PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	4847
Project Name:	Pine Islands - Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros)
Countr(ies):	Bahamas, Regional
Implementing Agency:	UNEP

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name
Pine Islands - Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros)

Country
Bahamas, Regional

GEF ID	Implementing Agency
4847	UNEP

Executing Entity
BEST Commission with Bahamas Agriculture and Industrial Corporation (BAIC), Bahamas National G.I.S. Centre (BNGIS), Bahamas National Trust (BNT), Department of Lands & Surveys (DLS), Forestry Unit, Department of Physical Planning (DPP), and Town Planning Committee (TPC).

Trust Fund	Project Type
GET	FSP

PIR Submission	Fiscal Year , PIR Number
8/28/2025	FY 2025 , 9th PIR

Objective
Integrate Biodiversity Considerations & Ecosystem Services into Forest Management and Land Use Planning (4 Pine Islands: Grand Bahamas, New Providence, Abaco and Andros)

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress	Development Objective
Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory

Overall risk
Moderate Risk

Project Financing	Cumulative Disbursement
3,124,500.00	2,710,964.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval	Agency Approval
9/8/2015	9/8/2015

Implementation Start 11/17/2015	First Disbursement 2/23/2016
Expected MTR 7/1/2021	Actual MTR 5/1/2021
Expected Completion 9/30/2025	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Component 1Outcome 1.2 Increased targeted public awareness of the importance and benefits of sustainably managing forest & mangrove biodiversity, ecosystem services, and sustainable land management: Work regarding the National Forest Inventory has been completed, with endorsements of the completed work provided by the Bahamas Forestry Unit. Associated reports have been completed and submitted to the forestry unit with only carbon sequestration estimates outstanding. Geospatial handbook to be completed and provided to the relevant island administrators (North and Central Andros, Abaco, Grand Bahama, and one for New Providence with copies to be provided by the partners within the Ministry of Environment. Department of Environmental Planning and Protection Website completed to house data maps and project data. Completion of submission of project-relevant information is scheduled to be completed by mid-September 2024.The Department of Physical Planning was provided with draft versions of the two Land Use Plans for New Providence by the Urban Planning Consultant and the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection in March and May 2024, respectively. Given the extended review timeline, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works was engaged to help facilitate the completion of the review process and ensure that feedback could be provided to the consultant for necessary revisions based on input from the Department of Physical Planning (DPP). In July 2025, the DPP consultant advised that they may recommend the documents not be published. However, no formal comments or written review of the draft documents have been submitted to date. The Project has funding to be utilized for promotion of the Project, The DEPP and Forestry unit via the National Television and Radio Station from August to December 2025. Component 2Outcome 2 Improved management effectiveness of existing and new forest reserves: Approval for the boundaries of the National Forestry estate has been submitted to the Permanant Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and the Minister. The project is currently awaiting the response of Cabinet. It should be noted that the gazette of the National Forest Estate and National Forest Plan is a legal mandate and required a revision of the end-project targets as stated in the previous PIR. This process has been a major area of focus for the leadership of the DEPP, BAIC and thr Forestry Unit.Davis Creek activities have been completed with only signage outstanding to be provided for the site. Five sites in the Davis Creek area are proposed by the signage plan. Procurement of the signs and frames have began with completion of instillation expected to have been completed by mid-September 2025.Component 3Output 3 Pilot Model Sustainable Cultivation of Native Palms: As of 2025, two of the three planned greenhouses have been successfully constructed—one located in Acklins and the other in Red Bays, Andros. The third structure is slated for development at the Gladstone Road Agricultural Centre in New Providence, with formal approval secured from the Ministry of Agriculture.Throughout 2025, key advancements have been made in building local capacity. Training on the operation and management of the Acklins greenhouse began earlier this year, with corresponding sessions for the Red Bays community set to commence in August 2025. These sessions are designed to strengthen community-based agro forestry and sustainable plant propagation practices, aligning with the broader goals of improving livelihoods and promoting environmental responsibility.The Red Bay greenhouse effort stands out

as a community-centered initiative. Land for the facility was allocated within the community park thanks to the collaboration of local leadership and the advocacy of influential women. Residents were directly involved in shaping the greenhouse's orientation, dimensions. To secure maintenance of the greenhouse for the remainder of the project and to help in training, BAMSI was engaged to support the community in this regard.A core priority of the Sustainable Livelihoods Component is advancing gender equity. The project emphasizes the inclusion of women in leadership and decision-making roles while also ensuring equitable access to training and employment linked to greenhouse management and sustainable land use. These efforts are intended to support inclusive, community-led development and to empower women as key stakeholders in sustainable growth.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

Despite notable progress under the Bahamas Pine Island Project, several challenges have emerged that have impacted the timely and effective implementation of key components. These challenges include:1. Delays in Interagency Coordination: Coordination between key government departments—such as the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP), Department of Physical Planning (DPP), and the Ministry of Works—has, at times, resulted in delays in feedback, decision-making, and document finalization. For instance, the review and validation of Land Use Plans have taken longer than anticipated, affecting downstream activities.2. Slow Turnaround on Technical Reviews: Technical inputs and formal written feedback on planning documents and spatial data submissions have experienced bottlenecks, hindering the project's ability to finalize outputs and submit materials to implementing agencies and stakeholders on schedule.3. Procurement and Infrastructure Delays: While progress has been made in constructing greenhouse infrastructure, the procurement process for signage, supplies, and contractors have been slower than expected. Challenges include navigating government procurement procedures, the availability of materials on remote islands, and contractor mobilization.4. Limited On-Island Technical Support: In North Andros BAIC lacks readily available technical personnel to support consistent monitoring, training, or troubleshooting. This is particularly evident in locations where greenhouses were constructed and operations are ongoing or imminent.5. Logistical Constraints: Shipping delays, transportation of materials, and access to remote sites (e.g., Acklins and Red Bays) have posed logistical difficulties. These issues have affected the timely delivery of materials and limited on-site training and supervision capabilities.6. Community Engagement and Capacity Gaps: While community involvement is a strength of the project, there remain capacity gaps—particularly in newer project communities—where ongoing support is needed to ensure sustained participation, especially among women and youth.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

The Sustainable Livelihoods Component of the Bahamas Pine Island Project has made progress over this reporting period, yielding tangible results while gaining support and expanding collaboration with key institutional partners and reinforcing the project's long-term development impact. This component is focused on fostering resilient, community-based agroforestry systems through greenhouse propagation, livelihood training, and sustainable land-use practices—core pillars that support both environmental and socio-economic goals.

As present, two of the three greenhouses under the project have been constructed—one located in Acklins and the other in Red Bays, Andros. A third greenhouse is scheduled for development at the Gladstone Road Agricultural Centre (GRAC) in New Providence. The land for this facility has been made available through

the Ministry of Agriculture, marking a significant step toward piloting propagation techniques and greenhouse operations.

This report period has seen a marked increase in engagement with technical stakeholders and institutional partners critical to the success of the livelihoods component. Recognizing the limited involvement of the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC) to date, and acknowledging challenges with the greenhouse provided under its purview, the project has actively sought strategic support from the Bahamas Agricultural and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI) and the Bahamas Development Bank (BDB).

BAMSI will provide technical expertise in crop propagation, greenhouse management, and sustainable farming practices. Their role includes capacity-building support for local communities, assistance with greenhouse operations, and technical input to improve overall productivity and viability of the propagation systems. BAMSI's experience in agricultural education and training presents a critical asset to the project, especially as training activities conclude within 2025 with project wind-down.

The Bahamas Development Bank (BDB) is also engaged as a strategic partner, particularly in facilitating access to micro-financing opportunities and enterprise development for individuals and small groups participating in the livelihood activities. BDB’s involvement is instrumental in transitioning participants from subsistence-level propagation to commercially viable operations, in line with the project’s broader objective of sustainable economic empowerment.

Training efforts have also expanded significantly in this reporting period. Hands-on instruction on the use and maintenance of the Acklins greenhouse commenced earlier this year, covering topics such as nursery operations, agroforestry propagation techniques, irrigation management, and post-harvest handling. These sessions also include modules on climate adaptation, environmental best practices, and income generation strategies.

Gender inclusion remains a guiding principle in all areas of implementation. The project continued to promote equal access for women in training programs and decision-making roles. Efforts are being made to mainstream gender equity into institutional partnerships and ensure that women are fully represented in both the technical and economic aspects of the component.

Overall, this reporting period has seen consolidation, course correction, and strengthened inter-agency cooperation for the Sustainable Livelihoods Component. Through its expanded collaboration with BAMSI and BDB, and its responsive approach to operational challenges, the project continues to build a strong foundation for community-driven growth

D. Gender Equality

Gender-Based and Female-Led Activities Prioritized in 2024–2025: The Bahamas Pine Island Project continues to place gender equity at the forefront of its implementation strategy, with a dedicated focus on empowering women through inclusive planning, leadership, and direct engagement in project activities. During the 2024–2025 period, the Sustainable Livelihoods Component has advanced a number of initiatives designed to be women-led and community-driven, with particular emphasis on indigenous knowledge and economic empowerment.

1. Women-Led Community Engagement and Greenhouse Revitalization: Consultations were conducted with female artisans in the Red Bays settlement to explore how the community greenhouse could be utilized more effectively to support women's livelihoods. As a result of these consultations, the cultivation and harvesting of the silver top palm—a culturally significant and economically valuable non-timber forest

product—was identified as a priority. Training and capacity-building activities around this initiative will be led by the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC) and further supported by the Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI), which is being formally brought onto the project to provide technical support and expertise.

2. Female Lead Implementation Team for Community Training: In alignment with the project's commitment to gender equity, the consultant tasked with developing and delivering the training on silver top palm propagation will be two women from the community, supported by two women community liaisons. This team will lead grassroots outreach and hands-on training activities within North Andros communities. The intentional placement of women in leadership and facilitation roles not only models gender parity in technical fields but ensures that community engagement strategies are accessible and inclusive.

3. Mainstreaming Female Participation Across Project Components: Beyond the Sustainable Livelihoods workstream, the project actively promotes the equal involvement of women across all other components, including forestry, ecosystem monitoring, and knowledge management. Women are being encouraged and supported to participate in field training sessions, technical workshops, and decision-making processes at both the community and institutional levels.

This approach reinforces the project's broader objective of ensuring that environmental sustainability is pursued hand-in-hand with social equity, recognizing the critical role that women play in managing natural resources, sustaining traditional knowledge, and shaping resilient communities.

E. Knowledge Management

During this phase of the Bahamas Pine Island Project, several key learnings emerged that have strengthened the overall implementation approach and institutional capacity of stakeholders involved. One of the most significant outcomes was the improved understanding of the logistical and regulatory challenges surrounding land procurement and site preparation, especially in relation to Crown Land designation and inter-agency coordination. Project partners, including the Forestry Unit, BAIC, and BDB, deepened their practical knowledge of cross-sector collaboration and the importance of integrating environmental, agricultural, and financial planning for long-term sustainability.

Capacity building efforts and field engagement activities also enhanced local understanding of sustainable forestry practices, propagation techniques, and climate-resilient livelihoods. The project's emphasis on gender-inclusive leadership, particularly through the recruitment of a female-led technical team and community managers, reinforced the value of inclusive development and highlighted the benefits of empowering women in environmental governance and community-based initiatives.

Furthermore, ongoing monitoring and evaluation provided valuable insight into the adaptive management of pilot interventions, revealing the importance of flexibility in implementation timelines and the need for improved data collection systems. Overall, these experiences have informed a more responsive and context-sensitive approach to project delivery, which will guide future scaling efforts under the national forest estate and related sustainable development programs.

Main learning during the period

1. Institutional Capacity and Multi-Agency Cooperation: One of the key lessons learned during the implementation of the project was the significant impact of limited human resources within the Forestry Unit,

which hindered the long-term sustainability of forest monitoring and enforcement activities. This challenge underscored the necessity of multi-agency cooperation, particularly involving partners such as DEPP, BAMSI, and BDB, to fill operational and technical gaps—especially during periods of staff turnover or institutional undercapacity. As a result, the project emphasized the importance of long-term human resource planning within natural resource ministries. Furthermore, it fostered a culture of inter-agency knowledge sharing, particularly in the area of community-based intervention management.

2. Community Engagement and Social Dynamics: The project demonstrated that community engagement is most effective when local technical officers or individuals from within the community are involved in the delivery and facilitation of project activities. This approach proved particularly successful in Andros and Acklins, where communities showed high receptivity and willingness to participate. Conversely, engagement efforts in New Providence encountered greater challenges, largely due to competing land-use priorities and pressures. These experiences led to a shift toward more participatory models of engagement, moving away from top-down approaches. They also prompted the development of localized outreach strategies that are better aligned with the unique social and cultural dynamics of each island.

3. Policy and Governance Constraints: The project encountered structural challenges related to policy formulation within the Bahamian political system, where the passage of forestry-related policies—such as land allocations and Cabinet approvals—proved to be complex and slow-moving. It became clear that early and sustained advocacy, particularly through engagement with Permanent Secretaries and relevant Ministers, is essential to building policy momentum. As a result, the project contributed to institutional learning on how to strategically navigate policy bottlenecks and leverage political support. Informal processes for pre-legislative engagement and consensus-building were also developed to ensure smoother progression of policy proposals.

4. Risk and Resilience Management: Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Dorian, highlighted the critical need to integrate climate resilience into the design and implementation of forestry projects. These events revealed that land availability and environmental vulnerability vary significantly across islands, necessitating context-specific approaches. As a result, project partners shared knowledge related to the development of disaster-resilient infrastructure and the importance of flexible, adaptive land-use planning. Additionally, the project increased awareness of the complex and shifting nature of land tenure arrangements in post-disaster recovery contexts.

5. Technical and Operational Lessons: Operationally, the project revealed that certain foundational components, such as fire management planning, were insufficiently addressed during the early stages. The underestimation of fire risk led to reactive rather than proactive mitigation measures. Furthermore, the maintenance of physical infrastructure—including nurseries and other facilities—was often compromised due to the absence of long-term support plans. These gaps led to the subsequent development of fire management protocols in collaboration with NEMA and BNGIS, and highlighted the need for post-construction operational planning, including local maintenance training and community stewardship strategies.

6. Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) Challenges: Challenges also emerged in the area of monitoring and reporting. Discrepancies between reported and actual project activities—exacerbated by low staffing levels in the Forestry Unit—called into question the reliability of some data. Staff turnover further disrupted institutional memory and tracking systems. These difficulties underscored the need for centralized reporting tools and the standardization of MRV protocols across implementing agencies. In response, the project encouraged the provision of ongoing technical assistance to strengthen data quality assurance, control, and documentation processes.

7. Partnership Models and Responsibility Sharing: The project also illustrated the evolving nature of partnership dynamics. In instances where initial implementing partners lacked the capacity to fully deliver on their responsibilities, agencies such as BAMSI, BDB, and DEPP—as well as community volunteers—stepped

in to ensure continuity. This led to the emergence of a flexible model of "horizontal and vertical loading," whereby responsibilities were redistributed across institutions and administrative levels. This approach enabled the project to maintain momentum despite internal challenges, and provided important lessons on role clarity, coordination, and the risks associated with over-reliance on any single institution.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	Project extensions to accomodate implementation delays.
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Crooked Island Plantation (HardHill Settlement)	22.6030	-73.8833	

Location Description:

Cascarilla Coppice Forest Plantation

Activity Description:

Cascarilla plantation for cascarilla propagation and harvesting of cascarilla bark for distillation of cascarilla oil and production of other cascarilla based products

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Andros Plantation: Red Bays	25.1405	-78.1876	

Location Description:

Pine Forest: Silver Top Forest Plantation

Activity Description:

Greenhouse site for the silver top palm propagation in North Andros.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
New Providence	25.0238	-78.1876	

Location Description:

Forest Reserve

Activity Description:

Proposed reserve area

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
New Providence	25.0206	-77.4306	

Location Description:

Forest Reserve

Activity Description:

Proposed reserve area

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Grand Bahama	26.6751	-77.4306	

Location Description:

Forest Reserve

Activity Description:

Proposed reserve area

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Davis Creek	24.7451	-77.8124	

Location Description:

Mangrove Creek System

Activity Description:

approximately 80 hectare mangrove restoration in Davis creek Andros

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
National Forest Estate Grand Bahama	26.6597	-78.3403	

Location Description:

Forest Reserve

Activity Description:

Proposed reserve area

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
National Forestry Estate Nassau	25.0212	-77.4066	

Location Description:

Pine Forest and Mangrove/Wetland Ecosystem

Activity Description:

Proposed reserve area

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Acklins & Crooked Island Cascarilla Cultivation Site	22.6044	-73.8755	

Location Description:

Cascarilla Cultivation Site

Activity Description:

40.5 hectare plantation for cascarilla propagation and harvesting of cascarilla bark for distillation of cascarilla oil and production of other cascarilla based products

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Andros Red Bays Resource Assessment	25.1361	-78.1843	

Location Description:

Silver Top Cultivation Site

Activity Description:

Greenhouse site for the silver top palm propagation in North Andros.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Gladstone Road Agricultural Centre	25.0187	-77.4017	

Location Description:

National Botanical Gardens

Activity Description:

Construction of Greenhouse for Silver-Top Palm and Cabbage Top Palm to help repopulation in Grand Bahamas

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	4847-PIR-UNEP-2025-Bahamas Pine Islands