

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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General Project Information

Project Title

Strategic Management of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) to Safeguard Biodiversity and Support Ecosystem Restoration in The Bahamas

Region	GEF Project ID
Latin America and the Caribbean	12345
Country(ies)	Type of Project
Bahamas	MSP
GEF Agency(ies):	GEF Agency ID
UNEP	01731
Executing Partner	Executing Partner Type
Department of Environmental Planning & Protection (DEPP)	Government
GEF Focal Area (s)	Submission Date
Biodiversity	5/15/2026

Project Sector (CCM Only)

Taxonomy

Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Stakeholders, Private Sector, SMEs, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Beneficiaries, Local Communities, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Academia, Non-Governmental Organization, Type of Engagement, Participation, Consultation, Partnership, Information Dissemination, Communications, Education, Behavior change, Awareness Raising, Public Campaigns, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Capacity Development, Knowledge Generation, Targeted Research, Knowledge Exchange, Learning, Theory of change, Indicators to measure change, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Women groups, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Gender results areas, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Species, Threatened Species, Invasive Alien Species, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Productive Landscapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt

Type of Trust Fund	Project Duration (Months)
GET	60
GEF Project Grant: (a)	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)
4,598,180.00	0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)
436,827.00	0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	Total Co-financing
5,035,007.00	12,610,000.00

PPG Amount: (e)	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)
150,000.00	14,250.00
PPG total amount: (e+f)	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)
164,250.00	5,199,257.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No Competitive Window: No

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B “project description”. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Project Summary

Terrestrial and coastal biodiversity in The Bahamas is increasingly threatened by a combination of interacting drivers, including the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (IAS), land use change associated with development, habitat fragmentation and displacement of natural ecosystems, underpinned by insufficient integration of biodiversity considerations into development planning and regulatory processes. These pressures have contributed to the degradation of native vegetation communities and the loss of ecosystem integrity across coastal and inland landscapes. Invasive alien species (IAS) of greatest concern in The Bahamas, notably *Casuarina* and *Scaevola* are contributing to the rapid degradation of natural coastal and inland vegetation communities, with the disruption of the stability of native coastal dune ecosystems that buffer inland ecosystems particularly against storm events. In coastal areas, these impacts are compounded by development pressures and land use changes that reduce, fragment, and displace natural habitats, thereby weakening ecosystem resilience and limiting natural regeneration. Existing environmental planning and development approval processes have not consistently incorporated biodiversity considerations, further increasing ecosystem vulnerability to degradation and loss. The situation is anticipated to worsen with the effects of climate change and associated sea level rise, exacerbated by extreme storm surge inundations from increasingly intense hurricanes, compounded by altered rainfall and moisture regimes that will mean increased fire risk in already impacted ecosystems, particularly in drier months. Coastal ecosystems once dominated by native sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*), are being increasingly displaced by *Casuarina equisetifolia* that alters soil conditions and inhibits native species recruitment. Natural regeneration of the native Silver-top Palm (*Coccothrinax argentata*), is constrained by out-competition by *Scaevola taccada* through dense shading and suppression of understory diversity, with similar impacts to mangrove ecosystems (dominated by *Conocarpus erectus*, *Rhizophora mangle*, *Avicennia germinans*, and *Laguncularia racemosa*) which are being affected by IAS-driven habitat modification, where altered hydrological regimes further limit regeneration and weaken connectivity between coastal and upland ecosystems.

Deterioration of ecosystem quality is having compounding impacts on the survivorship of other globally important species which include the endangered endemic Bahama Swallow (*Tachycineta cyaneoviridis*)^[1], Bahama Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala bahamensis*), West Indian Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*), along with important migratory shorebirds along the Atlantic Flyway such as the near-threatened Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)^[2] and Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*), which rely on intact beach and dune habitats for nesting and foraging. The risk posed by IAS in the coastal zone also impacts the Critically Endangered Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), whose nesting success is directly impacted by shoreline degradation and the loss of stable, native vegetation.

To counter the growing IAS threat, this proposed project will address the drivers of terrestrial ecosystem integrity loss resulting from the aggressive proliferation of floral IAS in The Bahamas, with focus on two primary species, *Casuarina* and *Scaevola*. The aim is to mitigate further degradation threat, improve ecosystem quality and resilience at priority locations, and ultimately safeguard globally significant biodiversity that is at risk due to the proliferation of *Casuarina* and *Scaevola*. Project interventions on Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island will support habitats within and adjacent to Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), nationally protected areas, and other priority conservation landscapes, including the Southern Abaco KBA (#19822) and Abaco National Park (a protected area), the Harold Wilson Pond which functions as both a protected area and KBA (#19820) in New Providence KBA, and the Cat Island Wetlands KBA (#20634). Priority ecosystems targeted for restoration, including pine forests, coppice, mangrove, wetland, and coastal strand habitats, provide critical ecological functions and habitat for species of national and global conservation importance. By reducing invasive species pressures and restoring ecosystem function, the project will strengthen ecosystem resilience and contribute to national and global biodiversity conservation objectives.

The key anticipated outcomes from successful project implementation are (i) Strengthened and mainstreamed policy, regulation, cross-institutional and cross-sectoral management arrangements to more effectively reduce threats posed by invasive alien species (IAS) to the integrity of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems; (ii) Strengthened early detection, surveillance, prevention and management of priority invasion pathways contribute to reduced risks associated with IAS introduction and spread; (iii) Over 1,013 hectares of IAS-degraded landscapes restored, and 41,175 hectares under active IAS management across Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island, improving ecosystem quality and resilience to climate change impacts; (iv) Strengthened capacity and skills of national and local authorities, communities, and relevant stakeholders that contribute to improved operational effectiveness and coordinated IAS management, and (v) Heightened awareness and strengthened knowledge management contributes to improved decision-making and stakeholder mobilization in mitigating impacts from IAS in The Bahamas. Long-term global environmental benefits (GEBs) are expected to accrue as ecosystem integrity improves within native sea grape, Silver-top Palm, and mangrove communities. Enhanced coastal and inland ecosystem conservation through IAS mitigation and control will strengthen essential ecosystem provisioning services and support the conservation of species of global conservation importance such as the Bahama Swallow, Piping Plover, Wilson's Plover, and Hawksbill Turtle.

The initiative will be anchored in the Bahamas National Invasive Species Strategy (BNISS) toward its upgrading, and guided by key frameworks, including The Bahamas National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and legislative provisions under the Forestry Act, the and the Plant Protection Act, and will align with international commitments, principally the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. The project will be executed by the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) in collaboration with partner agencies including the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), The Forestry Unit, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Bahamas Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority (BAHFSA), the Ministry of Tourism, The Ministry of Agriculture and the Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Sciences Institute (BAMSI), the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) and other relevant agencies. UNEP's support in the country's access to the GEF8 STAR allocation falls within the framework of the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF) for 2022-2026 which includes Outcome 6 'Caribbean countries manage natural resources & ecosystems strengthening their resilience & enhancing the resilience & prosperity of the people and communities that depend on them'.

[1] <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22712080/179692086>

[2] <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22693811/182083944>

Indicative Project Overview

Project Objective

To restore and enhance the resilience of coastal and terrestrial ecosystems in The Bahamas by improving the existing IAS framework, restoring native vegetation, reducing the spread and impacts of invasive plant species, and fostering long-term community-led coastal stewardship.

Project Components

Component 1: Enhanced policy, legal and institutional coordination frameworks for control and mitigation of impacts of invasive alien species (IAS)

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
656,883.00	1,662,750.00

Outcome:

1.1 Strengthened and mainstreamed policy, regulation, cross-institutional and cross-sectoral management arrangements to more effectively reduce threats posed by invasive alien species (IAS) to integrity of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems

Indicators: (i) Number of updated policy and regulatory options on IAS management available to decision makers for adoption, (ii) Number of documented upgrade recommendations available for adoption by decision makers, (iii) National IAS investment strategy and proposed financial mechanism adopted by stakeholders

Output:

1.1.1. Package of recommendations for upgrading relevant legislation and regulations, including updated NISSAP based on review existing legislation, policies, strategies, and institutional mandates related to IAS management.

1.1.2. Package of recommendations for an improved organizational governance mechanism for IAS prevention, control, and reporting including operational guidelines and SOPs to define agency roles in prevention, eradication, and response.

1.1.3. Cost-benefit analysis on IAS management, a National IAS investment strategy and proposed **financial mechanism** to support IAS management, aimed at integration into national planning and budgeting processes.

Component 2: Strengthened early detection, surveillance and mitigation system for IAS management

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
437,922.00	1,032,250.00

Outcome:

2.1 Strengthened early detection, surveillance, prevention and management of priority invasion pathways contribute to reduced risks associated with IAS introduction and spread

Indicators: (i) number of baseline surveys conducted; (ii) number of baseline dataset on IAS threats integrated into NBISS; (iii) Number of invasion pathways identified and documented for priority IAS affecting coastal ecosystems

Output:

2.1.1. Baseline surveys on IAS threat in target coastal ecosystems at priority sites on Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island incorporating community consultations and participatory mapping.

2.1.2. Risk assessment pathway definition and management measures for critical IAS including *Casuarina spp.* and *Scaevola*

2.1.3. Upgraded SBIS platform to incorporate Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) information to facilitate decision-making.

Component 3: Investments and capacity building in IAS management and ecosystem restoration across priority landscapes to enhance ecosystem integrity and climate resilience toward replication and upscaling of best practices

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
2,846,492.00	7,862,470.00

Outcome:

3.1 Over 1,013 hectares of IAS-degraded landscapes restored, and 41,175 hectares under active IAS management across Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island, improving ecosystem quality and resilience to climate change impacts (such as storm surge, coastal flooding, erosion, and sea level rise)

Indicators: (i) number of site-specific restoration plans accepted; (ii) number of nursery facilities established / upgraded; (iii) number hectares under restoration and IAS removal; (iv) attainment of at least 50% survivability in new restorative plantings

3.2 Strengthened capacity and skills of national and local authorities, communities, and relevant stakeholders that contribute to improved operational effectiveness and coordinated IAS management

Indicators: (i) number of completed training events; (ii) number of trainees (agencies and communities) disaggregated by gender; (iii) Number of national agencies that have adopted and are applying IAS risk assessment and management measures; (iv) Number of agencies accessing the upgraded SBIS platform for IAS monitoring and response

Output:

3.1.1 Site-specific restoration and maintenance plans, including the integration of IAS control into protected area or landscape management over a wider 41,175 hectares for priority sites on Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island inclusive of community stewardship agreements for each restored site.

3.1.2. Six propagation facilities/greenhouse systems commissioned to support community-led native vegetation propagation across the target sites on Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island

3.1.3. Targeted removal of IAS and restoration of degraded coastal ecosystems and buffers across 1,013 hectares at priority sites on Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island.

3.2.1 Suite of gender-responsive capacity building resources targeting relevant institutions, communities and relevant stakeholders to strengthen their capacity in effectively managing and controlling IAS.

3.2.2 Series of training sessions for customs, quarantine, forestry, environmental, local authorities and community stakeholders on identification of IAS and response and management measures

Component 4: Heightened awareness and enhanced knowledge management on IAS management for improved decision support and empowerment among key stakeholders

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
257,922.00	1,032,250.00

Outcome:

4.1 Heightened awareness and strengthened knowledge management contributes to improved decision-making and stakeholder mobilization in mitigating impacts from IAS in The Bahamas

Indicators: (i) % increase in awareness (over baseline) on IAS management among stakeholders; (ii) Number of policies, plans, or management frameworks informed by project-generated knowledge products (iii) number of stakeholders by gender engaged in awareness-raising events; (iv) number of awareness events and campaigns hosted

Output:

4.1.1. National awareness campaign enhancing gender-sensitive stakeholder engagement on IAS management within wider national biodiversity management programme

4.1.2. Knowledge management strategy directing consolidation of project-derived knowledge on IAS management best practice into mechanism for long-term application among stakeholders

4.1.3. Suite of knowledge products including case studies, lessons learned, best practices from demonstration sites to support upscaling and replication across other islands and ecological contexts

4.1.4. Awareness and knowledge exchange events at the national level and with other regional and global SIDS to share experiences on restoration, monitoring and IAS management.

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
180,000.00	415,000.00

Outcome:

5.1 Project Steering Committee decisions are consistently informed by data and insights generated through the project's monitoring and evaluation framework

Output:

5.1.1. Project monitoring and evaluation system, through mid-term review, project steering committee (PSC) annual meetings and Terminal Evaluation developed and utilized providing systematic information on progress in meeting project outcome and output targets

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1: Enhanced policy, legal and institutional coordination frameworks for control and mitigation of impacts of invasive alien species (IAS)	656,883.00	1,662,750.00
Component 2: Strengthened early detection, surveillance and mitigation system for IAS management	437,922.00	1,032,250.00
Component 3: Investments and capacity building in IAS management and ecosystem restoration across priority landscapes to enhance ecosystem integrity and climate resilience toward replication and upscaling of best practices	2,846,492.00	7,862,470.00
Component 4: Heightened awareness and enhanced knowledge management on IAS management for improved decision support and empowerment among key stakeholders	257,922.00	1,032,250.00
M&E	180,000.00	415,000.00
Subtotal	4,379,219.00	12,004,720.00
Project Management Cost	218,961.00	605,280.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	4,598,180.00	12,610,000.00

Please provide justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Background: The Bahamas archipelago covers roughly 260,000 square kilometres and is made up of over 3,000 islands, cays, and rocks or islets. The archipelago has the largest tropical shallow water area in the Western Atlantic^[1]³. The combination of shallow banks and deep-water channels creates three distinct marine ecosystems: coastal and shallow shelf, pelagic, and deepwater. These zones are home to a diverse range of wildlife, including reef and pelagic fish, lobsters, conch, turtles, algae, and resident and migrating birds (Ministry of Transport and Aviation 2015). The country's coastal zone is central to the nation's climate change defenses, environmental health, economic stability and cultural heritage. Coastal ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs, and coastal wetlands all provide important ecosystem services, making the coastal zone a valuable resource for the national economy. Some of these services include nursery habitats for commercially and ecologically important fish stocks, protection of public infrastructure and coastal communities from erosion and flooding, and support for tourism and recreational activities that underpin national livelihoods. Coastal zone ecosystems also house the majority of the country's tourism and fishing infrastructure, including industrial complexes, ports, processing facilities, resorts, and services, as well as 80% of the residential population (IDB 2013).

Global environmental changes driven by climate change and **exacerbated by invasive alien species (IAS)** are rapidly eroding the integrity and resiliency of coastal zones around the world. The urgency of addressing these pressures is especially critical in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as The Bahamas, which depend disproportionately on coastal systems while facing heightened exposure to their degradation. Over 50 million people living in small island developing states (SIDS) face heightened ecological risks from the proliferation of IAS (Reaser et al., 2007). Introduced competitors, particularly plants, can disrupt ecological interactions, leading to declines in native species populations and, in some cases, local extirpations (Russell et al., 2017). Together with other major drivers, IAS have contributed to extensive biodiversity loss, being implicated in 60% of recorded global extinctions and solely responsible for 16% of these events. Beyond ecological impacts, IAS also drives social instability and economic hardship, placing significant constraints on biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and economic growth. Islands are particularly sensitive to these threats because native species often lack life history, behavioural, and morphological traits that allow them to resist invaders, making the ecological consequences disproportionately severe compared to continental systems (Russell et al., 2017). Moreover, the impacts of IAS on island ecosystems are often more readily distinguishable, especially in areas where other confounding threats are minimal or absent.

These challenges of IAS are typified in The Bahamas where climate change also represents the primary threat to coastal and marine systems, driving sea-level rise, ocean warming, increased storm intensity, and accelerated coastal erosion. These climate pressures are exacerbated by invasive alien species, which degrade habitats, disrupt ecological processes, and reduce the resilience of coastal ecosystems of global environmental significance.

The Bahamas harbors several IAS that threaten both terrestrial and coastal ecosystems. **Key invasive species of significant concern are the Australian pine (*Casuarina equisetifolia*), and Hawaiian seagreape/sea lettuce (*Scaevola taccada*)** that effectively outcompete native vegetation, reduce habitat quality for wildlife, and disrupt key ecological processes including soil stabilization and nutrient cycling (Moultrie et al., 2013). The Australian pine, native to Australia, southeast Asia and the Pacific was introduced to The Bahamas in the late 19th or early 20th century, following introduction to Florida, where it was established for coastal protection, landscaping, serving as windbreaks, and to provide shade. It was planted within settlement areas, along roads, resorts, beaches, and on reclaimed or disturbed land, from where it spread rapidly. Hawaiian sea lettuce (*Scaevola taccada*) also native to Australia, southeast Asia and the Pacific and Madagascar was originally introduced to the country from Florida in the 1970s-1980s as an ornamental and for beach stabilization. The species has powerful natural dispersal mechanisms that once introduced, can spread across the islands on ocean currents given the buoyancy and long viability of its fruits. Birds contribute to its wide dispersal (sources: The Bahamas National Trust^[2]⁴, ^[3]⁵, Institute for Regional Conservation^[4]⁶, Leon Levy Preserve^[5]⁷). In coastal dune environments in The Bahamas, these species are observed to alter vegetation structure and weaken the natural capacity of dunes to stabilize sediments and buffer coastal communities from storms and erosion. At the same time, native vegetation, including culturally and economically important fruit trees, is declining due to habitat loss, development pressures, and competitive exclusion by invasive species. For a country that depends heavily on healthy coastal and terrestrial environments,

confronting the threat of invasive alien species is paramount to addressing the country's issues of land degradation, biodiversity and climate change mitigation. The loss of ecosystem functioning within coastal areas due to IAS proliferation in association with urban and settlement expansion is gradually permeating within adjacent inland ecosystems, a phenomenon of increasing concern.

Notwithstanding the concerns associated with *Casuarina* and *Scaevola*, other IAS of emerging concern highlighting the need for a coordinated national response. These include Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolia*), which forms dense stands that displace native vegetation; Southern cattail (*Typha domingensis*), which alters wetland hydrology and reduces open water habitats; Green iguana (*Iguana iguana*), which competes with native species and damages vegetation and infrastructure; cats (*Felis catus*), which prey on native wildlife; raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), which impacts ground-nesting species and agricultural areas and cane toad (*Rhinella marina*), which poses a significant toxic threat to native predators and disrupts food webs. Collectively, these species underscore the growing and interconnected nature of IAS threats across ecosystems, reinforcing the need for strengthened, integrated management under the BNISS. These have been introduced more recently mainly via the transportation and cargo import pathways.

Several **IAS introduction pathways into The Bahamas** exist. Notably, these include the Nassau Container Port (Arawak Cay), Freeport (Grand Bahama), Lynden Pindling International Airport, and the numerous yachting and smaller ports distributed throughout the archipelago. The Nassau Container Port (Arawak Cay) is the main freight hub for New Providence, inter-island cargo redistribution, and international imports. It supplies goods to New Providence and the Family Islands and facilitates import entry. The port handles about 402,000 tonnes of cargo and approximately 73,000 Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit (TEUs) annually (FY2025), showing steady growth from 2024. Bulk imports such as cement, aggregates, and minerals total about 417,947 tonnes per year, reflecting increased construction demand in The Bahamas. These volumes classify Nassau as a high-exposure IAS entry point for terrestrial and marine species (potentially via cargo and ballast water), highlighting the need for careful monitoring to manage invasive species risks (sources: The Tribune^[6], Shipnext^[7]). Arawak Cay is adjacent to dense coastal development and sensitive nearshore ecosystems that enhances the risk of IAS spread into the environment. Freeport (Grand Bahama) is another major port of entry. Unlike Arawak Cay, it operates as a Free Trade Zone and mainly offers maritime provisioning, refueling services, and other logistics. Freeport functions primarily as a trans-shipment and industrial port, handling large volumes of cargo that mostly pass through with limited local distribution. As a result, compared to Arawak Cay, it presents fewer opportunities for IAS pathways. Additionally, there is a greater physical distance between the port and nearby communities.

The Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) represents a critical IAS introduction and amplification node for The Bahamas. LPIA managed approximately 4.06 million passengers during Fiscal Year 2024, with domestic flights accounting for nearly 750,000 internal travelers each year. The overall IAS risk assessment for LPIA is high because it serves as the largest passenger gateway in the country in the context of potential undetected IAS introductions, both inadvertent and deliberate. Passenger volumes are exceptionally high and there are direct flights arriving from the United States, Caribbean, and Europe (seasonally). There is a constant inflow from regions considered high-risk for IAS, and inspection and awareness systems specifically designed for IAS remain limited. LPIA also acts as a multiplier node that facilitates inter-island spread, serving as a national redistribution hub. Passengers and cargo travel daily between New Providence and the Family Islands, including Abaco, Eleuthera, Exuma, Andros, and others. (sources: Bahamas National Trust^[8]^[10], Lynden Pindling International Airport^[9]^[11], Bahamas Chronicle^[10]^[12])

While a comprehensive national cost assessment of invasive alien species (IAS) in The Bahamas has not been undertaken, available sectoral evidence highlights tangible economic implications. For example, under the Global

Environment Facility (GEF)-funded “*Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean*” project, The Bahamas received approximately US\$466,129 in support for IAS management, including lionfish control, with an additional US\$261,000 mobilized through related marine protected areas initiatives. At the national level, control measures also carry direct costs, with the Ministry of Works estimating approximately US\$150 per tree stump for removal of invasive species such as *Casuarina* along roadways and coastal areas. National response efforts, such as the Lionfish Response Plan, have also been implemented without a full costing of long-term management. Together, these indicate that IAS likely impose substantial and ongoing economic burdens across multiple sectors of the Bahamian economy.

Coastal ecosystems once dominated by native sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*), are being increasingly displaced by *Casuarina equisetifolia* that alters soil conditions and inhibits native species recruitment. Natural regeneration of the native Silver-top Palm (*Coccothrinax argentata*), is constrained by out-competition by *Scaevola taccada* through dense shading and suppression of understory diversity, with similar impacts to mangrove ecosystems (dominated by *Conocarpus erectus*, *Rhizophora mangle*, *Avicennia germinans*, and *Laguncularia racemosa*) which are being affected by IAS-driven habitat modification, where altered hydrological regimes further limit regeneration and weaken connectivity between coastal and upland ecosystems.

Strengthening ecosystem services, including habitat provision, coastal protection, and food availability, will improve the resilience of restored ecosystems and enhance survival prospects for **globally significant species endemic to The Bahamas**. Targeted invasive species management, coupled with the restoration of native vegetation, will improve habitat quality and connectivity across coastal and nearshore environments. This is critical for species of ecological and economic importance such as reef-building corals, juvenile reef fish, queen conch (*Aliger gigas*), sea turtles, and bonefish (*Albula vulpes*), all of which depend on healthy coastal systems. It will also be key for survivorship of globally important terrestrial and coastal species, including the endangered endemic Bahama Swallow (*Tachycineta cyaneoviridis*), Bahama Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala bahamensis*), Bahama Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis rostrata*), West Indian Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*), the Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and Wilson’s Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*), which utilize Bahamian shorelines as wintering habitat; endemic reptiles such as the Bahama Boa (*Chilabothrus strigilatus*), Bahamian Pygmy Boa (*Tropidophis canus*), rock iguanas (*Cyclura rileyi*, *Cyclura carinata*, *Cyclura cychlura*), which are vulnerable to habitat loss and invasive species pressures; and marine turtles including the Green (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) turtles which rely on coastal habitats for nesting and foraging. Together, these interventions will contribute to safeguarding biodiversity while reinforcing the ecological integrity of coastal systems.

In response to the increasing threat posed by IAS the country developed the **Bahamas National Invasive Species Strategy (BNISS)** in 2003 that was updated in 2013^[11]¹³. This strategy serves as The Bahamas' primary framework for managing invasive species aiming to prevent the entry, control, or eradicate alien species that threaten local ecosystems. The strategy is multi-sectoral in its approach involving prevention, early detection, eradication, public awareness, and coordination across sectors like agriculture, forestry, fisheries, land use, transport, trade, and tourism. This work was further supported by broader frameworks such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), which reinforce ecosystem-based management and help address IAS impacts within coastal and marine environments. The 2013 BNISS has elaborated a 10-year implementation plan focused on reducing introduction risks from recreational activities and improving monitoring at critical sites. Notwithstanding investment in the BNISS and implementation plan, it is not fully implemented given the reasons outlined in the barrier analysis presented below.

Over the past decades, agencies including the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, the Forestry Unit, the Bahamas National Trust, the Bahamas Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority, the Department of Customs, and the Ministry of Works have undertaken a range of measures to manage IAS. These efforts have focused on both **pathway control at the border** through inspections, permitting, and quarantine measures, as well as **on-the-ground removal and management** of priority species such as *Casuarina* and *Scaevola*. Control activities have been carried out across New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco, and several Family Islands, including interventions along coastal shorelines, in national parks, and within local communities, often supported by public awareness campaigns and community clean-up initiatives.

While these interventions have resulted in localized successes, including the clearance of invasive stands in priority areas and increased public engagement, efforts remain largely **site-specific and resource-dependent**, with limited long-term monitoring and follow-up maintenance. Persistent re-infestation, capacity constraints, and gaps in sustained financing continue to undermine effectiveness. As such, despite demonstrated progress, these challenges highlight the need for a more coordinated, scaled, and systematically resourced national approach to IAS management.

The loss of terrestrial and coastal biodiversity in The Bahamas as a result of the introduction and spread of IAS is influenced by **indirect drivers** arising from system-level pressures specifically (i) economic growth, land development and infrastructure expansion against a backdrop of relatively limited consideration of how the physical environment may be modified by development that favours proliferation of IAS, (ii) movement of goods and people through trade, tourism and general transportation where there remains relatively weak IAS surveillance and control mechanisms, and (iii) changing climate that is manifested in increasing storm frequency and intensity, sea-level rise and deepened drought and frequency of occurrence, that creates conditions for IAS proliferation that outcompetes native species. These indirect drivers in turn exert influence inter-related and cascading **direct drivers** of IAS impacts on ecosystems degradation and resultant biodiversity loss as follows; (i) direct competitive exclusion of native floral species and habitat degradation with impacts to dependent threatened biodiversity, (ii) disruption of ecological processes related to soil physical and chemical alteration and changes in nutrient cycling, (iii) suppression of regeneration and survivability of native biodiversity, (iv) destabilization of coastal ecosystems, notably dune and mangrove systems and (v) ultimately reduced ecosystem resilience to climate change.

Under a **business-as-usual scenario** in the absence of targeted management interventions, invasive plant species are expected to continue spreading across Bahamian islands through pathways associated with tourism, trade (including plant imports for landscaping) and inter-island movement. The geographic separation of the country's 26 inhabited islands further complicates monitoring and management efforts, allowing invasive species to establish and expand before effective response measures can be implemented. As climate change pressures intensify, coastal ecosystem degradation will likely accelerate, resulting in declining biodiversity, reduced ecosystem services, and increased vulnerability of coastal communities and infrastructure. The **long-term problem** the country will therefore face will be **progressive and potentially irreversible degradation of its natural capital**, with cascading impacts on biodiversity, climate resilience, livelihoods, and economic stability. Invasive species will continue to **displace endemic and native flora and fauna**, leading to sustained biodiversity loss across terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal ecosystems that are already highly vulnerable due to island endemism and limited ecological redundancy. Over time, the unchecked spread of invasive species will **undermine the functioning of key ecosystems**, including mangroves, coastal dunes, wetlands, pine forests, and coral-associated habitats. This degradation will weaken natural coastal protection, increase erosion and flooding risks, and reduce the capacity of ecosystems to buffer climate shocks such as hurricanes and sea-level rise, thereby increasing long-term adaptation and disaster-recovery costs. Economically, failure to manage invasive species can potentially **erode the foundations of tourism, fisheries, and agriculture**, which depend directly on healthy ecosystems. Degraded beaches, declining fisheries productivity, and damaged protected areas as a result of the influence of invasive species will potentially reduce tourism value and livelihoods, while increasing public expenditure on reactive control, infrastructure repair, and emergency response. As invasive species become more widespread, management costs will escalate beyond feasible levels, locking the country into a cycle of **high costs, reduced resilience, and declining ecosystem services**.

There are **five core barriers** that limit effective invasive species management and coastal ecosystem restoration in The Bahamas that are to be addressed under the project. **(1) Limited institutional capacity and coordination:** In The Bahamas IAS management is distributed across multiple ministries and agencies, which creates coordination challenges and weakens implementation. While the National Invasive Species Strategy provides an overarching framework, there remains institutional fragmentation and limited technical capacity, which constrain sustained control, monitoring, and enforcement efforts, particularly across the archipelago's many islands. Contributing factors include insufficient trained personnel, non-comprehensive policies regarding IAS, limited operational capacity at island level, the physical separation of islands, which complicates IAS management and requires replication of control and monitoring efforts across 26 major inhabited islands, and challenges coordinating between environment, agriculture, customs, and tourism authorities. **(2) Insufficient and unsustainable financing:** Achieving effective IAS control requires significant financial resources and long-term national commitment; however, funding is frequently limited to short-term, project-based initiatives, which restrict continuity in eradication, monitoring, and restoration efforts. Core government resources frequently assign a lower priority to sustained invasive species management, while alternative financing models involving private sector participation and co investment have not yet been fully explored. As a result, field operations remain under-resourced and monitoring and follow up activities are limited. **(3) Gaps in data, baseline information, and early detection systems:** There is a general lack of comprehensive national baseline data and inventories for invasive species, particularly in coastal and terrestrial ecosystems. Incomplete distribution data and limited systematic monitoring constrain the ability to prioritize high risk

areas, design cost effective control measures, and implement early detection and rapid response mechanisms. **(4) Lack of targeted demonstrative in-field methods and support infrastructure:** Although there have been efforts to address the spread of floral IAS in the country, these actions so far have been sporadic and lack a coordinated approach at the landscape level. Due to the stubborn persistence of the species needing attention, there is insufficient technical knowledge regarding best practices, as well as a lack of supporting in-field resources like nurseries. Additionally, human capacity for applying and replicating effective techniques is limited, which will challenge the sustainability of ongoing efforts. **(5) Low awareness and compliance among key sectors and communities:** There limited awareness of IAS pathways and impacts, especially among tourism operators, landowners, and local communities. Some invasive species continue to be used for landscaping or coastal stabilization, inadvertently promoting their spread. This reflects limited understanding of invasive species risks, low compliance with biosecurity and best practice guidance, and insufficient outreach and behavior change initiatives. Low awareness also reduces opportunities for early detection, prevention, and community stewardship. This also constrains priority policy attention and needed budget allocation from state resources.

A simple ‘**futures narrative**’, in line with GEF-STAP technical guidance^{[12]¹⁴}, is elaborated here to illustrate how the project intends to build durability of the GEF investment by considering how environmental outcomes may be potentially shaped by the interaction between four key drivers **(i) land development, (ii) movement of goods and people, (iii) climate change, and (iv) economic growth**, rather than by any single driver in isolation. The interactions between these drivers reinforce one another and together influence the scale, speed, and persistence of biodiversity loss, land degradation, and invasive alien species pressures and may potentially unfold in different combinations, signaling the conditions to which the project must be resilient in order to avoid maladaptation and ensure long-term global environmental benefits.

- **Land development** is expected to continue in response to population needs, tourism expansion, infrastructure investment, and economic diversification. Land conversion and habitat disturbance reduce ecosystem resilience and create entry points for non-native species, particularly in coastal zones, wetlands, and peri-urban areas where development pressures are highest. Once established, invasive species further degrade land and coastal systems, increasing long-term management costs and undermining development benefits.
- At the same time, **movement of goods and persons** is projected in an upward growth trajectory as the economy of the country grows and regional and international connectivity increases. Trade, tourism, and construction supply chains are well-recognized pathways for the introduction and spread of invasive species in island contexts, especially where biosecurity and pathway management are weak or fragmented. Increased movement therefore amplifies the environmental risks associated with land development, particularly when invasive species risks are not integrated into planning and permitting processes.
- **Climate change** is a risk multiplier across these dynamics. Rising temperatures altered rainfall patterns, sea-level rise, and more intense storms are already affecting Caribbean ecosystems as is the case for The Bahamas, and are expected to continue to present risk. These stresses weaken native species and ecosystems, reduce recovery capacity following disturbance, and create conditions that favor the spread and dominance of invasive species in disturbed landscapes. Climate impacts also drive adaptive responses such as coastal protection works, relocation, and changes in land use, which can unintentionally accelerate habitat disturbance if not carefully planned.
- **Economic growth**, while essential for development and poverty reduction, will influence future environmental trajectories depending on how it is pursued. Growth that relies on land-intensive development, poorly regulated construction, or short-term exploitation of natural assets risks locking countries into a cycle of ecosystem degradation, rising management costs, and reduced resilience. Conversely, growth pathways that integrate ecosystem-based approaches, sustainable land management, and prevention of invasive species can help decouple economic benefits from environmental decline.

From a futures perspective, the critical uncertainty is not whether these drivers will continue, but whether governance systems can manage their interactions coherently. Without integrated planning, future scenarios point toward escalating invasive species impacts, declining ecosystem services, and increasing costs for both governments and communities. With early action—particularly prevention, land-use planning, and pathway management—future trajectories can shift

toward more resilient development outcomes that align economic growth with biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation. Considering these simple future narratives, the durability of project outcomes will depend on designing the project interventions that perform 'reasonably well' across multiple plausible futures, rather than optimally under only one assumed scenario.

While direct interventions will focus on these 1,013 hectares, the project is designed to influence a wider area of ecological connectivity over 41,175 hectares through improved management effectiveness, within adjacent contiguous coastal and inland systems that are designated key biodiversity areas and/or protected areas. As such, management actions are expected to generate benefits beyond the immediate project sites, contributing to improved ecosystem resilience at the landscape and seascape levels. *Casuarina* spp. have been documented to contribute to beach dune degradation due to the release of allelopathic compounds, which, once the species reaches substantial density, inhibit the regeneration of native coastal vegetation. *Scaevola* spp. similarly displaces native coastal vegetation contributing to dune destabilization and erosion. The resulting degradation of protective dune systems reduces natural coastal defense capacity, increasing vulnerability to hurricane impacts, particularly storm surge inundation. The targeted landscapes include coastal, forest, and ecotonal interfaces/transitional zones, encompassing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Marine Managed Areas (MMAs), national parks, cultural heritage sites, agricultural lands, inland coppice and pine forest systems, and ecotones that connect terrestrial and marine environments. Together, these sites represent ecologically significant and climate-vulnerable systems where invasive plant encroachment is weakening natural coastal defenses, reducing biodiversity, and undermining tourism and fisheries productivity, with direct implications for local livelihoods and national economic resilience.

Stakeholders and beneficiaries: In small island developing states such as The Bahamas, local communities maintain direct and indirect beneficiary relationships with biodiversity resources due to the limited size and interconnected nature of landscapes. Project stakeholders within the **private sector** who depend on **biodiversity and coastal ecosystem services** include tourism operators, coastal developers, fisheries enterprises, and other businesses whose economic activities rely on healthy marine and terrestrial ecosystems. These actors have a vested interest in maintaining ecosystem integrity, particularly in areas where invasive alien species threaten coastal habitats, landscape aesthetics, and ecosystem services that underpin tourism and fisheries productivity.

Conservation advocates and supporting entities include non-governmental and research organizations such as the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Bahamas Reef Environmental Educational Foundation (BREEF), Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI), FRIENDS of The Environment (Abaco); Cat Island United, Cat Island Conservation Institute (CICI) and other civil society groups that contribute to biodiversity conservation through research, habitat restoration, protected area management, public education, and community engagement.

Community stakeholder groups represent key partners in project implementation and long-term sustainability. These include **fishers, women, youth, local landowners, community leaders, farmers, tourism workers, and other resource users** whose livelihoods and well-being are closely linked to the health of coastal and terrestrial ecosystems. As primary users and stewards of natural resources at the local level, these stakeholders possess valuable knowledge of local environmental conditions and are often among the first to observe changes associated with invasive alien species and ecosystem degradation. Throughout project implementation, community stakeholders will be actively engaged through consultations, participatory planning processes, training and capacity-building activities, citizen science programmes, habitat restoration initiatives, and community-based monitoring efforts. Particular attention will be given to ensuring the **meaningful participation of women and youth** in project activities and decision-making processes, while fishers and other natural resource users will contribute to invasive species surveillance, management actions, and the promotion of sustainable resource management practices. Their involvement will help ensure that project interventions are locally relevant, socially inclusive, and sustainable beyond the life of the project.

Key **governmental stakeholder institutions** responsible for the management of biodiversity resources fulfil their mandates through policy development, regulatory oversight, environmental monitoring, and enforcement, while facilitating coordination between state and non-state actors. Core agencies in the biodiversity management landscape include the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, which plays a central role in environmental coordination and oversight of international environmental agreements and functions as the country's GEF focal point. Other key governmental actors in the biodiversity policy and regulatory management space include:

- The *Bahamas Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority (BAHFSA)* plays a central role in biosecurity, quarantine, and invasive species prevention and management.

- The *Bahamas Agricultural and Marine Sciences Institute (BAMSI)* is a government research and education institute supporting agriculture and plant science, and under the project will provide technical support for invasive species management, native plant propagation, and capacity building.
- *Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation (MoTIA)* supports sustainable tourism development and coastal destination management.
- *Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources* oversees agricultural biosecurity and plant health.
- *Bahamas National Geographic Information Systems Centre (BNGIS)* is the government agency responsible for national geospatial data management and mapping, and under the project will support SBIS expansion by assisting with data spatial data collection, GIS expertise, and tools for invasive species mapping and coastal ecosystem monitoring.
- The *Forestry Unit*, part of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is responsible for managing and conserving terrestrial forests and native vegetation, and under the project will support invasive species management, habitat restoration, and the propagation and planting of native coastal species.
- *Office of the Attorney General (OAG)* is responsible for providing legal advice to the Government, supporting the development and review of legislation, and ensuring legal compliance across government sectors. Under the project, the OAG will support the review and development of legal and regulatory frameworks related to invasive alien species management, biodiversity conservation, biosecurity, and the implementation of project-supported policy reforms.
- *Ministry of Works and Family Island Affairs* is responsible for national infrastructure, coastal works, and land-use planning, and under the project will support invasive species management and coastal ecosystem restoration by integrating project interventions into development and coastal management planning.
- *Local Government entities*, including *Family Island administrators* and *district councils*, play important roles in facilitating community engagement, supporting local environmental management initiatives, and ensuring that project interventions align with local development priorities and land-use considerations.

These agencies collectively play a critical role in ensuring that biodiversity conservation, invasive species management, and ecosystem restoration are integrated into national development planning and coastal zone management.

[1] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0025326X00001041>

[2] <https://bnt.bs/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/casuarina.pdf>

[3] <https://bnt.bs/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Scavola-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

[4] <https://www.regionalconservation.org/ircs/database/plants/PlantPageBAH.asp?TXCODE=Scaetacc>

[5] <https://levypreserve.org/plant-listings/scaevola-taccada/>

[6] <https://www.tribune242.com/news/2025/sep/09/nassau-port-volumes-exceed-july-forecast-by-double-digits/>

[7] <https://shipnext.com/>

[8] <https://shipnext.com/>

[9] <https://nassaulpia.com/news/lpia-reaches-record-4-06m-passengers-in-fy2024-surpasses-pre-pandemic-record-set-in-fy2019/>

[10] <https://bahamaschronicle.com/4-million-passengers-new-lpia-record/>

[11] <https://caribbeaninvasives.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Bahamas-Revised-NISS-2013-FINAL.pdf>

[12] <https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/simple-future-narratives-brief-and-primer>

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Project Description

With the support of GEF financing, the project will implement coordinated invasive plant management and ecological restoration in priority coastal ecosystems while strengthening national and community capacity for long-term monitoring, prevention, and response. The project will review relevant national policies and frameworks related to invasive alien species (IAS), coastal zone management, and biodiversity conservation in order to strengthen and harmonize existing institutional arrangements, operational protocols, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms. At the policy and institutional level, the project will support the implementation of existing national policy commitments as directed under the Bahamas National Invasive Species Strategy (BNISS), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), the Conservation and Protection of Marine Life Act, the Wild Animals Protection Act, and the Convention on Biological Diversity. By translating these commitments into coordinated site-level action, the project will strengthen inter-agency collaboration and improve long-term management of invasive species and coastal ecosystems.

While the project's policy and institutional strengthening activities will address invasive alien species across all taxa, the targeted field interventions for removal and ecological restoration will focus primarily on priority invasive plant species affecting coastal ecosystems, particularly *Casuarina* spp. and *Scaevola taccada*, which are widely recognized as major drivers of habitat degradation in Bahamian ecosystems. Complementing these governance improvements, targeted invasive species removal and ecological restoration activities will be implemented in selected priority sites adopting a landscape approach with the spatial investments following 'functional ecological corridors' as impacted by IAS threats and landscape modifications within priority locations and adjacent areas. These actions will focus on the removal of invasive alien plant species and the restoration of native coastal vegetation to stabilize coastal landscapes, improve shoreline protection, and restore ecological functions within degraded coastal ecosystems.

To support long-term sustainability of restoration efforts, the project will establish community-based native plant propagation facilities to supply planting material for restoration activities. These facilities will be accompanied by targeted training programs designed to build local technical capacity in invasive species management, ecosystem restoration, and native plant propagation while creating livelihood opportunities and promoting inclusive participation, particularly among women and youth. Education and outreach initiatives will engage front-line policy and regulatory agencies with responsibility for IAS control and management, local communities, schools, tourism operators, fishers, and land managers to improve awareness of invasive species pathways and strengthen early detection and response mechanisms. These activities will help reduce the likelihood of reinvasion while promoting sustainable ecosystem/landscape management practices.

Through the combined implementation of invasive species control, ecosystem restoration, institutional strengthening, stakeholder and community engagement, the project establishes a clear pathway through which degraded ecosystems can recover ecological function and resilience. Restored integrated terrestrial and coastal habitats will enhance natural protection against storm surge, flooding, and erosion while improving habitat quality for species of global conservation significance. IAS removal and ecosystem restoration will improve habitat quality and connectivity across coastal and nearshore environments, reducing the risk of further loss of biodiversity of national and global importance. Investments will benefit endemic species such as the Bahama Swallow, Bahama Parrot, Bahama Yellowthroat, Bahama Oriole, along with the West Indian Whistling Duck, Piping Plover, Wilson's Plover, Bahamian endemic reptiles such as the Bahama Boa and Bahamian Pygmy Boa, rock iguanas, and marine turtles. Restoration and improvement of coastal ecosystems will generate positive benefits for reef-building corals and mangroves that

provide refuge for juvenile reef fish, bonefish, and queen conch, which are of significant economic importance to The Bahamas. The intended outcome is healthier, more functional ecosystems that support biodiversity conservation, strengthen climate resilience, and deliver sustained global environmental benefits.

Project theory of change: The project design addresses the drivers of biodiversity loss and underpinning pressures with respect to IAS proliferation and considers three causal pathways that link the intervention goal to short - and long-term outcomes, specifying outputs when adopted by stakeholders, will contribute to overcoming the key barriers to long term management of IAS, with focus in the scope of this investment, on priority floral IAS.

Causal pathway 1 is underpinned by the barrier posed by limited institutional capacity and coordination and insufficient and unsustainable financing. The project design posits that IF there is adoption of an updated NISSAP and upgraded relevant legislation (and regulations), along with aligned institutional mandates and standard operating procedures related to IAS management, that are in turn supported by advancement of an IAS investment strategy and proposed financial mechanism that enhances sustainability of effort, THEN strengthened and mainstreamed policy, regulation, cross-institutional and cross-sectoral management arrangements will more effectively reduce threats posed by invasive alien species (IAS) to integrity of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems.

Causal pathway 2 is underpinned by the barriers posed by gaps in data, baseline information, and early detection systems for IAS and the lack of targeted demonstrative in-field methods and support infrastructure. The project design therefore assumes that IF knowledge is enhanced on IAS threats through baseline surveys, and that risk assessment pathways are well understood and appropriate data is readily available to support early detection, surveillance and prevention, this will support the design of site-specific restoration and maintenance plans that will guide investments in IAS control measures which, if are backed up by adequate capacity building and know-how among stakeholders, THEN there will be strengthened early detection to mitigate risks of further IAS introduction, supported by active IAS management and demonstrative restoration of priority degraded coastal and terrestrial landscapes across impacted landscapes in The Bahamas, that will be sustained into the long-term by enhanced capacities of national and local authorities, communities, and relevant stakeholders.

Causal pathway 3 is underpinned by the barrier posed by low awareness and compliance among key sectors and communities. The project design suggests that IF there is execution of an effective national awareness campaign and knowledge management strategy for IAS management that is complemented by knowledge products to support upscaling and replication across other islands and ecological contexts, and that stakeholders are accorded opportunities to engage with knowledge exchange events at the national, regional and global SIDS levels to share experiences on restoration, monitoring and IAS management, THEN there will be heightened awareness and strengthened knowledge management contributes to improved decision-making and stakeholder mobilization in mitigating impacts from IAS in The Bahamas.

The project interventions, through the generation of a suite of key outputs, expects to result in the realization of five interconnected outcomes that will lead to the desired intermediate states where (i) there is strengthened and mainstreamed policy, regulation, cross-institutional and cross-sectoral management arrangements to more effectively reduce threats posed by invasive alien species (IAS) to integrity of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, (ii) strengthened early detection, surveillance, prevention and management of priority invasion pathways contribute to reduced risks associated with IAS introduction and spread, (iii) over 1,013 hectares of IAS-degraded landscapes is restored, and 41,175 hectares are under active IAS management across Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island, improving ecosystem quality and resilience to climate change impacts (such as storm surge, coastal flooding, erosion, and sea level rise), (iv) there is strengthened capacity and skills of national and local authorities, communities, and relevant stakeholders that contribute to improved operational effectiveness and coordinated IAS management, and (v) there is heightened awareness and strengthened knowledge management contributes to improved decision-making and stakeholder mobilization in mitigating impacts from IAS in The Bahamas.

Realization of these outcomes will result in attainment of the intermediate states where (a) the threats to globally significant biodiversity are lessened through the effective systemic policy-driven management of IAS and invasion pathways and (b) innovative in-field approaches to IAS management and best practices are adopted and implemented through positive behavioral change, which in turn will have positive impact in terms of local ecosystem health showing positive recovery, with co-benefits in expanded economic gains and widened social well-being, and ultimately expanded global environmental benefits (GEBs).

The following are the main assumptions that will need to be considered in the project design and eventual implementation; (i) Sustained political and institutional commitment (*critical to Component 1*): It is assumed that relevant government institutions will continue to prioritize invasive species management and provide leadership, coordination, and enforcement support, underpinned by heightened awareness throughout the project lifecycle, including alignment with national biodiversity and land-use objectives. It is also assumed that there will not be major policy or development decisions that significantly undermine invasive species objectives; (ii) Effective inter-agency coordination (*required across all Components*): Effective IAS management requires that key agencies (environment, agriculture, biosecurity, planning, tourism) collaborate effectively, share information, and align mandates, avoiding fragmentation or duplication of efforts; (iii) Adequate and timely availability of financial and human resources (*critical across all Components*): It is anticipated that core national counterpart resources, co-financing, and skilled personnel will be available as planned, allowing implementation of prevention, control, restoration, and monitoring activities at the intended scale; (iv) Prevention and pathway controls are enforceable (*critical to Components 2 and 3*): It is assumed that biosecurity and pathway management measures (at borders, in trade, tourism, and landscaping) can be implemented and enforced sufficiently to prevent rapid re-introduction following control or eradication efforts; (v) Stakeholder and community acceptance (*critical across all Components*): It is assumed that communities, landowners, and private-sector stakeholders will recognize the long-term benefits of invasive species management and support project interventions, including access to sites, behaviour change, and compliance with prevention measures; (vi) Monitoring and adaptive management systems function as intended (*required for Components 2 and 3*): The project assumes that monitoring systems generate usable data and that institutions are willing and able to adapt management approaches in response to lessons learned; (vii) Climatic conditions remain within manageable variability (*required across all Components*): While climate risks are recognised, the project assumes that extreme events (e.g. major hurricanes) do not occur at a frequency or intensity that overwhelms implementation capacity or repeatedly reverses restoration gains during the project period.

There are **key enablers** that create favorable conditions for advancing the successful IAS management in The Bahamas include: (i) Established national policy and strategic framework: The Bahamas has a long-standing Bahamas National Invasive Species Strategy (BNISS), first developed in 2003 and revised in 2013, with an accompanying implementation framework. This provides a clear policy mandate, priority species focus, and institutional entry points for project action, allowing projects to move rapidly from planning to implementation rather than starting from a policy vacuum; (ii) Recent strengthening of environmental governance: The establishment of a dedicated Ministry with responsibility for environmental management and planning functions in 2019, alongside the reactivation of national biodiversity and climate change coordination mechanisms, is contributing to strengthened institutional leadership, inter-agency coordination, and accountability. This creates a favorable governance environment for cross-sectoral invasive species management; (iii) Strong alignment with national development priorities: Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience are directly linked to tourism, fisheries, and coastal protection, which are core pillars of the Bahamian economy. This alignment increases political and stakeholder buy-in, as invasive species management is widely recognized as protecting economic assets, not just biodiversity; (iv) Active national and local implementation partners: Institutions such as the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, the Bahamas National Trust, the University of The Bahamas, and sectoral agencies provide a strong operational base for field implementation, monitoring, and community engagement. Their established mandates and presence across islands are a major enabling factor; (v) Growing community awareness and stewardship: There is increasing public awareness of invasive species impacts, particularly where they affect beaches, fisheries, and protected areas. Community-led monitoring, citizen science, and stewardship initiatives provide a foundation for early detection and long-term sustainability; (vi) Experience with GEF and regional invasive species projects: The Bahamas has extensive experience implementing GEF-funded biodiversity, land degradation, and invasive species projects, including national and regional initiatives. This experience reduces implementation risk, as institutions are familiar with GEF procedures, safeguards, and adaptive management requirements.

The project design is reflective of causal pathways captured in the theory of change below:

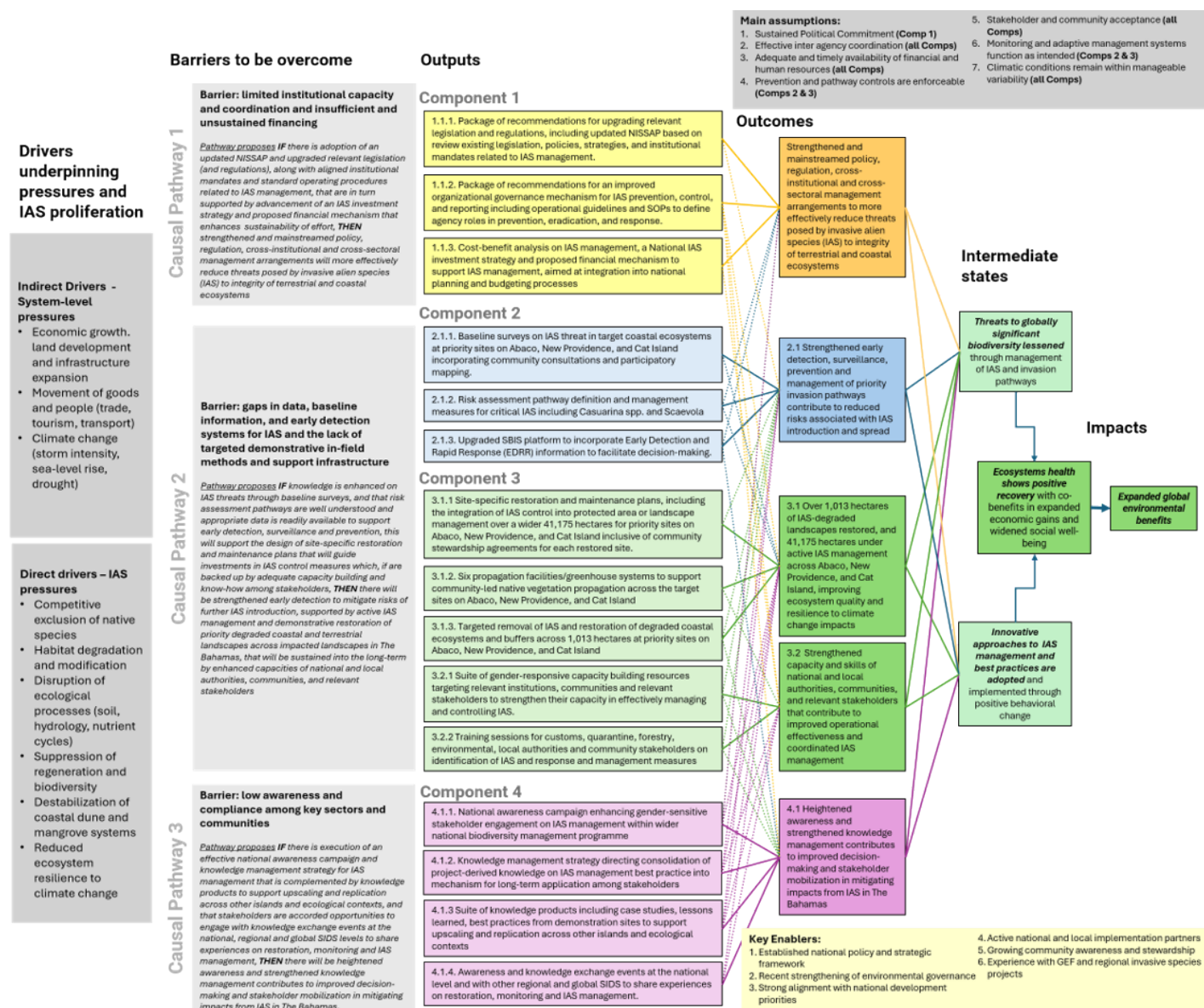


Figure 1. Project theory of change

The project components aligned to the five project outcome areas are elaborated below.

Component 1 Enhanced policy, legal and institutional coordination frameworks for control and mitigation of impacts of invasive alien species (IAS). This component will result in the realization of *Outcome 1.1: Strengthened and*

mainstreamed policy, regulation, cross-institutional and cross-sectoral management arrangements to more effectively reduce threats posed by invasive alien species (IAS) to integrity of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems.

Under this component a comprehensive *review of all existing legislation, policies, strategies, and institutional mandates related to IAS prevention, early detection, control, eradication, and ecosystem restoration* will be carried out. The review will identify gaps, inconsistencies, and operational barriers across relevant legal and policy instruments and assess how IAS considerations are currently integrated across key sectors. Based on this assessment, *a package of recommendations will be developed to update and strengthen the national policy and legal framework*, including proposed upgrades to transform the National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (NISSAP) and associated regulatory instruments into IAS management legislation. While some existing policy provisions related to IAS management are contained within the legislation governing the Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute and the Bahamas Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority (BAHFSA), these provisions focus primarily on plant-related risks. Work under this component will therefore support the development of a *comprehensive legislative and policy framework* that addresses the management of invasive alien species across all taxa. In addition, *amendments will be proposed to relevant legislation* to address barriers to effective IAS control and management. *The project will also update the list of prioritized invasive alien species across all taxa for management and removal interventions.* Currently, the BNISS 2013 document only presents a list of plant and animal species recommended for control and eradication.

Recommendations for IAS prevention and ecosystem restoration will also be developed for integration into existing coastal development, tourism, and land-use planning instruments to ensure that IAS management considerations are mainstreamed across national development planning processes. Key entry points will be in respect to land / infrastructure development permissions granted through the Department of Physical Planning (in the Ministry of Works) mainly for commercial investments that are likely to have larger environmental implications. Full development approvals are contingent on the issuance of the Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) by the DEPP that takes into account environmental mitigation that includes considerations for IAS. Instruments for review will include Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations and guidelines, physical planning and zoning policies, coastal zone management plans and tourism development standards. Key provisions to be incorporated will include updated biosecurity protocols (e.g., screening and quarantine measures for imported materials), site-specific IAS risk assessments within EIAs, guidelines for the use of native and non-invasive species in landscaping and restoration, monitoring and early detection requirements, and strengthened compliance and enforcement mechanisms. This approach, *consistent with BD-1 requirements*, will ensure that IAS management considerations are systematically mainstreamed across national development planning processes.

The project will contribute to the development of a package of recommendations for institutional mandate upgrades around a coordination mechanism for IAS prevention, control, and reporting including operational guidelines and SOPs to define agency roles in prevention, eradication, and response. The project will strengthen institutional arrangements for coordinated IAS management across relevant government agencies and stakeholders. Improved coordination will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of national IAS management efforts by reducing duplication of effort, clarifying agency responsibilities, and enabling more timely responses to emerging IAS threats. *Recommendations will be developed to enhance institutional mandates and establish or strengthen a national organizational governance (coordination) mechanism* for IAS prevention, control, and reporting. *Standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be developed with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and coordination protocols* for IAS prevention, management, data collection, and reporting across agencies responsible for environment, agriculture, biosecurity, customs, tourism, and other relevant sectors. In doing so, the framework will help safeguard biodiversity, support the resilience of coastal and terrestrial ecosystems, and reduce risks to key economic sectors such as tourism, fisheries, and agriculture that depend on healthy ecosystems in The Bahamas. *Where appropriate, the development and implementation of these protocols will consider gender-related implications of IAS management measures and associated policy changes, including potential impacts on livelihoods, access to resources, and participation in decision-making, to help ensure equitable outcomes for women and men.* The operational framework will also include guidance for prevention, early detection, rapid response, eradication, and reporting of IAS to support more coordinated and effective national responses to IAS threats across the archipelago.

The project will contribute to the strengthening of the financial sustainability of invasive alien species (IAS) management in The Bahamas by undertaking an assessment to guide the development of a financial justification and investment framework to guide long-term national action. This assessment will evaluate the economic and ecological impacts of IAS on key sectors such as biodiversity conservation, tourism, fisheries, and agriculture, and identify priority investments required for prevention, early detection, control, eradication, and ecosystem restoration. The results will demonstrate the economic rationale needed for sustained investment in IAS management and highlight the potential costs of inaction. A *National IAS Investment Strategy* will be developed to identify priority actions and financing needs for IAS management across terrestrial and coastal ecosystems. The strategy will outline potential funding sources and opportunities to leverage existing national financing streams, while also proposing a *financial mechanism or set of financing options to support sustained IAS management*. These may include integration of IAS priorities into existing environmental financing mechanisms, partnerships with international donors and the private sector, or incorporation of IAS management priorities into national planning and budgeting frameworks. **The investment strategy and proposed financing mechanism will need to consider where appropriate, gender-based implications particularly for livelihood outcomes and seek to ensure there is equitable benefits between women and men.** Together, the investment strategy and proposed financing mechanism will help ensure sustained and predictable financing for IAS prevention, control, and ecosystem restoration.

Component 2 Strengthened early detection, surveillance and mitigation system for IAS management. This component will result in the realization of *Outcome 2.1: Strengthened early detection, surveillance, prevention and management of priority invasion pathways contribute to reduced risks associated with IAS introduction and spread.*

Under this component the project will establish baseline information on the presence, distribution, and impacts of invasive alien species in priority ecosystems. *Baseline surveys will be conducted at selected sites on Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island to assess IAS threats in ecologically significant habitats.* These surveys will document the occurrence and extent of invasive plant species, identify ecosystem vulnerabilities, and provide an evidence base for targeted management and restoration actions. The assessments will incorporate community consultations and participatory mapping approaches to capture local knowledge on IAS presence, historical spread, and areas of ecological or cultural importance **through balanced representation between men and women in these assessments.** The results will help inform IAS presence and extent of invasion, site prioritization, guide management interventions, and establish baseline conditions against which future project impacts and ecosystem recovery can be measured. These baseline assessments will directly support the achievement of the project's core indicator target of approximately 41,175 hectares of landscapes under improved management practices, by identifying priority coastal areas where IAS management and restoration interventions will be implemented and scaled.

Using evidence generated through the baseline surveys, *species-specific risk assessments will be conducted to identify introduction pathways, ecological impacts, and the potential spread of Casuarina spp. and Scaevola.* Based on these assessments, pathway management measures will be developed to guide targeted prevention, control, and removal interventions, supporting more strategic and effective management of these priority species across the project sites. These actions will help reduce the likelihood of reintroduction and secondary spread of established species that threaten biodiversity, coastal resilience, and ecosystem services within vulnerable ecosystems, contributing to more effective long-term IAS management.

The project will support the *expansion and upgrading of the national Spatial Biodiversity Information System (SBIS) platform to strengthen decision-making for IAS management.* The SBIS platform^{[1]¹⁵} was developed under the GEF-UNEP Meeting the Challenge of 2020 project. Currently, the system contains limited datasets related to invasive species, and there are no records from any islands in the southern Bahamas. The upgraded platform will incorporate new modules for IAS reporting, monitoring, and data management to facilitate timely information sharing and

evidence-based decision-making. The system will support the collection, storage, and analysis of IAS occurrence data generated through surveys, monitoring programs, and community reporting.

Integrating Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) information into the SBIS platform will improve the ability of relevant agencies and stakeholders to detect emerging IAS threats, coordinate response actions, and track management outcomes. The platform's expansion will also include the incorporation of Cat Island, representing the first of the southern islands to be integrated into the system's dataset. Strengthening this national information system will enhance information sharing among agencies and stakeholders, facilitate earlier detection of emerging IAS threats, and support more coordinated responses to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species across the archipelago.

Component 3 Investments and capacity building in IAS management and ecosystem restoration across priority landscapes to enhance ecosystem integrity and climate resilience toward replication and upscaling of best practices. This component will result in the realization of *Outcome 3.1 Over 1,013 hectares of IAS-degraded landscapes restored, and 41,175 hectares under active IAS management across Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island, improving ecosystem quality and resilience to climate change impacts (such as storm surge, coastal flooding, erosion, and sea level rise)* and *Outcome 3.2 Strengthened capacity and skills of national and local authorities, communities, and relevant stakeholders that contribute to improved operational effectiveness and coordinated IAS management.*

Component 3 will support targeted investments and capacity building for invasive alien species (IAS) management and ecosystem restoration across priority landscapes in The Bahamas. The component is designed to address underlying and direct drivers of biodiversity loss associated with IAS, including habitat degradation, competitive exclusion of native species, alteration of ecosystem structure and function, and increased vulnerability of ecosystems to climate change impacts. By reducing IAS prevalence, restoring degraded ecosystems, and strengthening institutional and technical capacity, the project will contribute to enhanced ecosystem resilience, improved biodiversity outcomes, and the long-term sustainability of ecosystem services.

The project will restore some 1,013 hectares of IAS-degraded coastal and terrestrial landscapes with further measures to control and manage IAS over 41,175 hectares **that are classed as key biodiversity areas and/or protected areas across Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island that will contribute to improved management effectiveness in protected area management that will benefit** improved ecosystem quality and increased resilience to climate change impacts such as storm surge, coastal flooding, erosion, and sea level rise. This outcome will be achieved through the realization of three key outputs, specifically (1) the formulation of site-level and wider landscape-level planning for surveillance, rapid response and restoration, (2) invasive species removal and ecosystem restoration interventions based on the restoration plans, implemented across priority landscapes, supported by (3) the installation of capacity to propagate native species to be used in restoration of landscapes that were degraded by IAS proliferation.

The following describes the target areas and the justification for selection.

(1) Cat Island contains high-value coastal and cultural landscapes that are central to its branding as an untouched, sustainable tourism destination. The proposed interventions in Cat Island adopt an integrated ridge-to-reef approach, expanding beyond coastal systems to include inland coppice and forest ecosystems that are ecologically connected and critical to overall landscape resilience. Cat Island represents a strategic geographic expansion of national invasive species management efforts. As the first southern Bahamian island to receive investment of this magnitude, Cat Island will serve as a demonstration site for ecosystem restoration, spatial planning integration, and invasive

species management in more remote island contexts. Importantly, this will be the first southern island to benefit from comprehensive GIS mapping and spatial datasets related to invasive plant distribution, ecosystem vulnerability, and restoration prioritization. This foundational data will enable long-term planning, replication across the southern Bahamas, and improved national reporting under biodiversity and climate commitments. The proposed project area borders the Cat Island Wetlands Key Biodiversity Area (KBA 20634). This site has also been identified as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and forms part of the Alliance for Zero Extinction network due to the presence of globally significant species. The southern portion of Cat Island represents the southernmost nesting ground for the Red-legged Thrush, Cuban Pewee, and Bahama Yellowthroat.

The target sites in Cat Island include (i) Greenwood Beach and Port Howe, (ii) Columbus Point and Pigeon Key and the (iii) Fernandez Bay/Joe Sound/Armbrister Creek MPA system are highly vulnerable to hurricane-driven storm surge, erosion, and mangrove degradation. At these locations the spread of *Casuarina* spp. and *Scaevola* spp. has been observed to reduce dune stability, displace native vegetation, and weaken natural coastal protection systems. Restoration of native coastal and mangrove vegetation will contribute to increased wave attenuation and flood mitigation capacity, protection of tourism infrastructure and utilities, safeguard of biodiversity within co-managed MPAs and contribute to strengthening of eco-tourism and cultural heritage value. Cat Island also includes the country's first tri-partite co-managed Marine Protected Area pilot, offering a nationally significant opportunity to integrate invasive species management into innovative governance frameworks.

The proposed development sites at Fernandez Bay and Greenwood Beach are located within the southern portion of Cat Island, an area recognized for its ecological importance. Situated between the two sites is Gambier Lake, a large brackish wetland that supports a variety of resident and migratory bird species. The lake provides habitat for Least Grebes, Neotropic Cormorants, Reddish Egrets, Tricoloured Herons, Least Terns, Gull-billed Terns, and Royal Terns, while the surrounding vegetation supports both resident and migratory woodland birds. Collectively, these sites support species of global conservation significance, including the globally Vulnerable West Indian Whistling Duck, the Bahamian endemic Bahama Yellowthroat, endemic reptiles such as the Bahama Boa and Bahamian Pygmy Boa, and an isolated freshwater turtle population considered to be of high conservation concern. These species contribute to the international biodiversity importance of southern Cat Island. The proximity of the proposed development sites to both Gambier Lake and the Cat Island Wetlands KBA presents an opportunity to promote environmental stewardship and habitat conservation within the surrounding landscape. By supporting the conservation of ecologically connected habitats, the project has the potential to contribute to the long-term persistence of globally significant species and the maintenance of ecosystem integrity within southern Cat Island.

Location on island/ Site name	Site restoration (ha)	IAS mitigation management (surveillance and control) (ha)	Site Type	Justification
Greenwood Beach and Port Howe Coastline (within KBA ID: 20634)	60	50	Cultural Heritage	The presence of non-native plant species has reduced the ecological integrity and resilience of coastal dune systems, weakening their ability to function as natural barriers against coastal hazards. The displacement and loss of native vegetation diminishes natural coastal defense mechanisms, including dune stabilization and wave attenuation, thereby increasing the vulnerability of beachfront infrastructure, utilities, and tourism facilities to hurricane-driven storm surge and coastal erosion. As many project sites are located within low-lying coastal zones with documented climate vulnerability, the degradation of these ecosystems heightens exposure to extreme weather events. In addition to increasing physical risk, the decline in native coastal vegetation and dune health also affects beach aesthetics and environmental quality, which are critical to visitor experience and repeat tourism in The Bahamas.
Columbus Point and Pigeon Cay (within KBA ID: 20634)	130	11,338	Cultural heritage	Exposed southern peninsula highly susceptible to surge inundation and coastal flooding. Mangrove thinning and vegetation loss reduce natural flood mitigation capacity. Replacement of native mangrove and coastal species weakens natural flood protection. Habitat degradation affects biodiversity, reducing eco-tour appeal. Erosion threatens access paths and visitor safety

Fernandez Bay/Joe Sound/Armbrister Creek (within KBA ID: 20634)	120	9,766	MPA	This area is a pilot project demonstrating a tri-partied MPA co-management agreement. It is the first of its kind for The Bahamas and is being managed by two government agencies: DMR and Forestry Unit. The total size of the MPA is 9766 ha, and is inundated with IAS along its coastline.
Total	310	21,154		

(2) New Providence, the country's population and administrative centre, contains ecologically important yet highly pressured protected areas. The proposed interventions in New Providence also follow a ridge-to-reef approach, addressing IAS impacts across coastal, nearshore, and inland ecosystems, including mangroves, coastal vegetation, and coppice forests. These ecosystems provide essential services such as flood mitigation, shoreline protection, and habitat for native and migratory species. Further, New Providence has experienced increasingly prolonged dry periods and shifting rainfall patterns, consistent with broader climate change projections for The Bahamas. Changes in weather patterns, including reduced rainfall consistency, higher temperatures, and extended drought-like conditions, have heightened stress on terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, reduced soil moisture, and increased vulnerability to habitat degradation and invasive species establishment. These conditions also place additional pressure on freshwater resources and reduce the resilience of native vegetation and ecosystems. Given the high level of development and associated pressures, proactive IAS management is critical to maintaining ecosystem function and reducing risks to infrastructure and communities.

The target area falls within the New Providence Key Biodiversity Area (KBA 19820), a globally recognized biodiversity site encompassing important coastal, wetland, coppice, and marine ecosystems that support biodiversity conservation and ecological connectivity on the island. Historically, these habitats functioned as an interconnected ridge-to-reef landscape comprising coppice forests, freshwater and coastal wetlands, mangrove systems, seagrass beds, and coral reef ecosystems. The spread of invasive alien species, combined with urban development pressures and climate-related stressors, has increasingly disrupted these ecological linkages, reducing ecosystem resilience and threatening the biodiversity values supported by the KBA and adjacent protected areas.

The target locations on New Providence (as well as will build directly upon institutional, ecological, and management foundations established under previous GEF-supported initiatives, including the **Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas** and the Bahamas Pine Islands Project. These earlier investments strengthened protected area management, forest conservation, and biodiversity monitoring systems. The current project leverages those gains by integrating invasive species prevention and restoration into coastal and marine management frameworks, ensuring sustainability and scalability. The project goes further by introducing IAS datasets onto the already existing SBIS platform for decision making.

Harold Wilson Pond National Park is currently heavily impacted by invasive species, including *Casuarina* spp. and Southern Cattail (*Typha domingensis*), leading to obstruction of monitoring infrastructure and temporary closure to the public. The Southwest New Providence Marine Managed Area protects diverse coral reef habitats, fish spawning aggregation sites, and nursery areas for commercially important species such as spiny lobster. **These coastal and marine ecosystems also provide important habitat for globally threatened biodiversity, including marine turtles and migratory shorebirds, while supporting species of national conservation importance.** IAS control within coastal interface zones will enhance fisheries productivity, biodiversity conservation, and resilience of marine ecosystems adjacent to the capital.

Interventions in New Providence demonstrate how invasive species management can be integrated into urban protected area systems while restoring ecosystem services that directly benefit communities.

Location on island/ Site name	Site restoration (ha)	IAS mitigation management (surveillance and control) (ha)	Site type	Justification
Harold Wilson Pond (WDPA ID: 555592591; KBA ID: 19820)	60	101	MPA	Beyond ecological impacts, the unchecked spread of cattails has directly affected park infrastructure and operations that support public use, species monitoring, and overall park management. Overgrowth has obstructed boardwalks, trails,

				viewing platforms, and access points, limiting staff and researcher access to key monitoring sites and compromising routine maintenance, surveillance, and data collection. These conditions have also reduced the park's capacity to support visitor experiences, environmental education, and community engagement.
Southwest New Providence Marine Managed Area (WDPA ID: 555592591; KBA ID: n/a)	110	7,284	MMA	This is a marine managed area. The size of the protected area is 500 hectares, however, the size of the area needing IAS intervention is to be determined. The site contains highly diverse diving habitats, crucial spawning areas for fish, and serves as a nursery habitat for species like the spiny lobster.
Total	170	7,385		

(3) Abaco: The proposed interventions in Abaco adopt an integrated ridge-to-reef approach, targeting both coastal and inland ecosystems, including dune systems, rocky shorelines, pine forests, and inland coppice. These interconnected habitats support critical biodiversity, provide shoreline stabilization, and enhance climate resilience. The target area forms part of a broader landscape of nationally and globally significant biodiversity, encompassing interconnected terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems that support ecological connectivity, species movement, and ecosystem resilience. Historically, these habitats functioned as a connected mosaic of pine forest, coppice, wetland, coastal, and marine environments. Abaco National Park falls within the Southern Abaco Key Biodiversity Area (KBA 19822), a globally recognized conservation landscape containing extensive Caribbean pine forest, coppice, and freshwater wetland habitats that are critical to maintaining ecological integrity and biodiversity conservation outcomes in The Bahamas. The spread of invasive alien species threatens these ecological linkages and the biodiversity values they support.

In 2019, Hurricane Dorian caused catastrophic damage to Abaco's ecosystems, including the loss and degradation of significant areas of mangrove habitat and forest cover. Rapid field assessments conducted by the Forestry Unit of the Ministry of the Environment and Housing, supported by the Bahamas National Trust State of the Environment: Post-Dorian Report and research by McKenzie et al. (2024), estimated that approximately 13,563 hectares of forest on Abaco were severely to catastrophically damaged, representing nearly 24% of the island's estimated 60,216 hectares of total forest resources. Damage classifications followed the Georgia Forestry Commission scale, with "catastrophic" defined as greater than 50% stem breakage or blowdown. Field observations documented widespread canopy loss, standing dead trees, saltwater inundation, and multiple forest fires across impacted pine ecosystems.

The storm-related stress and saltwater intrusion significantly increased the vulnerability of native Caribbean Pine (*Pinus caribaea* var. *bahamensis*) forests to secondary pest outbreaks, particularly the Southern Pine Beetle (*Dendroctonus frontalis*). Hurricane-stressed pine stands provided ideal conditions for infestation, with the beetle boring beneath the bark and disrupting the vascular system of already weakened trees, resulting in accelerated forest mortality across large portions of the pine landscape. Disturbed and degraded landscapes have also become increasingly susceptible to invasive alien species establishment and expansion, particularly aggressive colonizing species such as Casuarina, which can rapidly outcompete recovering native vegetation and alter natural regeneration processes. Although recovery is ongoing, many coastal and terrestrial ecosystems remain vulnerable to disturbance and invasive species establishment. Although recovery is ongoing, many coastal and terrestrial ecosystems remain vulnerable to disturbance and invasive species establishment. While the current presence of invasive alien species (IAS) in the proposed management areas remains relatively limited, early intervention is critical to prevent seed dispersal along coastlines and into adjacent forest reserves.

The following parks will be targeted for IAS control work; (i) Abaco National Park, (ii) Fowl Cays National Park, (iii) Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park, and (iv) Tilloo Cay National Reserve, where they represent early-stage invasive incursions within nationally significant protected areas. Although IAS presence is currently limited in scale, proactive removal is critical to prevent further seed dispersal along coastlines and into forest reserves. These parks protect globally significant coral reef, seagrass, mangrove, and coastal habitats that provide important breeding, nesting, and foraging grounds for native and migratory species, including the White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*), the Endangered Bahama Warbler (*Setophaga flavescens*), and the Endangered Abaco Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala bahamensis*), one of the few remaining ground-nesting parrot populations in the world.

Early intervention in Abaco prevents long-term ecological degradation and reduces future management costs. The sites on Abaco (as with New Providence) will also build on institutional, ecological, and management foundations

established under previous GEF-supported initiatives, including the **Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas** and the Bahamas Pine Islands Project. Further to this, the selected sites also include areas identified for new forest reserve and conservation designation, which have received Cabinet approval and are presently undergoing public consultation. Initial feedback has been favorable, indicating broad stakeholder support for their designation and sustainable management.

Location on island/ Site name	Site restoration (ha)	IAS mitigation management (surveillance and control) (ha)	Site type	Justification
Abaco National Park (WDPA ID: 129917; KBA ID: 19822)	230	8,296	MPA	Although these species are not dominant within the national park, their establishment poses a risk of increased seed dispersal into adjacent park habitats and along the broader Abaco coastline. This site is also a proposed Forest conservation area. This means that once approved, the site will function as a “no take zone” to protect, preserve and conserve the forest ecosystem there. These forests are globally important as habitat for the Bahama parrot, which nests on the ground here. Without early intervention, these species have the potential to expand inland, outcompete native coastal and dune vegetation, and compromise the ecological integrity of both the park and surrounding coastal systems.
Fowl Cays National Park (WDPA ID: 555592579; KBA ID: 20385)	20	945	MPA	With the introduction of Casuarina on the island, there is the possibility to spread and outcompete native biodiversity, reduce important beach and coastal dune habitat, and increase rate of beach erosion.
Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park (WDPA ID: 11839; KBA ID: n/a)	20	849	MPA	Non removal of the IAS can lead to increased rate of beach erosion, outcompeting native flora, and decreased habitat for native fauna.
Tilloo Cay National Reserve (WDPA ID: 31341; KBA ID: n/a)	3	5	MPA	Tilloo Cay National Reserve is mostly a rocky coast shoreline, therefore, there would be limited resilient species able to grow within the rocky shoreline. The park is also a breeding site for White-tailed Tropicbird, a summer migrant to The Bahamas. Although it is listed as a species of Least Concern by the IUCN, it has a globally declining population, therefore, minimizing the impacts of invasive species is very important.
Bucakaroon Bay (WDPA ID: n/a; KBA ID: n/a)	260	2,541	Forest Reserve Agricultural Coastal	The site has been nominated as a forest reserve by the Forestry Unit, with Cabinet approval, and has undergone consultation with members of the surrounding community. It comprises a mix of agricultural land, forest, and coastal ecosystems. As a forest reserve, the site will remain accessible to the local community for livelihood activities under predetermined conditions that ensure safe, sustainable use and long-term protection of natural resources.
Total	533	12,636		

The restoration will be informed by *site-specific restoration and maintenance plans for priority coastal and terrestrial ecosystems on Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island*. These plans, taking into account the wider 41,175 hectares of protected area landscape across the three target islands, will outline restoration objectives, invasive alien species

(IAS) management actions, and long-term maintenance requirements to guide ecosystem recovery across the targeted sites. This will be contributory to enhancing management effectiveness in protected areas and conserved areas through the integration of IAS prevention, monitoring, control, and response measures into existing site-level management instruments and operational frameworks (aligned to GEF Core Indicator 1.2).

Of the three target locations for the project, Abaco is the only project landscape with protected areas supported by formal site-specific management plans. The protected and proposed conservation areas in New Providence and Cat Island are managed within the broader framework of The Bahamas National Protected Areas System and are guided by national policy instruments, principally by the National Protected Areas System Master Plan, complemented by the Bahamas NBSAP and the and the National Wetlands Policy. Collectively, these frameworks provide strategic direction for biodiversity conservation, IAS prevention and management, habitat restoration, and climate-resilient ecosystem stewardship. The project will build upon these existing national frameworks by strengthening site-specific IAS surveillance, prevention, control, and integrated ridge-to-reef management across the target landscapes while supporting the future development of site-level management planning where appropriate.

In addition, national decision-making tools, including the EIA and Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) processes and physical planning and development approval frameworks, can facilitate the site-specific integration of biodiversity conservation, biosecurity considerations, and IAS risk management into local area land-use and development planning. This will be connected to Component 1 outputs where the project aims to strengthen these existing mechanisms by enhancing the incorporation of IAS considerations into environmental assessment, planning, and protected area management, thereby supporting a coordinated, landscape-scale approach to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience.

Community stewardship agreements will also be developed for each restored site to promote gender-equitable local participation, shared responsibility, and long-term maintenance of restoration activities. The plans will guide implementation of IAS removal, native vegetation propagation, and ecosystem restoration activities to ensure that restoration interventions across the 1,013 hectares are coordinated and sustainable. These plans will additionally specify implementation of integrated, landscape-scale invasive species management by combining best-practice prevention (biosecurity), early detection and rapid response protocols over the wider protected areas on these islands constituting to some 41,175 hectares.

Six greenhouse facilities will be installed in Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island to produce native plant species required for restoration of degraded ecosystems and buffers. Propagated species will primarily consist of native and ecologically appropriate flora, including but not limited to *Rhizophora mangle* (red mangrove), *Avicennia germinans* (black mangrove), *Laguncularia racemosa* (white mangrove), *Conocarpus erectus* (buttonwood), *Coccoloba uvifera* (seagrape), and other native dune and coppice species. These propagation systems will supply native seedlings for replanting following IAS removal while also strengthening community participation in restoration activities. Where appropriate, and based on site-specific restoration and community livelihood considerations, the propagation of select non-invasive, climate-resilient species such as fruit trees may also be explored in collaboration with local farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture to support agroforestry and community co-benefits. These systems will supply seedlings for replanting following invasive alien species (IAS) removal while strengthening community participation in restoration activities.

The greenhouse systems will serve as local training hubs where community members and local stakeholders can build practical skills in plant propagation, nursery management, and ecosystem restoration techniques. The proposed greenhouse facilities will be water and energy efficient powered by solar voltaic energy and outfitted with rainwater harvesting systems that employs water and fertilizer-efficient application. Given the predisposition of the country to hurricanes the greenhouses will be built to mitigate storm damage potential. During the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase, optimal siting, scale, and configuration will be determined based on restoration demand and

community access. Co-management arrangements will be explored, likely involving the Ministry of Agriculture, the Forestry Unit, Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute, Bahamas National Trust, and local communities, drawing on models such as the Pine Islands Restoration Project. All facilities will operate under good environmental management practices to minimize risks associated with agrochemical use and resource inefficiency. Depending on the scope and scale of investments in expanded nursery infrastructure, this may warrant accompanying Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) to identify the risks and mitigation measures for any identified risks. The issuance of Certificates of Environmental Clearance (CEC) may apply based on the foregoing considerations. Further insights will be gained in the PPG phase. The table below presents proposed sites for greenhouses associated with this project. Key locations will be cemented in the PPG Phase.

Proposed Green House Sites		
Island	Proposed Location	Site relevance
Abaco	Marsh Harbour / Dundas Town (Central Abaco)	This green house will function as the primary propagation and coordination hub for Central Abaco. <i>This site is strategically selected due to its high population density, central accessibility, and significant ecosystem degradation following recent hurricane impacts.</i> The greenhouse will serve communities including Marsh Harbour, Dundas Town, Murphy Town, and Spring City by producing native fruit trees, pine trees, and dune-stabilizing species required for restoration activities. It will also support the cultivation of local produce to enhance food security and provide livelihood opportunities. This site should act to help enable rapid replanting following invasive species removal and will serve as a focal point for training, community engagement, and coordination of evasive removal (and possibly restoration efforts) across the island, contributing directly to land restoration targets, increased beneficiary reach, and strengthened technical capacity.
	Cooper's Town (North Abaco)	This greenhouse will serve northern Abaco communities, including Cooper's Town, Blackwood, Crown Haven, and surrounding settlements. <i>This site leverages the area's agricultural base and available land to integrate native tree propagation with agroforestry practices.</i> The greenhouse will produce native seedlings for ecosystem restoration while supporting local farmers for training with local crops (particularly climate-resilient crops), thereby enhancing both environmental and economic outcomes. It will function as a northern distribution hub for planting material and a training site for sustainable land management and farming practices. This intervention supports improved food production, strengthens community-based resource management, and contributes to sustainable land use across northern Abaco.
	Sandy Point (South Abaco)	This greenhouse will be established in Sandy Point to serve southern Abaco communities, including Sandy Point, Crossing Rocks, and nearby settlements. <i>This location is strategically selected to ensure geographic balance and inclusion of southern communities that are often underserved and highly vulnerable to environmental change.</i> The greenhouse will support the propagation of native coastal and terrestrial species for restoration of degraded habitats while also enabling local food production to improve resilience and reduce dependence on imports. It will serve as a localized hub for community training, stewardship, and participation in restoration activities, ensuring that southern Abaco is fully integrated into project implementation. This site contributes to expanded beneficiary coverage, supports restoration of additional land areas, and enhances long-term sustainability through community ownership and engagement.
Cat Island	Arthur's Town (North Cat Island)	This greenhouse will be established in Arthur's Town to serve northern Cat Island communities, including Arthur's Town, Orange Creek, and Knowles. <i>This site will support the propagation of native dry forest and coastal species necessary for ecosystem restoration while reducing increase the local ability to produce palms needed for straw work throughout The Bahamas as well as decrease dependence on food crops.</i> The greenhouse will strengthen local capacity for agroforestry and restoration activities, providing both environmental and socio-economic benefits. It contributes to land restoration, enhances local resilience (environmentally and economically), and increases community engagement in ecosystem stewardship.
	New Bight / Dumfries	This greenhouse will be located in the New Bight and Dumfries area, serving as a central hub for Cat Island, including communities such as New Bight,

	(Central Cat Island):	Dumfries, and Old Bight. <i>This site will support the production of native seedlings and food crops, enabling coordinated restoration efforts across the island.</i> It will also function as a training center for sustainable agriculture and long-term ecosystem management. Through community stewardship agreements, this greenhouse will ensure sustained local involvement in restoration activities. This intervention supports capacity building, promotes sustainable production systems, and ensures long-term maintenance of restored ecosystems.
New Providence	Fox Hill / Eastern New Providence	A second greenhouse will be located in the historical Fox Hill area to serve eastern New Providence communities. <i>This site is selected for its strong community networks and accessibility, making it ideal for outreach, training, and stewardship activities.</i> The greenhouse will focus on urban and peri-urban greening initiatives, supporting the propagation of native species for restoration of degraded green spaces while also improving access to fresh produce. Communities benefiting include Fox Hill and surrounding eastern districts. This intervention increases direct beneficiaries, supports capacity development, and promotes sustainable urban ecosystem management.

The project will support field ***removal of priority invasive plant species and implementation of control interventions for key IAS of concern, including Casuarina spp. and Scaevola, across approximately 1,013 hectares of priority landscapes*** on Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island. These islands have seen aggressive expansion in the coverage of Casuarina spp. and Scaevola that have degraded native ecosystems with replacement of native vegetation and compromise of the initial ecosystem integrity.

Building on existing efforts in The Bahamas, which have primarily involved mechanical clearing and localized coastal restoration, the project will apply an integrated management approach combining mechanical removal (cutting, extraction, and stump grinding), targeted stump treatment to prevent regrowth, and follow-up maintenance, alongside the strategic use of prescribed burning in suitable inland and coppice systems to reduce biomass, manage regrowth, and support native species recovery. These interventions will be complemented by active restoration using native coastal and coppice species to stabilize soils, restore ecosystem function, and reduce the likelihood of reinvasion. The approach is aligned with international best practices, including guidance from CABI through its Invasive Species Compendium (ISC), which promotes integrated control techniques (mechanical, chemical, and ecological), site-specific planning, biosecurity measures to prevent reinvasion, and long-term monitoring and adaptive management. By scaling up proven techniques already applied in-country and strengthening coordination, resourcing, and follow-up management, the project will enable more effective, landscape-level control of invasive species and improved ecosystem resilience.

Following the IAS removal operations in the targeted areas, ***coastal ecosystems and buffers will be restored through native vegetation planting at priority sites*** using plant material propagated through the project greenhouse systems. Restoration interventions will focus on re-establishing native plant communities that stabilize soils, restore habitat quality, and improve ecosystem functions. Interventions will be site-specific and guided by ecological zonation principles, incorporating appropriate species assemblages for coastal, transitional, and inland forest system. These actions will contribute to improved ecosystem integrity and strengthen natural coastal buffers that help reduce vulnerability to storm surge, coastal flooding, erosion, and sea level rise. Adequate measures and due diligence will be considered to avoid introduction of IAS during reforestation. Intervention exercises will be conducted in collaboration with the Forestry Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, and TNC with technical support from BAMSI, and the BNT. Local communities will be actively engaged, ***with facilitation of equitable participation by women***, through training and restoration activities, including IAS removal, planting, and maintenance, fostering stewardship and building local capacity. The project will finance core restoration interventions, complemented by co-financing and in-kind contributions from national agencies and partners to support scale and sustainability. There may be a possibility that location-specific interventions may impinge on areas that are of social and/or cultural significance. During the PPG phase this will be investigated and if needed, appropriate (location-specific) cultural/social heritage management plans will be developed to mitigate potential adverse outcomes.

A *monitoring protocol* will be developed and implemented across all intervention sites to assess the effectiveness of IAS control measures and the ecological response of restored habitats. Monitoring indicators will include the extent of IAS removal achieved, rates of mortality and die-back of target invasive species, levels of reinvasion, native vegetation regeneration success, survival rates of planted native species, and changes in habitat condition. While measurable population-level changes in globally significant species may not be detectable within the project timeframe, positive trends in native vegetation recovery, habitat condition, and indicator species use of restored areas will provide evidence that conditions necessary for biodiversity recovery are being established and maintained. Monitoring results will inform adaptive management and support reporting on biodiversity and ecosystem restoration outcomes. Indicators such as native vegetation cover, species richness, seedling recruitment, and survivorship will serve as primary proxies for ecosystem recovery, ecological integrity, and resilience following IAS removal and habitat restoration.

The project will contribute to the development of a suite of *capacity-building resources* designed to support national institutions, communities, and relevant stakeholders responsible for IAS management and control. In addition to the restoration trainings for local communities, these resources will provide technical guidance and practical tools to strengthen institutional capacity in IAS prevention, monitoring, removal, and ecosystem restoration for all major stakeholders. The materials will support capacity-building programs that improve coordination among agencies and equip stakeholders with the knowledge needed to effectively implement IAS management measures and restoration activities across the project sites. Examples of capacity-building resources include technical guidance manuals on invasive species identification and removal techniques, field identification guides for priority IAS, standard operating procedures (SOPs) for safe removal and disposal practices, restoration manuals for coastal and terrestrial ecosystems, greenhouse propagation guides for native plant species, and monitoring protocols and data collection templates to support restoration tracking.

Educational and outreach materials may also be developed to support community awareness and participation in IAS prevention and restoration activities. These resources will draw on established tools from Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International, including guidance developed under the Preventing the Costs of Invasive Alien Species in Barbados and the OECS Countries, adapted to the Bahamian context. Development will be undertaken collaboratively with Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) in conjunction with national partners, including the Forestry Unit, BAMSI, BNT, BREEF, and the Ministry of Education. Engagement with the Ministry of Tourism, Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association, the Tourism Development Corporation and local government authorities, and community-based organizations will support outreach, regulatory alignment, and uptake, particularly where restoration intersects with tourism and local livelihoods. The development and dissemination of these resources will ensure that stakeholders have access to consistent, science-based information and practical tools needed to implement effective IAS management measures. By strengthening knowledge and technical capacity at both institutional and community levels, these resources will support the sustainability and replication of restoration efforts beyond the lifetime of the project and contribute to more coordinated and effective IAS management across The Bahamas.

The project will deliver targeted *training sessions for key stakeholder groups involved in the prevention, detection, management, and monitoring of invasive alien species*. The targets will include representatives with from regulatory agencies with responsibility for border security and customs, quarantine services, forestry, environmental management, and will include local authorities and community stakeholders. **The project will seek to assure balanced representation by women.** The training program, to be developed with the DEPP's oversight and delivered by national partners will focus on strengthening technical knowledge, practical skills, and inter-agency coordination required for effective IAS management and ecosystem restoration across The Bahamas. Training will be delivered across four main areas (and the associated target audiences):

1. Identification of priority IAS and the safe and effective implementation of response and management measures - public service officers including customs, agriculture, BAHFSA quarantine, forestry, and environmental officers.
2. Invasive species management techniques, restoration approaches, and community engagement strategies to support on-the-ground remediation efforts to support non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including agencies like the BNT, TNC, Friends of The Environment, and BREEF.

3. IAS identification, management practices, and greenhouse propagation techniques to support the cultivation and replanting of native tree species used in ecosystem restoration activities to support local community stakeholders including small-scale landowners, community groups, farmers, and traditional resource users.
4. Monitoring and reporting protocols using the Science Based Information System (SBIS) platform. Training on the SBIS platform will strengthen national capacity to collect, store, analyze, and share IAS monitoring data. This will enable more coordinated reporting, support evidence-based decision-making, and facilitate long-term tracking of restoration outcomes across the efforts of key government agencies, including the DEPP, BAHFSA, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, the Department of Physical Planning, and BNGIS.

Together, these training activities will strengthen human and institutional capacity to support IAS detection, removal, monitoring, and long-term ecosystem restoration. By improving the ability of agencies and communities to identify, report, and respond to IAS threats, the training program will contribute to more coordinated national responses and enhanced operational effectiveness in IAS management across the archipelago. **The project will track the participation and efficacy of capacity building of stakeholders, including communities members, applying gender-based indicators, tentatively defined in the project indicative framework, to be finalized in the PPG phase.**

Component 4 Heightened awareness and enhanced knowledge management on IAS management for improved decision support and empowerment among key stakeholders. This component will result in the realization of *Outcome 4.1: Heightened awareness and strengthened knowledge management contributes to improved decision-making and stakeholder mobilization in mitigating impacts from IAS in The Bahamas.*

This component focuses on strengthening national awareness, knowledge sharing, and information management related to invasive alien species (IAS) in The Bahamas. Effective IAS management requires not only strong policies and field interventions but also informed stakeholders and accessible knowledge systems that support evidence-based decision-making. Through national awareness initiatives, development of knowledge products, and knowledge exchange platforms, this component will improve understanding of IAS impacts and management approaches among government agencies, practitioners, communities, and the broader public. Awareness-raising efforts will be aligned with national development priorities, including climate resilience and disaster risk reduction under the Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plan, sustainable tourism objectives led by the Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation, and national priorities related to biodiversity conservation, protected area management, food security, land degradation, and community livelihoods. These efforts will also support The Bahamas' commitments under key multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and, where relevant, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

This component will also facilitate the documentation and dissemination of lessons learned from project interventions, supporting replication and scaling of successful IAS management and ecosystem restoration practices across The Bahamas and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Implementation of awareness and knowledge management activities will be guided by a Gender Action Plan to be developed during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase, ensuring inclusive engagement and **gender-equitable** access to information, capacity-building, and participation opportunities across stakeholder groups. This component contributes to the GEF cross-cutting priority of knowledge generation, learning, and stakeholder engagement to support improved environmental governance and decision-making. Under this **component**, the project will strengthen national communication and knowledge management systems to ensure that information generated through the project is effectively shared and utilized. By increasing public awareness and improving access to practical knowledge on IAS management, stakeholders will be better equipped to support prevention, monitoring, and restoration efforts across the archipelago.

A National awareness campaign and knowledge management strategy for IAS management will be developed within the wider national biodiversity management program. In the first instance, the project will support the development and implementation of a coordinated *national awareness campaign* aimed at increasing public understanding of invasive alien species, their impacts on biodiversity, ecosystems, and livelihoods, and the importance of prevention and management actions. The campaign will target a range of stakeholders including government agencies, local communities, schools, tourism operators, hospitality providers, transportation and shipping operators, construction and development interests, agricultural producers, natural resource managers, and the private sector.

In parallel, a *knowledge management strategy* that is coupled with the awareness campaign will be developed to guide the collection, organization, and dissemination of information related to IAS management. This strategy will ensure that knowledge generated through the project and other national initiatives is systematically documented, accessible to stakeholders, and integrated into national biodiversity management efforts. Specifically, it will define how knowledge and learnings from the project, also drawing from the global commons, will be captured and used to share evidence to support management investments on IAS prevention, early detection, control, and long-term ecosystem restoration. The strategy will define how knowledge streams from across the project components on policy and technical data, field experience, and local knowledge will be integrated in informing implementation during the project and onward, post-project. Key aspects include establishing standardized data collection and monitoring systems (e.g., surveillance and early warning databases), promoting open data sharing and interoperable platforms to enable cross-sector and regional collaboration, and ensuring continuous learning through documentation of lessons, best practices, and case studies. During the PPG phase the key elements of the knowledge management strategy will be outlined to guide its full elaboration during project implementation.

To support the awareness campaign and inputs to enhance knowledge management, a *suite of knowledge products* including, but not limited to case studies, technical briefs, lessons learned, best practices from demonstration sites Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island. These products will capture practical insights on invasive species removal techniques, ecosystem restoration approaches, monitoring methodologies, and community engagement strategies. By documenting and disseminating these experiences through targeted knowledge exchange platforms, the project will support the replication and scaling of effective IAS management and restoration practices across other islands in The Bahamas and in similar ecological contexts in the Caribbean and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The Caribbean Invasives Network (caribbeaninvasives.org), built from knowledge and experience from prior GEF projects (3183 and 9408) and CABI's work as host agency, will support this project. The network serves as a regional knowledge-sharing hub, linking databases, case studies, and communication materials across countries and institutions to support consistent messaging, regional learning, and awareness of island biodiversity threats. The network maintains access to online training resources and learning modules on IAS, as well as regional awareness campaigns such as "Declare, Deposit or Pay" to communicate risks and encourage behaviour change among travellers and local communities. The Network also provides technical guides and illustrated field resources, including species identification manuals and best-practice management guidance, to help stakeholders recognize, monitor, and respond to IAS.

The project will support *at least 12 awareness and knowledge exchange events* at the national level and with other regional and global SIDS to share experiences on restoration, monitoring and IAS management. These will be delivered through workshops, seminars, and stakeholder forums at the national level, as well as participation in regional and international knowledge-sharing platforms. These events will bring together government agencies, researchers, NGOs, community groups, and international partners to share experiences, lessons learned, and innovative approaches to IAS management and ecosystem restoration.

These activities will be coordinated by the DEPP, in collaboration with partner agencies including The University of The Bahamas, the BNT, BAMSI, Tourism, TNC, FRIENDS, relevant family island NGOs, local government and other national partners. Technical exchanges with regional and international partners, including Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) and other Caribbean research institutions, will be facilitated through study tours, joint workshops, and virtual knowledge-sharing sessions to promote cross-learning and innovation. NGOs such as Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation, Young Marine Explorers (YME) will support outreach and

community engagement components. Engagement with other Small Island Developing States will enable The Bahamas to both contribute to and benefit from regional and global knowledge on IAS management, helping to strengthen collaborative learning and the adoption of best practices for biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in island ecosystems.

Specific indicators to monitor changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors among target stakeholder groups, including adoption of recommended biosecurity practices, reporting of IAS sightings, participation in restoration activities, and other measures of stakeholder engagement, disaggregated by sex where appropriate, to assess the effectiveness and gender responsiveness of outreach efforts, will be developed during the PPG phase. The campaign will incorporate gender-responsive communication approaches and seek to ensure equitable participation and leadership opportunities for women and men in awareness, knowledge-sharing, and stewardship activities. **The project will implement *Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) surveys at baseline and end line* to measure changes in awareness and understanding of IAS and ecosystem restoration.** These will be complemented by event feedback, participation metrics, and knowledge product uptake to track effectiveness and inform adaptive learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A project monitoring and evaluation system will be put in place to ensure continual assessment of progress in meeting project outcome and output targets. The monitoring, evaluation and learning system will ensure full transparency of the project progress and performance against the results framework, and compliance with the established reporting and evaluation requirements, ensuring that gender metrics are fully integrated.

[1] Requires login credentials; shortened website URL used for this document in the interim: <https://sl1nk.com/t1kw5oj>

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing

The Department of Environmental Planning & Protection (DEPP) will serve as the project Executing Agency. As the leading organization for sustainable development in The Bahamas, DEPP's main responsibilities include preventing or controlling pollution, regulating environmental activities, and ensuring conservation and sustainable use of the environment. The agency also oversees the country's multilateral environmental agreements. Additionally, the DEPP develops and implements policies, programmes, and plans to effectively manage and conserve The Bahamas' physical environment. It is also responsible for the management of research permit applications for scientific studies that involve or impact the nation's natural resources.

The project will be governed by a multi-stakeholder steering committee mechanism that ensures adequate representation of beneficiary communities to provide strategic guidance and oversight, with representation from key government agencies, technical institutions, civil society, and beneficiary communities. Core supporting agencies will include BAMSI, BNT, TNC, and the Forestry Unit which will provide technical guidance, field support, and oversight across project components. Working groups and other technical coordination mechanisms will be established as needed. These mechanisms will operate primarily within existing participatory frameworks to minimize stakeholder fatigue and ensure coherence with ongoing processes.

Project implementation will be primarily delivered through the engagement of specialized consultants and service providers to undertake technical activities, including IAS removal, ecosystem restoration, training, and knowledge product development. Supporting agencies will function as technical backstopping partners, providing oversight, validating methodologies, and supporting field implementation. This modality is designed to ensure efficient delivery while strengthening national capacity through structured knowledge transfer, on-the-job training, and institutional learning. Detailed roles, contracting modalities, and capacity transfer mechanisms will be further refined during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase.

The GEF Agency will not undertake an execution role but will provide implementation support, technical oversight, and fiduciary supervision in accordance with GEF requirements, including quality assurance, safeguards compliance, monitoring and reporting, and facilitation of access to global expertise.

The project will be closely coordinated with ongoing national and regional initiatives to maximize synergies, avoid duplication, and leverage existing investments. There are two ongoing national GEF investments and one recently concluded regional IAS project that are of relevance to this proposed initiative, from which experiences and emerging lessons will be collected and incorporated into this project as appropriate. It should be noted that most of the same key national agencies are engaged in both national projects in leading partnership roles and coordinated by the DEPP. As a consequence, there are significant opportunities for synergies, considering that the projects are delivering on national strategic policy directives outlined under Section C. A short account is provided below:

The GEF-UNEP project ***Bahamas Pine Islands - Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration*** (GEF ID: 4847), which concluded in 2025, invested in the demarcation of the national forestry estate for gazette, accompanied by an updated forest estate assessment. Land use plans were formulated for New Providence and Andros, site-specific forestry management plans were developed, and capacity in forest management tools was strengthened. The project also supported sustainable livelihoods by fostering commercial development of non-timber forest products, specifically focusing on silver top palm and cascarilla extract. Although there was no targeted investment in invasive alien species (IAS) control, the management enhancements within the forestry sector will be contributory.

The ongoing GEF-UNEP project ***Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas*** (GEF ID: 9791), launched in April 2020, is a large-scale initiative focused on enhancing the management of five marine protected areas: Andros West Side National Park, Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park, Moriah Harbor Cay National Park, Bonefish Pond National Park, and Lucayan National Park, covering just over 688,000 hectares. The effort is being carried out in close partnership with The Bahamas National Trust (BNT), which holds management jurisdiction over these MPAs. Under Component 3, the project seeks to integrate MPA management with sustainable development across broader terrestrial and marine landscapes, including the removal of invasive alien species (IAS) and ecosystem restoration—particularly within Bonefish Pond National Park and Lucayan National Park, spanning around 100 hectares. The BNT has been making progress in IAS removal, prioritizing the elimination of casuarina trees that have aggressively encroached upon the peripheral areas of the national parks.

The GEF-UNEP ***Integrated Landscape Management for Addressing Land Degradation, Food Security and Climate Resilience Challenges in The Bahamas*** (GEF ID: 10694; 'ILM Project' for short) aims to enhance climate-resilient food production across productive agricultural landscapes through sound integrated landscape management and land degradation neutrality approaches in The Bahamas. The project targets 27,300 hectares on seven islands in the Bahamian archipelago - Abaco, Andros, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Long Island, Grand Bahama and New Providence - on which the land management practices used is contributing to the land degradation challenges the country faces. Although not an IAS-exclusive project, the project includes investments that will be relevant to invasive species management, including ecosystem restoration using native species, regenerative land management practices that will have co-benefits in the reduction of IAS establishment potential, and overall strengthening landscape resilience that will be conducive to preventing invasive species spread.

The GEF-UNEP regional project *Preventing Costs of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Barbados and the OECS Countries* (GEF ID: 9408) seeks to manage the risks and costs of IAS on important ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity in Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) region, specifically through prevention, early detection, control and management frameworks for IAS that emphasize a risk management approach by focusing on the highest risk invasion pathways. While the project did not include The Bahamas, the country will benefit through wider regional cooperation and sharing of lessons in the uptake and application of regional tools, guidance, and knowledge products. The project contributed to the community of practice, the Caribbean Invasives Network, through the online site 'caribbeaninvasives.org' which hosts a variety of technical resources that will be of use to practitioners in this project. The network hosted by CABI, facilitates regional knowledge-sharing, linking databases, sharing of case studies, and communication materials across countries and institutions to support IAS messaging, regional learning, and awareness of island biodiversity threats. CABI's anticipated involvement in this project will ensure utilization of the network to share best practices for uptake in this project and likewise in dissemination of work from The Bahamas to the Caribbean region and SIDS at the global level.

The project will build on lessons learned from the initiatives mentioned above (as well as others identified during the PPG phase) by focusing on integrated landscape approaches that address and control the spread of invasive alien species (IAS). Efforts under the Challenge of 2020 for IAS removal and restoration at Bonefish Pond and Lucayan National Parks will be expanded within this project. Additionally, proposed investments will benefit from the policy and regulatory frameworks developed for improved sustainable land management and land degradation neutrality advanced under the ILM Project. The project will employ science-based approaches for IAS management by drawing on regional and international experience through partnerships with organizations that have expertise in the field and will also demonstrate adaptive management practices informed by ongoing monitoring and continuous learning.

Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
27246	0	0	0

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
27246	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Abaco: Abaco	129917	National Park	8,296.00						

National Park									
Abaco: Fowl Cays National Park	555592579	National Park	945.00						
Abaco: Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park	11839	National Park	849.00						
Abaco: Tiloo Cay National Reserve	31341	National Park	5.00						
Cat Island: Fernandez Bay/Joe Sound/Armbrister Creek		Protected Landscape/Seascape	9,766.00						
New Providence: Harold Wilson Pond	555592591	Protected Landscape/Seascape	101.00						
New Providence: Southwest New Providence Marine Managed Area	555625723	Protected Landscape/Seascape	7,284.00						

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
1013	0	0	0

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,013.00			

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
13929	0	0	0

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
13,929.00			

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	250276	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)	4117500	0	0	0

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	250,276			
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)	4,117,500			
Anticipated start year of accounting	2027			
Duration of accounting	20			

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	250			
Male	250			
Total	500	0	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators were established using a combination of preliminary spatial analysis, national technical guidance, and globally recognized estimation tools, with the understanding that all figures will be refined during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase.

Core Indicator 1: 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness. The target of 27,246 ha represents investments in integrated, landscape-scale invasive species management by combining best-practice IAS prevention (biosecurity), early detection and rapid response protocols within designated protected areas that are adjacent to areas targeted for restoration (aligned with Core Indicator 3.2) to generate broader landscape-level benefits across the full extent of each site. These estimates will be further validated during the PPG phase through spatial analysis and stakeholder consultations.

Core Indicator 3: 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration. The preliminary target of approximately 1,013 ha was identified based on designated restoration sites across three priority islands. These sites were selected using existing ecological assessments and national priorities for degraded forest landscapes. The final spatial extent will be validated during the PPG through ground-truthing and geospatial analysis to ensure feasibility and alignment with Nature-based Solutions (NbS) best practices. The table below summarizes the acreages at each location to be targeted for IAS control and land restoration in alignment with Core Indicator 3.2. Refer to the PIF document for details in the table.

Core Indicator 4: 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity. The target of 13,929 ha represents investments in integrated, landscape-scale invasive species management by combining best-practice IAS prevention (biosecurity), early detection and rapid response protocols over landscapes outside of designated protected areas adjacent to areas targeted for restoration (aligned with Core Indicator 3.2) to generate broader landscape-level benefits across the full extent of each site. These estimates will be further validated during the PPG phase through spatial analysis and stakeholder consultations.

Core Indicator 6: 6.1 Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (direct). The estimate was derived in two parts; (1) estimation for the forests that will undergo land use change with restoration over 1,013 hectares (GEF core indicator 3.2) and (2) estimation over the adjacent 41,175 hectares of protected area landscapes and landscapes outside PAs that are not anticipated to undergo land use change (GEF core indicators 1.2 and 4.1). Using the FAO EX-ACT Tool (v9.4.2) it was only possible to estimate the carbon sequestration for the 1,013 ha under restoration as the EX-ACT tool does not allow for calculation of carbon sequestration where there is no land use change; the calculator generates a system error.

(1) For the 1,013 hectares to be targeted for restoration, the EX-ACT Tool parameters were as follows: Land Use Change (LUC) coefficients for 'Other Land Use Changes' of 'degraded lands' as initial land use to (a) 'shaded perennial' land use, and (b) 'alley cropping' final land use, equivalent to restoration to the equivalent of closed-cover native vegetation and agroforestry tree crop systems associated with agricultural land use respectively. Of the overall 1,013 ha to be restored (i) 340 ha is assumed to be equivalent to 'shady perennial' final land use and (ii) and 673 ha equivalent to 'alley-cropping' as final land use. The total duration of accounting is over a 20-year period. The total sequestration is estimated at 250,276 tCO₂e over the period.

(2) For the combined 41,175 hectares associated with national parks/protected areas (27,246 ha) and areas outside of national parks/protected areas (13,929 ha) not subject to land use change, the estimated sequestration for Caribbean Pine and Coppice (dry) forest (based on expert knowledge and available references) assuming variable levels of stocking and mix, may range from 2 to 8 tCO₂e/ha/year. For this estimation a value of 5 tCO₂e/ha/year is assumed. For the 41,175-hectare area the total annual sequestration is estimated at 205,875 tCO₂e, to yield 4,117,500 tCO₂e over the 20-year accounting period.

The total carbon sequestration over the 20-year accounting period is 4,367,776 tCO₂e. These estimates are preliminary and will be refined during the PPG phase using site-specific data, including land-use histories, growth rates, and localized carbon stock factors, and validated through full application of the EX-ACT model.

Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments. Beneficiary estimates are based on projected engagement of local communities, land users, and institutional stakeholders. These figures will be refined during the PPG using detailed stakeholder mapping and participation analysis.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Substantial	The country lies within the Atlantic Hurricane belt and can be impacted by tropical cyclones. Depending on the severity of the event, mitigation measures that project can influence will be to ensure that infrastructure investments designed in accordance with national norms and standards in respect to design/build specifications and that investments are not located in inherently vulnerable locations. Data management systems for the project will be established to build redundancies and back-up to avoid loss of data in the event of infrastructure loss at affected locations. Lessons have been drawn from the passage of Hurricane Dorian (high-end Category 5) in September 2019 that caused significant impacts in the northern Bahamas (Abaco and Grand Bahama).
Environmental and Social	Moderate	Site-specific risks and impacts will need to be considered as they trigger Safeguard Standard 1: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Safeguard Standard 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risks. There could also be a trigger for Safeguard Standard 5: Cultural Heritage which will need to be determined during project design. It is recognized that poorly designed invasive species removal may cause short term habitat disturbance or conflict with community use of land and coastal areas. In this regard, the project will need to apply site specific ecological screening to sequence removal and restoration, ensuring immediate replanting with native species, combine control activities with community stewardship and awareness programmes to minimise social conflict and improve compliance and focus interventions on priority and ecologically sensitive sites where benefits are clear and visible to communities. Consideration will also need to be given to whether there may be any impact on livelihoods. In the PPG stage, the proposed project activities will undergo screening to assess potential impacts with respect to potential safeguard concerns. Appropriate mitigation measures to address identified risks will be defined and embedded within the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, site-specific grievance redress mechanism along with the identification of any affected and interested stakeholders. If applicable, a plan to address any adverse outcomes to livelihood security may need to be developed. For any construction activities (likely mainly related to nursery facilities), ESIs may need to be defined; however, this will depend on assessment during the PPG phase.
Political and Governance	Moderate	There could be potentially shifts in political priorities or weak inter-agency coordination that may reduce effectiveness and continuity in invasive species management. The project will need to consider mitigation measures that ensure the anchoring of project actions in existing national strategies and legally mandated institutions, considering the National Invasive Species Strategy and relevant coastal/land management mandates. The project will seek to establish

		an appropriate inter-agency coordination mechanism to ensure post-project continuity. Importantly the alignment with tourism objectives given the expansive influence of the sector will need to be carefully considered.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Moderate	The institutional and policy-setting framework in The Bahamas has generally been conducive to environmental agenda implementation, and the mandate of the DEPP allows for broad-based execution of associated responsibilities. However, the project must address fragmented policies as well as outdated or inadequate regulations that may hinder installation of IAS prevention measures and effective pathway management. As such, the project should review existing policies and support targeted updates to biosecurity, land use planning, and tourism landscaping regulations among others. Additionally, the project will need to contribute to fostering the enabling conditions to integrate invasive species prevention into land use and coastal development/planning regulations, rather than treating IAS as an isolated ‘environmental’ issue and strengthen institutional clarity regarding roles and responsibilities for prevention, early detection, and response. This risk will be more fully assessed during the PPG phase.
Technological	Low	The key issue is limited access to appropriate monitoring and early warning tools that may reduce effectiveness. In The Bahamas context, there should be emphasis on the use appropriate, low-cost monitoring technologies (baseline inventories, field surveys, simple data platforms) suited to SIDS contexts. Similarly, there should be priority paid to early detection and rapid response systems rather than reliance on complex or high maintenance technologies and ensure that technology choices are matched to institutional capacity and long-term use. Otherwise, the project will employ well-established best practices for IAS controls and knowledge management gathered from the global community of practice.
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	A major challenge is that managing invasive species is both expensive and difficult to sustain after the project concludes. Through policy recommendations and implementation, the project should seek to foster conditions where IAS prevention and control measures become integrated into existing public expenditure streams across key economic sectors, such as tourism, agriculture, coastal area development, and broader land management. This approach should also support cost-effective prevention and early intervention strategies to reduce long-term control costs. It will be necessary to explore co-financing opportunities and engage the private sector, especially in the context of tourism and coastal development.
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Moderate	The project will be executed by the DEPP serving as the Executing Agency. The agency has experience in managing GEF projects, having fulfilled the Executing Agency role for multiple initiatives in recent years. While the DEPP possesses the institutional capacity and expertise required to carry out the Executing Agency responsibilities the project will nonetheless need to ensure

		that needed capacity is put in place for the project and that an exit strategy considers continuity post-project. This will include ensuring focus on targeted, practical capacity building for national agencies, protected area managers, and local practitioners. Additionally, this will include use of demonstration sites to build experience and confidence before scaling, and leveraging regional and international technical partners already active in IAS management.
Fiduciary	Low	The DEPP possesses experience in managing GEF grants as well as other donor-funded projects and has established fiduciary systems to ensure effective financial resource management and accountability. The agency maintains strong collaborative networks with national governmental and non-governmental organizations, promoting environmental conservation through policy support and technical assistance that accompanies the deployment of resources to achieve effective outcomes. However, during the PPG phase, further evaluation will be conducted on this aspect to assess risk levels.
Stakeholder	Moderate	To address stakeholder risks in IAS management considering the multi-sectoral approach that will be needed, the project will use an inclusive, adaptable engagement strategy. Detailed in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, this approach considers livelihood impacts, power dynamics, and cross-institutional coordination. All affected groups, including vulnerable rural communities as the case may be, will be involved throughout planning and implementation, using culturally aware methods that factor in gender and participation differences. Responsibilities will be clearly assigned, and coordination ensured across agencies for consistent policy and field actions. Stakeholder fatigue may pose a significant challenge requiring diligent management throughout the project's execution. With personnel resources constrained within both government agencies and community organizations responsible for participation and oversight, strategic coordination will be indispensable to project success. To improve efficiency, the project will organize joint consultations with partners who share similar goals, reducing standalone events and minimizing duplication. Consultations will focus on relevant stakeholders, with clear agendas and measurable outcomes. Gender responsiveness will be a key consideration, supported by gender-sensitive indicators in the results framework to ensure inclusive impact. The project will operationalize a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to ensure preservation of the rights of the local communities, ensuring that they have access to representation in amicably addressing complaints that may arise, and that the project management can take necessary actions in due time.
Other		
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	The project will require a multi-sectoral approach, spanning from policy to technical field strategies, in order to effectively address the challenges of IAS management, particularly considering the complex interactions between land

development and landscape modifications in productive sectors, and the pathways that may facilitate the proliferation of IAS.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project is in alignment with the **GEF-8 Biodiversity Programming Strategy**, particularly **Objective 1: to enhance the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of natural ecosystems**. It directly supports **Programming Directions BD-1-5, Prevention, control, and management of Invasive Alien Species (IAS)**, as well as **BD-1-3, which promotes ecosystem restoration**. In line with the GEF8 strategy the project will adopt by necessity, an integrated landscape management given the relatively close spatial interconnectedness of land management regimes that generally characterizes Caribbean landscape on account of small land areas. Central to the programming directive of GEF8 in respect to management of alien invasive species is cognizance that IAS proliferation is the primary cause of species extinctions on island ecosystems and if not controlled can degrade critical ecosystem services. In alignment with the strategy, this project will enhance national management capabilities through policy reform and technical innovation, aiming for comprehensive prevention, early detection, and control. The primary focus will be on the highest-risk invasion pathways of two significant IAS threats identified as top priorities in the country. The project will employ a whole-of-government approach, coordinating and integrating functionalities across key relevant national agencies responsible for thematic areas such as travel and shipping, port health and security, forestry and wildlife management, and urban and rural planning and development across main productive sectors—including tourism and agriculture. Additionally, strong private sector and community engagement will be essential, as they are the ultimate beneficiaries of this investment. The GEF strategy recognizes support for targeted eradication efforts in specific situations where proven, cost-effective, and efficient measures can lead to the removal of invasive alien species (IAS) and ensure the survival of globally significant species and ecosystems. In this context, the country has already implemented control initiatives targeting the IAS, particularly within and surrounding peripheral zones adjacent to important protected areas that are home to species of global significance.

The project will deliver co-benefits under Climate Change adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches that strengthen coastal resilience. Specifically, it will address climate-related risks, such as increased drought and wildfire frequency, by strengthening management regimes that safeguard ecosystem integrity within protected areas.

In terms of national policy, the project is most directly aligned with the **National Invasive Species Strategy (NISS) for The Bahamas (2003, updated 2013)**^{[1]¹⁶} that serves as the primary national framework for managing invasive species in The Bahamas. Its objective is to 'prevent the introduction of, control, or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats, and species.' The strategy employs a multi-sectoral approach, addressing prevention, early detection, control, eradication, public awareness, and institutional coordination. It explicitly incorporates invasive species considerations into sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, land use, transport, trade, and tourism, recognizing invasive species as a significant driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. Key policy objectives include developing strategic management plans for high-priority invasive species; preventing the introduction of invasive alien species into The Bahamas through regulatory and other measures; monitoring invasive species populations via surveys and risk assessments; and promoting, undertaking, and facilitating both the re-establishment of native species, where appropriate, and the restoration of invaded and damaged habitats. The BNISS also includes the National Invasive Species Policy and Codes of Conduct for the Government and other key sectors of Bahamian society, such as farms, pet stores, zoos and aquaria. The 2013 BNISS includes an implementation plan spanning 10 years with focus on a number of strategic actions such as reducing the threat of introductions via recreational boating and fishing and developing a monitoring system for priority sites.

The proposed project outcomes are fully consistent with the country's **National Strategy and Action Plan on Biological Diversity** (1999) and the directions in last published **4th National Biodiversity Report of The Bahamas to the UNCBD** (2011). In the NBSAP among the key goals is to conserve biological resources and diversity wherein the control of alien and invasive species is of priority. In the 4NR, under Goal 6, the aim is to control threats from invasive alien species through Target 6.1, that seeks to control pathways for major potential invasive alien species and Target 6.2 through the institution of management plans for major alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species.

There are two policy instruments that speak to landscape management that are relevant to IAS management; the National Development Plan and the Bahamas National Protected Areas System Plan. The **National Development Plan (NDP) 2016-2030** highlights environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and the protection of natural capital as essential to long-term economic growth, especially in an economy like The Bahamas, which relies heavily on tourism. Under Goal 11 on the Natural Environment, country aims to maintain a natural environment that supports sustainable development and the Bahamian way of life for future generations. Key challenges to be addressed that are of relevance to IAS management include the high vulnerability to threats from climate change and sea level rise affecting land, water, and biodiversity, land development practices that do not achieve a balance between progress and the management or protection of ecosystems and coastal areas, fragmented environmental legislation and management, combined with limited institutional capacity within environmental agencies, and weak enforcement of environmental laws. The key proposed response strategy and relevant action to IAS is the development of a comprehensive framework to prevent and reverse loss and protect coastlines, and increase the resilience of coastal ecosystems. The **Bahamas National Protected Areas System (BNPAS) Plan** is a strategic framework that aims to strengthen management effectiveness and ecological connectivity across protected and surrounding landscapes.

There are some key legislative instruments that are relevant to IAS management. The **Plant Protection Act** (2016) is one of the most operationally significant pieces of legislation for invasive species prevention given that it aligns The Bahamas with international phytosanitary standards and explicitly addresses alien and invasive plant pests. This Act provides the legal foundation for preventing the introduction and spread of invasive alien plant species through regulation of plants, plant products, and related materials. It establishes powers for inspection, quarantine, risk assessment, and phytosanitary controls at ports of entry and within the country. The **Wildlife Conservation and Trade Act** (2004) regulates the protection, possession, and trade of wildlife species and supports invasive species management by controlling introduction, movement, and trade of non-native fauna, particularly where such species threaten native wildlife. It also provides the legal basis for implementing international wildlife trade obligations. The **Forestry Act** (2010), provides the legal framework for the sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of forest resources in The Bahamas, supporting reforestation and ecosystem restoration efforts in terrestrial landscapes.

The **Department of Environmental Planning and Protection Act** (2019) and the **Ministry of Environment Act** (2019) jointly contribute to the strengthening of the institutional and regulatory framework for environmental management in The Bahamas. These instruments empower the DEPP in leading policy and technical coordination and cooperation with partners in invasive species management by enabling environmental planning, coordination, and enforcement functions relevant to land use, development control, and ecosystem protection. The **Bahamas National Trust Act** (1959) that establishes the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) and provides for the management of national parks and protected areas, which involves management provisions for invasive species control among other measures, in attaining conservation objectives within protected areas. The BNT is actively undertaking on-the-ground management interventions in the removal and control of invasive species in national parks (ongoing under the GEF Challenge of 2020 project). The **Planning and Subdivision Bill / Act** (2010) has implications for IAS management considering application of its regulatory provisions in land use planning and development approvals. This is in terms of management of entry points to mainstream IAS prevention measures, for example through mandating of landscaping controls and habitat protection into development planning and permitting.

Forefront governmental agencies to be involved in policy and technical-level regulation relevant to IAS management will include the **Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP)**, the **Forestry Unit**, the **Ministry of Agriculture**, the **Department of Marine Resources (DMR)**, and the **Bahamas Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority (BAHFSA)**. Affiliated agencies serving sectoral interests and engaged in landscape management will include the **Department of Physical Planning**, the **Ministry of Works and Family Island Affairs**, the **Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation (MoTIA)**, the **Bahamas National Trust (BNT)**, the **Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI)**, as well as **local government and Island Administrators** on Grand Bahama and Abaco. Local organizations dedicated to conservation and anticipated to be actively engaged will include the **Bahamas Reef Environmental Educational Foundation (BREEF)**, **Friends of The Environment (Abaco)**, **Cat Island United**, and the **Cat Island**

Conservation Institute (CICI). Regional and international support agencies active in the Bahamas and anticipated to contribute to IAS management include the **Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI)**, **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**, and the **Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI)**.

Regionally and globally, the project contributes to the implementation of key multilateral environmental agreements, principally the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with co-benefits in the context of both the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). By targeting IAS management and ecosystem restoration, the project advances obligations under the CBD to prevent and control invasive species and to restore degraded ecosystems, while also supporting land degradation mitigation and climate adaptation goals through nature-based solutions.

As a GEF biodiversity focal area project, it is aligned to the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity targets** of which **Target 6 is primary**; Eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent by 2030, and eradicating or controlling invasive alien species, especially in priority sites, such as islands. The project also closely aligned to:

- **Target 1:** Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and sea-use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- **Target 2:** Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity.
- **Target 4:** Ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.
- **Target 23:** Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the framework through a gender-responsive approach where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity.

[1] <https://caribbeaninvasives.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Bahamas-Revised-NISS-2013-FINAL.pdf>

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PIF development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The Bahamas does not yet have an officially adopted National Gender Equality Policy; however, gender equality considerations are generally guided in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), to which The Bahamas acceded in 1993. The Bureau of Women's Affairs within the Ministry of Social Services has responsibility for policy practice and gender mainstreaming as relevant, across the work of national agencies. In the context of the proposed project, gender dimensions will be important in terms of how invasives may compromise economic opportunities in productive sectors (fisheries, agriculture, tourism) that in turn may affect livelihoods based on the division of labour and roles between women and men. This may extend to household resource management and other wider societal dimensions. Gender-responsive project framing with appropriate indicators will contribute to more effective stakeholder engagement in IAS management. Ensuring gender-equitable participation in training, access to information, and leadership opportunities can strengthen institutional capacity and community ownership of project interventions that will ultimately lead to inclusive, sustainable, and socially equitable outcomes in the prevention and management of invasive alien species. Details on gender considerations, such as women's roles in output delivery, decision-making, implications for livelihood opportunities among others, will be fully elaborated in the Gender Action Plan under the PPG phase.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder consultations undertaken during the PIF development phase included representatives from government agencies, protected area managers, technical institutions, civil society organizations, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders with expertise and experience in biodiversity conservation, invasive alien species management, ecosystem restoration, protected area management, and environmental governance. Women were appropriately represented throughout the consultative process and comprised the majority of senior technical and decision-making representatives engaged during project identification and design. Inputs received through both group consultations and bilateral discussions informed the design of the proposed IAS management and ecosystem restoration interventions, including the identification of priority sites, selection of management approaches, institutional roles and responsibilities, capacity development needs, and opportunities for strengthening coordination and stakeholder participation. These stakeholders will continue to be engaged throughout the PPG phase and project implementation, ensuring that project activities remain informed by local knowledge, technical expertise, and stakeholder priorities.

The following is a summary of stakeholder consultations in the formulation of the PIF.

Date(s)	Consultation outcomes	Participant organizations
31 May 2024	INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING <i>Lead convener: Ministry of Works and Family Island Affairs</i> The meeting focused on presenting and reviewing the Roadmap to a Resilient Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Enabling	- Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) - Office of the Prime Minister - Ministry of Works

	Framework for The Bahamas. The roadmap outlines a structured, phased approach to developing policies, legislation, institutional arrangements, and financing mechanisms to support sustainable and coordinated management of coastal and marine resources. 1. Establishment of a national ICZM policy, legislation, and institutional structure 2. Creation of mechanisms for coordinated coastal and ocean management 3. Importance of inclusive, multi-sectorial consultations 4. Development of stakeholder engagement strategies, including Green and White Papers 5. Designation of a lead ICZM agency and supporting committee 6. Development and harmonization of policies, legislation, and regulatory processes	• BAMSI • Department of Marine Resources • Ministry of Agriculture • IDB • Department of Physical Planning • University of The Bahamas • Bahamas • The Bahamas Contractors Association
20 September 2024	As Workshop – Cultivating Critical Collaboration For Invasive Alien Species Management <i>Lead convener: Bahamas National Trust (BNT)</i> This workshop brought together national stakeholders to address the growing threat of invasive alien species (IAS) in The Bahamas, particularly within national parks. The engagement emphasized knowledge exchange, capacity building, and coordinated management approaches. Key outcomes included: 1. Strengthened understanding of IAS impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem function, and resilience 2. Identification of priority invasive species, including casuarina, Brazilian pepper, scaevola, and melaleuca 3. Recognition of IAS threats within protected areas and their impacts on native species such as iguanas, flamingos, and the Bahama parrot 4. Promotion of inter-agency collaboration and knowledge sharing for IAS control and management 5. Capacity building through technical sessions and field-based removal exercises at Bonefish Pond National Park 6. Reinforcement of the need for education, awareness, and proactive management to prevent IAS spread 7. Emphasis on drivers of IAS spread, including importation, land disturbance, and weak regulatory frameworks	• Bahamas National Trust (BNT) • Ministry of Agriculture • Forestry Unit • Department of Public Works • Public Parks and Beaches Authority • DEPP • University of The Bahamas • Local Communities
28 FEB 2025	GEF 8 MEETING <i>Lead convener: DEPP</i> <i>Format: Virtual</i> The meeting was convened to engage partner agencies, present the proposed GEF-8 concept, and generate ideas to support the development of the concept note. Main discussion points: 1. Overview of the GEF-8 framework, including objectives and funding priorities. 2. Development of a plan for sustainable cities and identification of potential thematic areas. 3. Opportunities for inter-agency collaboration and project development.	• DEPP • Forestry Unit • The Nature Conservancy • Bahamas National Trust
20 MAR 2025	COMMUNITY OUTREACH <i>Goal: MANGROVE RESTORATION</i> <i>Lead convener: Forestry Unit</i> The objective of this community outreach initiative was to facilitate public participation in the replanting of red mangrove propagules at Bonefish Pond, New Providence.	• Forestry Unit • DEPP • University of The Bahamas • Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources
25 JUN 2025	GEF 8 MEETING <i>FORMAT: Virtual</i> Main discussion points: 1. The issuance of a call for proposals, including a proposed submission deadline at the end of summer, was discussed.	• DEPP • Forestry Unit • TNC • BNT

	- Participants discussed the identification and selection of target areas for project implementation. - The need for capacity-building initiatives to support project development and implementation was highlighted. - The socio-economic benefits of proposed projects were considered as an important factor in project design. - Restoration of degraded areas was highlighted and discussed as a key priority for the project.	
17 JUL 2025	GEF 8 MEETING <i>Format: Virtual</i> Main discussion points - The identification of key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Housing for the integration of climate-resilient housing and the Ministry of Health for critical infrastructure in clinics and hospitals, was discussed. - The development of project objectives was discussed, including strengthening invasive species control, increasing green spaces on New Providence, and improving existing policies to support the implementation of protected terrestrial areas on New Providence, Abaco, Andros, and a selected Family Island. - The creation of a pilot greenhouse project for comprehensive schools on the Southern Islands was discussed as a means of improving self-sufficiency and reducing reliance on imported produce. - Key focal areas for the project were identified and discussed, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, and land degradation.	- DEPP - Forestry Unit - TNC - BNT
15 OCT 2025	GEF 8 MEETING <i>Format: In person</i> <i>Lead Convener: DEPP</i> Main discussion points Revising the document to remove references to climate change and refocus on sustainable tourism, waste management, and land restoration and degradation on New Providence and Grand Bahama.	DEPP
17 OCT 2025	NAVIGATING THE CEC PROCESS WORKSHOP <i>Format: In person</i> <i>Lead convener: DEPP</i> The purpose of this meeting was to educate contractors and engineers in The Bahamas on the Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) process and to promote sustainable construction practices within the country. The workshop resulted in an increased understanding among contractors and engineers of the legal framework governing development projects in The Bahamas, as well as improved awareness of environmentally sensitive areas.	- DEPP - Forestry Unit - Bahamas Wildlife Enforcement Network - Bahamas Contractor's Association - Water and Sewerage Corporation
11 DEC 2025	GEF 8 MEETING <i>Format: Hybrid</i> <i>Lead convener: DEPP</i> Main Discussion Points - The concept note will be streamlined to remove the climate change and waste management components, with a primary focus on invasive species stabilization. - Inclusion of a gender component and community engagement. - Establishment of a baseline for invasive species to track removal efforts.	- DEPP - TNC - BNT
5 JAN 2026	GEF 8 MEETING <i>Format: Hybrid</i> <i>Lead Convener: Depp</i> Main Discussion Points The climate change component will be removed from the concept note, as the DEPP no longer serves as the focal point.	- DEPP - TNC - BNT - UNEP

	2. The project will incorporate biodiversity and gender components, with sustainable tourism and community engagement treated as co-benefits. The sustainable tourism aspect will require hotels to plant native, fruit-bearing trees on their premises, while the community engagement component will support the establishment of greenhouses in schools on the southern islands.	
3 Feb 2026	Format: Online Lead convener: DEPP This meeting convened relevant stakeholders to provide an update on the status of the GEF-8 project and the anticipated timeline for submission. Main discussion points: 1. Review and agreement on core indicators for the project. 2. Submission and discussion of proposed project sites, with final nominations provided by stakeholders following the meeting. 3. Confirmation of the three target islands for project implementation. 4. Clarification of outstanding questions by the UNEP focal point regarding project requirements and submission expectations	• DEPP • Forestry • BNT • TNC • UNEP
18 Feb 2026	Lead convener: The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Representative: Mr. Solomon Gibson This meeting focused on identifying available GIS mapping tools and datasets for the selected project islands. Key outcomes: 1. Review of existing spatial datasets confirming the presence of invasive alien species (IAS) across most selected islands. 2. Identification of data gaps for Cat Island, where no GIS data currently exists within TNC's database. 3. Recognition that available datasets indicate IAS presence but do not capture species type or density. 4. Validation of the inclusion of Cat Island to strengthen GIS data coverage for the southern islands. 1. Agreement on the need to update and enhance existing data platforms with more detailed and current IAS information.	• TNC • DEPP
25 March 2026	CO-FINANCING AND PROJECT COMMITMENT DISCUSSION Format: Online This meeting was held to discuss co-financing contributions and institutional commitments to support the GEF-8 project.	• BAMSI
25 March 2026	CO-FINANCING AND PROJECT COMMITMENT DISCUSSION Format: Online This meeting focused on confirming co-financing contributions and identifying areas of support for project implementation.	• Ministry of Agriculture
26 MARCH 2026	CO-FINANCING AND PROJECT COMMITMENT DISCUSSION Format: Online	• BNT

	This meeting aimed to formalize co-financing commitments and discuss the role of partner organizations in project delivery.	
16 APRIL 2026	COMMUNICATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN ABACO Format: Online Discussion on proposed greenhouses for community engagement and involvement.	Local government representatives
16 APRIL 2026	COMMUNICATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN CAT ISLAND Format: Online Discussion on proposed greenhouses for community engagement and involvement.	Local government representatives

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
UNEP	GET	Bahamas	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	4,598,180.00	436,827.00	5,035,007.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						4,598,180.00	436,827.00	5,035,007.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

150000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

14250

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
UNEP	GET	Bahamas	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	150,000.00	14,250.00	164,250.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)						150,000.00	14,250.00	164,250.00

Please provide justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
UNEP	GET	Bahamas	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	5,199,257.00

Total GEF Resources	5,199,257.00
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Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
BD-1-5	GET	3,683,375.00	9915000
BD-1-4	GET	914,805.00	2695000
Total Project Cost		4,598,180.00	12,610,000.00

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4500000
Recipient Country Government	Forestry Unit	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	800000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	800000
Recipient Country Government	Bahamas Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority (BAHFSA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation (MoTIA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	250000
Recipient Country Government	Bahamas Customs & Excise Department	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300000
Recipient Country Government	Office of the Attorney General	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	400000
Recipient Country Government	Bahamas National Geographic Information Systems (BNGIS) Centre	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1500000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Works and Family Island Affairs	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	200000
Recipient Country Government	Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300000
Recipient Country Government	Local Government/ Island Administrators on Grand Bahama and Abaco	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100000

Others	Bahamas National Trust (BNT)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	800000
Civil Society Organization	FRIENDS of The Environment (Abaco)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	20000
Civil Society Organization	Cat Island United	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	20000
Private Sector	Cat Island Conservation Institute (CICI)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	20000
Civil Society Organization	Nature Conservancy (TNC)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	900000
Others	Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	900000
Others	Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300000
Total Co-financing				12,610,000.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Not Applicable

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

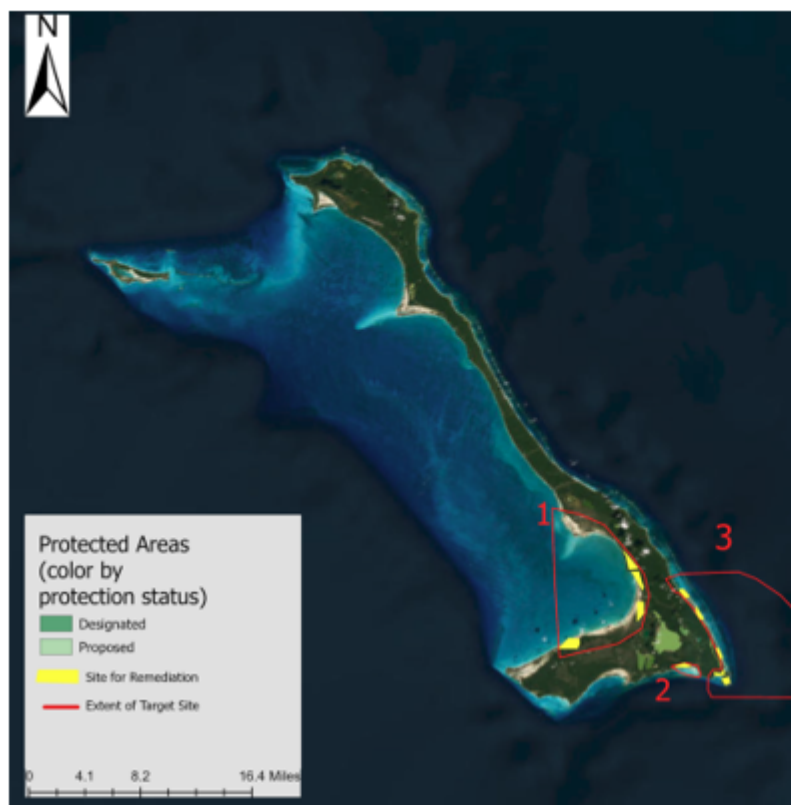
GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Kelly West	5/15/2026			kelly.west@un.org
Project Coordinator	Christopher Cox	5/15/2026			christopher.cox@un.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Rhianna M. Neely-Murphy	Director, GEF Operational Focal Point	Dept. of Environmental Planning & Protection, Ministry of the Environment & Housing	4/29/2026

ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place



Cat Island

Significance

Cat Island supports relatively undisturbed coastal and terrestrial ecosystems that are important for maintaining native biodiversity and ecosystem services. Its beaches, dunes, and mangrove systems provide critical habitat for coastal and marine species, while also supporting fisheries productivity and shoreline protection. The island's natural landscapes underpin its eco-tourism appeal and contribute to its reputation as a low-impact, sustainable destination. Community-based conservation areas, including emerging co-managed MPAs, further enhance its role in national biodiversity conservation efforts.

Total Area of Island ~39,000 ha

Total area under improved management effectiveness - IAS surveillance and control (CI 1.2) 9,766 ha

Total area for remediation (CI 3.2) 310 ha

Total area landscapes under improved mgmt. to benefit biodiversity CI 4.1) 11,388 ha

Landscapes proposed for restoration

1. Greenwood Beach and Port Howe Coastline (Cultural Heritage):

- **Coordinates:** 24.260, -75.402
- **Challenges:** Reduced dune resilience, increased storm vulnerability, and impacts to tourism infrastructure and aesthetics
- **Area:** Restoration: 60 ha (CI 3.2); Improved IAS management: 50 ha (CI 1.2 & 4.1)

2. Columbus Point and Pigeon Cay (Cultural Heritage):

- **Coordinates:** 24.151, -75.325
- **Challenges:** High exposure to storm surge, mangrove loss, coastal erosion, and risks to visitor access and safety.
- **Area:** Restoration: 130 ha (CI 3.2); Improved IAS management: 11,388 ha (CI 1.2 & 4.1)

3. Fernandez Bay / Joe Sound / Armbrister Creek MPA Pilot co-managed

- **Coordinates:** 24.192, -75.315
- **Challenges:** IAS threaten mangrove ecosystems and biodiversity.
- **Area:** Restoration: 120 ha (CI 3.2); Improved IAS management: 9,766 ha (CI 1.2 & 4.1)

Species of Interest in Cat Island Wetlands KBA (20634)

Species of conservation significance include the Vulnerable West Indian Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*) and the Bahamian endemic Bahama Yellowthroat (*Setophaga rostrata*). The area also represents the southernmost breeding site for the Red-legged Thrush (*Turdus plumbeus*), Cuban Pewee (*Contopus caribaeus*), and Bahama Yellowthroat.



Abaco

Significance

Abaco hosts some of the most extensive and ecologically important terrestrial and coastal ecosystems in The Bahamas. Its pine forests support endemic and native species, while protected areas such as Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park are recognized for high marine biodiversity, including coral reefs, seagrass beds, and nursery habitats. Offshore cays, including Tilloo Cay, provide critical nesting habitat for seabirds such as the White-tailed Tropicbird. These ecosystems are vital for biodiversity conservation, fisheries sustainability, and climate resilience.

Total Area of Island ~168,000 ha

Total area under improved management effectiveness - IAS surveillance and control (CI 1.2) 10,095 ha

Total area for remediation (CI 3.2) 533 ha

Total area landscapes under improved mgmt. to benefit biodiversity (CI 4.1) 2,541 ha

Landscapes proposed for restoration

1. Southern Abaco (Abaco National Park area)

- Coordinates:** 25.973, -77.224
- Challenges:** Risk of IAS spread into adjacent park habitats and inland ecosystems, threatening ecological integrity.
- Area:** Restoration: 230 ha (CI 3.2); Improved IAS management: 8,296 ha (CI 1.2 & 4.1)

2. Fowl Cays National Park

- Coordinates:** 26.628, -77.039
- Area:** Restoration: 20 ha (CI 3.2); Improved IAS management: 945 ha (CI 1.2 & 4.1)
- Challenges:** Casuarina spp. threaten coastal vegetation and increase erosion risk in sensitive island systems.

3. Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park

- Coordinates:** 26.402, -76.979
- Challenges:** IAS contribute to habitat degradation, loss of native flora, and reduced ecosystem function
- Area:** Restoration: 20 ha (CI 3.2); Improved IAS management: 849 ha (CI 1.2 & 4.1)

4. Tilloo Cay National Reserve

- Coordinates:** 26.472, -76.989
- Challenges:** IAS threaten sensitive rocky shoreline ecosystems and seabird nesting habitats.
- Area:** Restoration: 3 ha (CI 3.2); Improved management: 5 ha (CI 1.2 & 4.1)

5. Bucakaroon Bay

- Coordinates:**
- Challenges:** Risk of IAS spread into adjacent park habitats and inland ecosystems, threatening ecological integrity
- Area:** Restoration: 3 ha (CI 3.2); Improved IAS management: 2,541 ha (CI 1.2 & 4.1)

Species of Interest in Southern Abaco KBA (19822)

The KBA supports globally significant biodiversity, including the Endangered Bahama Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala bahamensis*) and Endangered Bahama Warbler (*Setophaga flavescens*), both of which are closely associated with Bahamian pine forests.

Refer to PIF for the third MAP.

ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title

SRIF_GEF-8_PIF_Bahamas_Reviewed June-2026 (uploaded)

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
No Contribution 0	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

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<<Table below for now taken from GEF-7 PIF>>

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing Models	- Transform policy and regulatory environments - Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making - Demonstrate innovative approaches <u>Deploy</u> innovative financial instruments		
Stakeholders	Private Sector	- SMEs - Individuals/Entrepreneurs	
	- Beneficiaries - Local Communities - Civil Society	- Community Based Organization - Non-Governmental Organization - Academia	
	Type of Engagement	- Information Dissemination - Partnership - Consultation - Participation	
	Communications	- Awareness Raising - Education - Public Campaigns - Behavior Change	
Capacity, Knowledge and Research	- Capacity Development - Knowledge Generation and Exchange - Targeted Research - Learning - Knowledge and Learning	- Theory of Change - Indicators to Measure Change	
Gender Equality	Gender Mainstreaming	- Beneficiaries - Women groups - Sex-disaggregated indicators - Gender-sensitive indicators	
	Gender results areas	- Capacity development - Awareness raising - Knowledge generation	
Focal Area/Theme	Biodiversity	Protected Areas and Landscapes	- Terrestrial Protected Areas - Productive landscapes - Community Based Natural Resource Management
		Species	- Threatened Species - Invasive Alien Species (IAS)