<i>Communication and public awareness</i>		4		
				3.87
				Moderately Satisfactory

ANNEX XI. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-Term Review of the UNEP/GEF project Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros) - GEF ID: 4847

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP Sub-programme:		UNEP Division/Branch:	
Expected Accomplishment(s):	<p>EA (a): Enhanced capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development planning processes;</p> <p>EA (c) Strengthened capacity of countries and regions to realign their environmental programmes to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services</p>	Programme of Work Output(s):	<p>Output 1: Methodologies, partnerships and tools to maintain or restore ecosystem services and integrate the ecosystem management approach with the conservation and management of ecosystems</p> <p>Output 2: Biodiversity and ecosystem values are assessed, demonstrated and communicated to strengthen decision-making by governments, businesses and consumers</p>
SDG(s) and indicator(s)	SDG Goal 13 Climate action, SDG 15 Life on Land		

<p>GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7); GEF5 tracking tool targets</p>	<p>SFM/REDD-plus (Core Results – Planned Targets and Outcomes) <u>Carbon stored in forest ecosystems and emissions avoided from deforestation and forest degradation from this project (Direct lifetime) - Avoided deforestation and forest degradation 22410 ha; 5661077 tonnes CO2eq</u></p> <p><u>1.1 : An enhanced enabling environment within the forest sector - sector policy/regulation framework are enforced</u> <u>1.2 : Good forest management practices applied in existing forests –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area covered by forest management plans – 22531 ha • Restoration/rehabilitation of degraded forests – 50 ha <p><u>2.1: Enhanced institutional capacity to account for GHG emission reduction and increase in carbon stocks - National carbon stock monitoring systems in place - monitoring information database publicly available; Area Covered (ha) 283,700.20</u></p> <p>BD Core Indicators Objective 1: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems (Refer to Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool METT for relevant threats and assessment criteria) Consolidated BD-1 METT Target Score: 259</p> <p>BD Core Indicators Objective 2: Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors</p>
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	<p>Part II. Project Landscape/Seascape Coverage</p> <p>1. What is the extent (in hectares) of the landscape or seascape where the project will directly or indirectly contribute to biodiversity conservation or sustainable use of its components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Landscape/seascape area directly covered by the project:</u> <i>Conservation Forests 22460 ha</i> • <u>Landscape/seascape area indirectly covered by the project:</u> <i>Andros and New Providence Sub National Plans 627400 ha</i> <p>Part III. Management Practices Applied</p> <p>Management practices employed by project beneficiaries that integrate BD considerations and the area of coverage of these management practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>4. Specific management practices that integrate BD - Sub-National Plans & Conservation Forest Management Plans;</u> <i>22459.5 ha</i> <p>LD Core Indicators: SLM in wider landscapes (integrated management)</p> <p>i. Enhanced cross-sector enabling environment for integrated landscape management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Framework strengthening INRM Cross-sectoral training courses addressing cross-sectoral issues are conducted</u> • <u>Integrated land management plans Cross-sectoral training courses addressing cross-sectoral issues are conducted</u> • <u>Capacity strengthening Initial awareness raised (e.g. workshops, seminars)</u> 		
Dates of previous project phases:	n/a	Status of future project phases:	n/a

Project Title:	Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros)
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Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment, BEST Commission/ The Department of Environmental Planning & Protection
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Project partners:	Ministry of Environment & Housing – Forestry Unit, Ministry of Public Works & Urban Development, Bahamas Agriculture & Industrial Cooperation, Department of Lands & Surveys
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Geographical Scope:	National
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Participating Countries:	The Commonwealth of The Bahamas
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GEF project ID:	4847	IMIS number*¹:	GFL-11207-14AC0003-4E34
Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity and Land Degradation	GEF OP #:	
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	BD-2, LD-3, SFM/REDD-1	GEF approval date*:	8 September 2015
UNEP approval date:	17 November 2015	Date of first disbursement*:	23 February 2016
Actual start date²:	23 February 2016	Planned duration:	48 months
Intended completion date*:	16 November 2019	Actual or Expected completion date:	16 November 2021
Project Type:	Full Size Project	GEF Allocation*:	USD 2,853,425
PPG GEF cost*:	USD 100,000	PPG co-financing*:	

¹ Fields with an * sign (in yellow) should be filled by the Fund Management Officer

² Only if different from first disbursement date, e.g., in cases where a long time elapsed between first disbursement and recruitment of project manager.

Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	USD 7,695,258	Total Cost*:	USD 10,548,683
Mid-term Review/eval. (planned date):	February 2021	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	N/A
Mid-term Review/eval. (actual date):		No. of revisions*:	5
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	25 January 2021	Date of last Revision*:	June 2020
Disbursement as of 30 June 2020*:	USD 880,370.00	Date of financial closure*:	30 December 2022
Date of Completion³*:	N/A	Actual expenditures reported as of 30 September 2020⁴:	USD 766,479.41
Total co-financing realized as of 30 September 2020	USD 3,626,729.03	Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 31 December 2020*:	N/A
Leveraged financing:⁵			
Dates of previous project phases:		Status of future project phases:	

2. Project Rationale

This project aims to build on recent advancements in the forestry sector by integrating biodiversity values, ecosystem services values and precepts of sustainable forest management and land-use into enhanced land-use planning in The Bahamas.

3. Project Results Framework

1. Component 1: The institutional systemic support & associated capacity building

- a. The establishment of a forestry assessment and monitoring system which reduces the technical gap by contributing biodiversity and ecosystem services values into an updated inventory of forest ecosystems in the Pine Islands while sustainably monitoring Bahamian forest change in the long term;
- b. Integration of Sustainable Land-Use and Sustainable Forest Management principles into National Land-Use Planning thru development of 2 sub-national plans for Andros and New Providence, in accordance with Planning and Subdivisions Act 2010.

2. Component 2: The expansion and improved management of forest and mangrove sector:

- a. Facilitation of the establishment of the National Forestry Estate thru the gazettement of 3 categories of Forest Reserves, Protected Forests and Conservation Forests. In addition, incremental support will be provided for the development of the National Forest Plan for the Forest Estate, and the targeted management planning for 15% of planned Conservation Forest comprising of 22,410 ha on two (2) pilot areas on Abaco and Andros using SFM/REDD+ principles of community co-management that is expected to increase the carbon sequestration up to 5,661,077 tCO₂ eq.
- b. Rehabilitation of Mangrove Ecosystem in Davis Creek, Andros comprising of 50 ha to restore ecosystem services and increase carbon sequestration up to 14,563 tCO₂ eq.

3. Component 3: Sustainable Livelihoods:

- a. Developing the concept of multi-functional conservation by enabling coastal communities thru effective provisioning of forest ecosystem services while promoting sustainable practices and community management of same. The two pilot projects are:
 - i. Native palm cultivation to support Indigenous Craft Industry on Andros and Grand Bahama
 - ii. Cascarilla bark Cultivation and Processing of Cascarilla Oil in Acklins and Crooked Islands

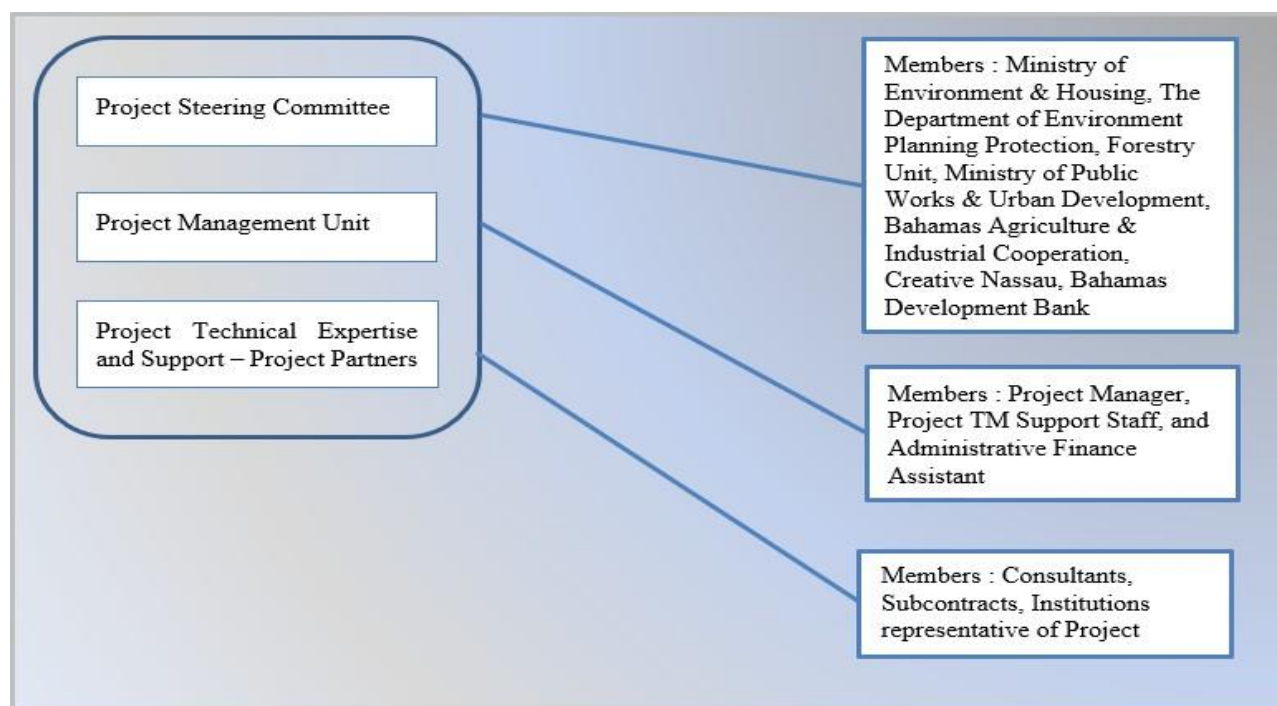
³ If there was a "Completion Revision" please use the date of the revision.

⁴ Information to be provided by Executing Agency/Project Manager

⁵ See above note on co-financing

4. Executing Arrangements

The BPI project has an established/ functional Project Steering Committee (PSC). In practical terms the PSC is responsible for ensuring that the project meets goals announced in the Project Result Framework by helping to balance conflicting priorities and resources. Conclusions and recommendations produced by the PSC are taken into consideration by UNEP and the PM to improve implementation strategies, annual work plans and resources allocation budget and, when necessary, to adjust the project's Result Framework. The Committee comprises of three component heads/focal points, UNEP representatives, and financial project partners: BAIC focal point, Forestry Unit focal point, DPP focal point, DBD focal point, Creative Nassau focal point, ENEP



As the need arises, the EA notifies the IA, in writing, of its intention to modify the agreed implementation plan and budget, and seeks approval from UNEP, and the Project Steering Committee. It will also rectify any issues raised by IA with respect to project execution in a timely manner.

5. Project Cost and Financing

The project falls under the full-size project (FSP) category, with an overall project budget of USD 10,548,683 comprised of a GEF allocation of USD 2,853,425 and co-financing support of USD 7,695,258 from various partners, both in cash and in-kind. The table below shows the itemized budget by component and funding source.

Focal Area Objectives	FA Objectives	Trust Fund	Grant Amount (\$)	Cofinancing (\$)
BD 1.1	Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas.	GEFTF	800,032	1,964,000
BD 2.1	Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation	GEFTF	200,000	984,794
LD 3.2	Integrated landscape management adopted by communities	GEFTF	1,000,032	1,984,433
SFM 1.1	Enhanced enabling environment within the forest sector and across sectors	GEFTF	100,000	1,000,000
SFM 1.2	Good management practices applied in in 15% Conservation Forests (191,826 hectares)	GEFTF	466,688	891,572

SFM 1.3	Good management practices by relevant economic actors in 15% Conservation Forests (191,826 hectares)	GEFTF	100,000	367,031
Project Management Cost			186,673	503,428
Total project costs			2,853,425	7,695,258

Project Components	(in \$)	
	GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
Component 1: Institutional systemic support & associated capacity building and public education, and community awareness	962,345	2,874,580
Component 2: Expansion and improved management of forest/mangrove sector	860,455	2,332,817
Component 3: Models for SFM Sustainable livelihoods, agriculture, forestry & sustainable land management in coastal communities of the Pine Islands, and additional Family Islands in Central and SE Bahamas	844,125	1,984,433
PMC	186,500	503,428
Subtotal	2,666,925	7,191,830
Total Project Cost	2,853,425	7,695,258

6. Implementation Issues

The project has faced some challenges during the phase of implementation which include:

- **General:** There has been turn-over in staff from the Executing Agency (DEPP) and with the identified project partners. Many partner agency representatives who were originally involved at project inception in 2016 moved on with loss of institutional memory and break in continuity. The resignation of the original project manager resulted in the project being turned over to a DEPP staff member (who had a full workload). This ‘interim’ management arrangement persisted which resulted in a loss of institutional continuity following the project initiation and loss of cohesion among project stakeholder groups; this included critical external technical experts on BPI. The ensuing situation coupled with staff turnovers resulted in significant delays in the execution of key project targets. This necessitated a re-launch (and extension) of the project in June 2019 with identification/re-engagement of project stakeholders, along with the recruitment of a dedicated project manager, and designation of focal persons for the project’s steering committee.
- **Scheduling:** Bringing the diverse stakeholder group together for planning and dialogue under the circumstances described in the point above proved a challenge over the reporting period. This is an inherent challenge in the country where there are many demands on few people who are otherwise engaged in multiple initiatives.
- **Lack of Project Knowledge/stakeholder disassociation:** Capacity limitation with regards to boundary verification for National Forest Estate from Dept. of Lands & Surveys is a continuing issue hindering progression. There was a slow of response from the department on the matter which is pertinent to the official verification of the boundaries of the National Forest Estate to facilitate advancement of the relevant provisions of the forestry act. A series of talks between and DLL and the Forestry Unit are working out capacity issues.
- **Natural Disaster:** Post Hurricane Dorian 2019 challenges in Abaco and Grand Bahama. Scheduling has proven to be challenging at times getting all the relevant stakeholders to coordinate trips to GB and Abaco due to ongoing travel restrictions (complicated by the COVID19 response) and various parts of the islands being at different stages of post-hurricane recovery.
- **COVID 19 Global Pandemic:** The situation presented a massive challenge to project implementation as the Government of The Bahamas enforced a countrywide lockdown order from March 24- June 1, 2020 and from August 24- November 3, 2020. Given the restriction on physical assemblies, innovation with respect to the conduct of virtual meetings and trainings was required. Deliverables not requiring

field travels were accomplished via virtual means and as a result the project has focused on non- fieldwork and travel related activities during this review period. Plans are being made to schedule field work in January 2021 assuming resumption of normalized operations, however with alignment with Covid-19 management protocols.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

7. Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁶ and the UNEP Programme Manual⁷, the Mid-Term Review is undertaken approximately half-way through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The MTR will assess project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes and supporting their sustainability.

8. Key Review Principles

Mid-Term Review findings and judgements will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the Review Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

As this Review is being undertaken at the mid-point of project implementation, particular attention will be given to identifying implementation challenges and risks to achieving the expected project objectives and sustainability, which will support potential course correction. Possible questions to be considered include:

- Does the TOC properly reflect the project's intended change process?
- Is the stakeholder analysis still appropriate and adequate to support the project's ambitions?
- Are results statements in keeping with both UNEP and GEF definitions (e.g. outcomes are expressed as the uptake or use of outputs)
- Are roles and responsibilities commonly understood and playing out effectively?
- Is there an effective monitoring mechanism for the project's implementation (this is separate from, and supports, reporting in the annual PIR)?
- Is the rate of expenditure appropriate for the mid-point?
- Have plans for inclusivity (human rights, gender considerations, disability inclusion etc) been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?
- Are safeguard identification and mitigation plans being monitored and steps taken to minimize negative effects?
- Is there an exit strategy in place and are the elements needed for the project's benefits to be sustained after the project end, being incorporated in the project implementation?
- Have recommendations from previous performance assessments (where they exist) been appropriately addressed?
- (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

A Mid-Term Review is a formative assessment, which requires that the consultants go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance is and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance is as it is. (i.e. what is contributing to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project at the mid-point and the recommendations that support adaptive management for the remainder of the project.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to attribute any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the contribution made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where

⁶ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

⁷ <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A credible association between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

A key aim of the Mid-Term Review is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff, the Executing Agency and key project stakeholders. The Review Consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the review process and in the communication of review findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all review deliverables. There may be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The Task Manager will plan with the Review Consultant which audiences to target and the easiest and most effective way to communicate the key review findings and lessons to them. This may include some or all of the following: a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of a review brief or interactive presentation. Draft and final versions of the Main Review Report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Task Manager and a copy of the final version will be submitted to the UNEP Evaluation Office, who will provide an assessment of the quality of the Review Report based on a standard UNEP template.

9. Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the MTR.

- To what extent is the project following a robust theory of change and capacity building with appropriately formulated outputs, direct outcomes, intermediate states and long-term results?
- What revisions are required to ensure that implementation can be effectively evaluated at the end of the project? This includes consideration of whether the outcome indicators are verifiable and appropriate for recording progress towards the achievement of the development objectives.
- The extent to which the design and implementation of the models that are to demonstrate viable forest management (SFM) livelihoods under Component 3 are meeting the intended impact with the likelihood of sustainability and scaling-up.

Address the questions required for the GEF Portal in the appropriate parts of the report and provide a **summary of the findings in the Conclusions section of the report:**

a) Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation:

What is the performance at the project's mid-point against Core Indicator Targets? *(For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided).*

b) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation:

What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

c) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:

What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*

d) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards:

What has been the experience at the project's mid-point against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and any measures taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

e) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness: What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge

Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions. *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

10. Evaluation Criteria

All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-G below, outline the scope of the criteria and a link to a table for recording the ratings is provided in Annex 1. A weightings table will be provided in excel format (see notes in Annex 1) to support the determination of an overall project rating.

A. Strategic Relevance

The Review will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. The Review will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval, as well as each country's UNDAF. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

- i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy⁸ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building⁹ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

- ii. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Review will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

- iii. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

The Review will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will be considered. Examples may include: UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

iv. Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence¹⁰

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization¹¹, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP -programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

⁸ UN Environment's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UN Environment's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UN Environment's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

⁹ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

¹⁰ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

B. Effectiveness

The Review will assess effectiveness across three dimensions: delivery of outputs, achievement of project outcomes and, where appropriate and feasible, likelihood of impact. At the mid-point more emphasis is placed on performance at the output and outcome levels, but observations about likelihood of impact may be helpful for course correction or adjusting the emphasis of the project's efforts.

i. Availability of Outputs¹²

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and achieving targets and milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, a table should be provided showing the original formulation and the amended version for transparency. The delivery of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their usefulness and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes¹³

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes defined in the Project Results Framework¹⁴. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to make them consistent with UNEP guidelines. Where possible, the Review should report evidence of attribution, contribution or credible association between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

Based on the articulation of longer-term effects as defined in the project objective or stated intentions, the Review will, where possible, assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality.

The Review will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute, to unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionately affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards¹⁵. The Review will consider the extent to which the project is playing a catalytic role or is promoting longer-term scaling up and/or replication¹⁶.

¹¹ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement.

Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

¹² Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

¹³ Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

¹⁴ UNEP staff are currently required to submit a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2013 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the evaluation.

C. Financial Management

Under financial management the Mid-Term Review will assess: a) whether the rate of spend is consistent with the project's length of implementation to-date, the agreed workplan and the delivery of outputs and b) whether financial reporting and/or auditing requirements are being met consistently and to adequate standards by all parties. This includes an assessment of whether UNEP's financial management policies and the GEF's fiduciary standards are being met. Any financial management issues that are affecting the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted.

D. Efficiency

The Review will assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Review will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximize results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project is being implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches. The Review will also assess ways in which potential project extensions can be avoided through stronger project management.

E. Monitoring and Reporting

The Review will assess monitoring and reporting across two sub-categories: monitoring of project implementation, and project reporting.

iv. Monitoring of Project Implementation

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART¹⁷ results towards the achievement of the project's outputs and outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. The Review will assess the use and quality of the monitoring plan. In particular, the evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. The Review will assess whether the monitoring system is operational and facilitates the timely tracking of results and progress towards project milestones and targets throughout the project implementation period. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Review should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring are being used to support this activity.

i. Project Reporting

Projects funded by GEF have requirements with regard to verifying documentation and reporting (i.e., the Project Implementation Reviews, Tracking Tool and CEO Endorsement template¹⁸), which will be made available by the Task Manager. The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and GEF reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Where corrective action is indicated in the annual Project Implementation Review reports (e.g. as an identified risk), the Review Consultant will record whether this action has been taken.

¹⁵ Further information on Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards (ESES) can be found at <http://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/8718><http://www.unep.org/about/eses/>

¹⁶ *Scaling up* refers to approaches being adopted on a much larger scale, but in a very similar context. Scaling up is often the longer-term objective of pilot initiatives. *Replication* refers to approaches being repeated or lessons being explicitly applied in new/different contexts e.g. other geographic areas, different target group etc. Effective replication typically requires some form of revision or adaptation to the new context. It is possible to replicate at either the same or a different scale.

¹⁷ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

¹⁸ The Consultant(s) should verify that the annual Project Implementation Reviews have been submitted, that the Tracking Tool is being kept up-to-date and that in the CEO Endorsement template Table A and Section E have been completed.

F. Sustainability

Sustainability¹⁹ is understood as the probability of the benefits associated with the project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits at the outcome level. Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

The Review will ascertain that the project has put in place an appropriate exit strategy and measures to mitigate risks to sustainability. The Review Consultant will consider: a) the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards, b) the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained and c) the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure.

G. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

These factors are rated in the ratings table but can be discussed as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. Where the issues have not been addressed under other evaluation criteria, the consultant(s) will provide summary sections under the following headings)

i. Preparation and Readiness

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project. The Review will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the Review will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements.

ii. Quality of Project Implementation and Execution

Specifically, for GEF funded projects, this factor refers separately to the performance of the Executing Agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP, as the Implementing Agency.

The Review will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive project management should be highlighted.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP. The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling

¹⁹ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment²⁰.

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equity and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular, the Review will consider to what extent to which project design, the implementation that underpins effectiveness and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening, risk assessment and management (avoidance or mitigation) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements²¹ were met to: screen proposed projects for any safeguarding issues; conduct sound environmental and social risk assessments; identify and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, mitigate, environmental, social and economic risks; apply appropriate environmental and social measures to minimize any potential risks and harm to intended beneficiaries and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken.

The evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project is minimising UNEP's environmental footprint.

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Review will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. The Review will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices. This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

The Review will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Review should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gender or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Review will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

²⁰The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and

other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time.

https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

²¹ For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

The Mid-Term Review will use a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the review process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the Review Consultant maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the review implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the review findings.

Where applicable, the Review Consultant should provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

The findings of the Review will be based on the following:

- (a) **A desk review** of:
 - Relevant background documentation, inter alia: Communication strategy
 - Project Document and Appendices
 - Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
 - Half-Year Progress Reports (HYPR), Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports, and financial reports (in the UNEP Anubis data management system), progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Tracking Tool etc.;
 - Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.
- (b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
 - UNEP Task Manager (TM) and team members;
 - Project Manager (PM) and team members; Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP), the Forestry Unit, The Bahamas Agricultural & Industrial Corporation (BAIC), Department of Physical Planning (DPP), The Bahamas Development Bank (BDB), Creative Nassau, The Department of Agriculture (DOA), and Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI).
 - UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
 - Representatives from civil society and specialist groups such as the Acklins Islanders Cooperative Society
- (c) **Field visits:** One
- (d) **Other data collection tools:** If needed, to be decided by the Review Consultant at the inception phase

11. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures

The Review Consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 3 for guidance on structure and content) containing confirmation of the results framework and Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify

emerging findings.

- **Draft and Final Review Reports:** containing an Executive Summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

Review of the draft review report. The Review Consultant will submit a draft report to the Project Manager and Task Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Project Manager with concurrence from the Task Manager, will share the cleared draft report with key project stakeholders for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Project Manager for consolidation. The Project Manager will provide all comments to the Review Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response. The Task Manager will support as appropriate.

At the end of the review process and based on the findings in the Review Report, the Task Manager will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals, and circulate Lessons Learned.

12. The Review Consultant

The Review Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the Project Manager Solomon Gibson of the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) in consultation with the Task Manager Christopher Cox and Team Assistant Gloritzel Frangakis, the Portfolio Manager Johan Robinson and the Fund Management Officer, Michael Atogoh. The consultant will liaise with the Task Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Review. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their travel, visa, plan meetings with stakeholders (with assistance from the DEPP), organize online surveys, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The Project Team, supported by the Task Manager will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the Review Consultant to conduct the Review as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period of 3 months [March 2021 to June 2021] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other related fields; a minimum of 10 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably to include elaboration and design of projects, evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; a broad understanding of multi-sectorial projects or initiatives analysis and evaluation, including multilateral funding or support agencies. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based and expected to be facilitated by telecommuting, considering COVID19 protocols.

The Review Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Project Manager, supported by the Task Manager, for overall management of the review and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Evaluation Deliverables, above. The Review Consultant will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

13. Schedule of the Review

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Review.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review

Milestone	Indicative Timeframe
Kick-off meeting (via Skype, Zoom, etc.)	March 2021
Inception Report	March 2021
Data collection and analysis, desk-based interviews and surveys	March – May 2021
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	May 2021
Draft Report to Project Manager	May 2021
Draft Report shared with the wider group of stakeholders	May 2021
Final Main Review Report	June 2021
Final Main Review Report shared with all respondents	June 2021

14. Contractual Arrangements

The Review Consultant will be selected and recruited by the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) under a service Contract for approval by the Government of The Bahamas through the Ministry of Environment and Housing-DEPP on a “fees only” basis (see below). By signing the service contract with the DEPP, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project’s executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Certificate of Confidentiality as required in any work engagement with the Government of The Bahamas.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Project Manager and Task Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per annex document 3</i>)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per annex document 4</i>)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	40%

Fees only contracts:

The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP’s Anubis information management system and if such access is granted, the consultant agrees not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Review report.

In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the Project Manager in consultation with the Task Manager, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the DEPP until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet the DEPP and UNEP’s quality standards.

If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to the Project Manager in a timely manner,

i.e. before the end date of their contract, the DEPP reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the DEPP to bring the report up to standard or completion.