



United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

**Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected
Area Network - The Bahamas**

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Acronyms and abbreviations

BEST	Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (Commission)
BNT	Bahamas National Trust
BPAF	Bahamas Protected Areas Fund
CaMPAM	Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBF	Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
DMR	Department of Marine Resources
ECLSP	Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), German Development Bank
MAP	Marine Protected Area
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
NCC	National Coordinating Committee
NISP	National Implementation Strategy Partnership
NPC	National Project Coordinator
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PIR	Project Interim Report
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
RAPPAM	Rapid Assessment and Prioritisation of Protected Areas Management
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
ToC	Theory of Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-CAR/RCU	Regional Coordinating Unit, Caribbean Environment Programme
UK	United Kingdom
US\$	United States dollar

Executive summary

Main findings

1. This project is a well-designed project which is relevant to the needs of The Bahamas, consistent with the objectives and policies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and fully integrated in the programmes of work of the national institutions involved in its execution. It is based on a theory of change that assumes that the establishment of a national protected areas fund will lead to a significant reduction in the funding gap, that a reduction in that funding gap will lead to improved conservation of biodiversity, that increased knowledge and capacity will lead to increased coverage of protected areas, and that increased coverage of protected areas will lead to improved conservation of biodiversity.
2. To date, the efforts of the implementing and co-executing agencies have focused primarily on the three pilot demonstration projects, on training activities, and on the design of the sustainable financing mechanism known as the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF). The project has also recently initiated three consultancies that will provide significant results in key areas of communications, legislation and conservation planning.
3. The main concern related to project execution is the lack of progress in, and the likely unfeasibility of, establishing and operating the BPAF as originally designed and intended. This is due primarily to the decision of two co-financing partners to allocate to a regional entity, the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), the funding originally committed to the BPAF as part of this project. It is also due to the failure of project partners to assess earlier the implications of this decision, with work progressing on the basis of assumptions which have since proven wrong, such as the continued availability of funding from the Government of The Bahamas to capitalise the BPAF. The future of this component of the project is the main challenge faced at this time.
4. The project has however been able to leverage additional funding, and the co-executing partners have succeeded in raising funds that have, for all practical purposes, helped to replace the shortfall caused by the lack of progress with the creation of the BPAF and that should therefore be treated as co-financing contributions. There has also been an increase in private sector involvement, with financial and in-kind support to project activities, and more generally to protected area management and conservation work in the country. These are positive developments that contribute to reducing the funding gap which this project seeks to address.
5. The project has provided a strong framework for the identification and selection of protected areas, with a list of 95 potential sites having been prepared. Work currently being initiated under a conservation planning consultancy, notably with a gap analysis, will strengthen this framework and provide the basis for future planning. Since the launch of this project, the number and coverage of marine protected areas in the country have significantly increased, and this demonstrates the commitment of the Government of The Bahamas and other stakeholders to achieve the objectives of this project.
6. There have been noticeable increases in the scores of management effectiveness, which are due primarily to the recruitment of additional staff, the drafting of management plans for several sites, the development of a business plan for one of the protected areas, and the various consultation and communication processes supported or facilitated by the project. Further enhancements can be expected with the recent initiation of the conservation planning and legal consultancies.
7. The three pilot demonstration projects have not all progressed at the same pace, with significant delays and issues having affected progress in two of the projects:

- Pilot demonstration project 1, Invasive Alien Species, which is executed by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR), has been affected by a late start, primarily because of delays in setting up a separate bank account.
- Pilot demonstration project 2, Incorporating Climate Change and Mangrove Restoration into Conservation Planning, which is executed by the Nature Conservancy (TNC), actually has two somewhat distinct components, one focusing on the mapping of resilience and reef – mangrove connectivity, and the other aimed at testing and documenting mangrove restoration. On that second component, a literature review and baseline studies have been completed, and data have been compiled, but this has led to the conclusion that mangrove restoration would not be needed in the site surveyed. A new location has therefore been selected. Meanwhile, work on mapping and analysing trends and factors of resilience is well advanced.
- Pilot demonstration project 3, Tourism and Coral Reef Health, which is executed by the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), is well advanced, with many activities completed. This pilot project will most likely achieve its objectives of improved MPA management and improved linkages with tourism in the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park (ECLSP).

8. A framework for monitoring was developed at the beginning of the project, and several monitoring activities are underway, including the application of the Rapid Assessment and Prioritisation of Protected Areas Management (RAPPAM) and Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) methodologies.

9. Project management and administration are satisfactory, with the National Implementation Strategy Partnership (NISPP) serving as the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) and providing an effective mechanism for collaboration and oversight. UNEP performs its implementation role adequately, and reporting arrangements and schedules are followed. The main issues that have affected project execution have been the change in the position of National Project Coordinator (NPC), with a vacancy of 5 months before the recruitment of the current NPC, and the delays caused by the procedure to open a separate bank account for the DMR.

10. The project can be expected to achieve most of its objectives, and to do so within the original time frame, but on the condition that decisions regarding the future of component 1 be made and implemented rapidly and decisively.

Main lessons learned

11. The experience of this project provides useful lessons with respect to the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms, including the fact that such mechanisms require a favourable economic, fiscal and political environment; that design issues are particularly complex in a region such as the Caribbean; and that a regional conservation fund is most effective when it relies on effective national funds.

12. Building sustainability in protected area management and conservation requires more than sustainable financing; it requires simultaneous interventions in research and monitoring, capacity-building, policy reform, awareness, planning and management.

13. Targets are useful instruments in development planning and management generally, and in conservation more specifically, but they must be used and applied wisely, and can at times divert attention from more essential objectives. Increasing protected area coverage and enhancing management effectiveness are not necessarily converging and mutually-reinforcing objectives. Conservation planning and action must be guided by both quantitative targets and qualitative objectives.

14. Policy formulation is a complex process that involves various levels of decision-making, and high-level political statements do not automatically lead to policy commitment and implementation.

15. Coordination among actors in countries is extremely useful, and there are many benefits to be gained from establishing a permanent coordinating mechanism among governmental and civil society organisations involved in conservation.

Key recommendations

Component 1

16. Options for the future of Component 1 should be looked at very carefully, and a decision should be made without further delay to implement the preferred option. Options include: proceed with the legal establishment of the BPAF; cancel plans to establish the BPAF, but use the funds available to capitalise the existing trust fund at the BNT; and cancel plans to establish the BPAF and modify the outcome and outputs of component 1 to focus on building the fundraising capacity of NISP partners as well as other actors, especially civil society organisations involved in conservation and protected area management at the local level.

17. Project stakeholders should assess and communicate the implications of the decisions made by KfW and TNC to allocate to the CBF the funds originally earmarked for the BPAF, and of the ruling that KfW funds cannot be used for The Bahamas.

18. The Government of The Bahamas should formally request from KfW and TNC a detailed and substantiated update on the status of establishment and capitalisation of the CBF, with quantified and timed projections of revenue generation and funding opportunities.

Component 2

19. Project management should provide all necessary support to the three main project consultancies (conservation planning, legislation and communications) and ensure that they are carried out in a complementary and mutually-reinforcing manner.

20. In order to optimise the impacts and benefits of the work of the conservation planning consultants, it is recommended that the option of reviewing their work plan and budget be considered, following the current phase of work and after the stakeholder workshop which is already part of the consultancy's work plan.

21. In order to optimise the impacts and benefits of the work of the legal consultant, it is recommended that work on the proposed BPAF be designed only after a decision has been made regarding the future of that funding mechanism and that other activities be carried out in very close collaboration with the conservation planning consultancy.

22. With respect to communication activities generally, and more specifically to the communications consultancy, the activities conducted as part of the pilot demonstration projects and of the conservation planning consultancy will require substantial support in communications, especially in capacity-building, community involvement and public relations, and it would be advisable to focus the work of the communication specialist on those areas.

23. With respect to the execution of the three pilot projects, the report offers a few specific recommendations that could increase their chances of success and their contribution to overall project objectives.

Component 3

24. It is recommended that the plan for monitoring protected area management effectiveness be reviewed on the basis of the outputs of the current conservation planning consultancy and of pilot projects 1 and 3, that the opportunities offered by current mapping work in pilot project 2 be used to develop a country-wide map of reefs, and that training be provided in RAPPAM and METT methodologies.

Component 4

25. The conclusions and recommendations of this mid-term evaluation should be considered by project partners within the next few weeks, with a view to revising the project results framework, work plan and budget.

Summary ratings table

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating*
A. Attainment of project objectives and results	The objectives and results of Component 1 are unlikely to be achieved, for reasons that are explained in this report. In spite of this, the project will eventually achieve very important results, and rating has been assigned accordingly	MS
B. Sustainability of project outcomes	If the project makes the right choices with respect to the future of Component 1, it will produce outcomes that will be sustainable	L
C. Catalytic role	The project's catalytic role is not yet performed, but it could become significant	MS
D. Stakeholders involvement	There is a very good level of involvement among national institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, but the level of participation in and awareness of the project beyond this inner circle is much lower	S
E. Country ownership / driven-ness	There is a strong ownership of the project by the national agencies directly involved, and it is these agencies that are driving project execution, with good support from the implementing agency	HS
F. Achievement of outputs and activities	As noted elsewhere, it is somewhat difficult to rate this criterion, because of the peculiar issues affecting the execution of Component 1, where the level of achievement is low. But it is satisfactory for most of the activities in Component 2, and the project has enough time ahead of it to ensure that most outputs are achieved	MS
G. Preparation and readiness	The project was designed in a participatory fashion by all the key agencies, the project preparation project was managed efficiently, and it produced a well-designed project with a number of useful and relevant background documents, baselines and analyses	HS
H. Implementation approach	The project is being implemented effectively and efficiently	S
I. Financial planning and management	Financial systems and procedures are good and are followed adequately.	S
J. Monitoring and Evaluation	The project has conducted useful activities and has built a good basis for monitoring and evaluation, but it has not yet established a comprehensive system that is owned, understood and managed by national stakeholders	MU
K. UNEP Supervision and backstopping	This evaluation did not identify any issue or concern in this regard	HS

*) A rating for each evaluation criterion is provided on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU).

Project Identification Table

GEF project ID:	3729	IMIS number*:	GFL/2328-2712-4B11
Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity	GEF OP #:	2
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	BD-SP1, BD-SP2/ Objective 1	GEF approval date*:	2 November 2009
Implementing Agency:	UNEP	Executing Agency:	Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (BEST) Commission
Approval date:	27 January 2010	Date of first disbursement*:	4 February 2010
Actual start date:	30 March 2010	Planned duration:	48 months
Intended completion date*:	February 2014	Actual or Expected completion date:	February 2014
Project Type:	Full Size Project	GEF Allocation*:	US\$2,200,000
PPG GEF cost*:	US\$50,000	PPG co-financing*:	US\$30,000
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	US\$7,761,600	Total Cost*:	US\$10,041,600
Mid-term review/eval. (planned date):	February 2012	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	N/A
Mid-term review/eval. (actual date):	May – July 2012	No. of revisions:	1
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	30 August 2012	Date of last Revision*:	Revised draft report 3 September 2012
Disbursement as of 30 June 2012*:	US\$ 337,115.29	Date of financial closure*:	4 September 2012
Date of Completion*:	N/A	Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2012:	US\$337,115.29
Total co-financing realized as of 30 June 2012:	US\$ 1,827.517.00 ¹	Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 30 June 2012:	US\$ 337,115.29
Leveraged financing as of 30 June 2012:	included in the co-financing amount		

¹ These figures are from a final but unsigned version of the report on the status of co-financing contributions at 30 June 2012. See more details in Annex 6.

I. Evaluation background

A. Context

26. The Bahamas is a large archipelago comprising over 700 low-lying islands and cays. It has a very rich biodiversity and several unique ecosystems. In 1958, the Government of The Bahamas established the first Marine Protected Area (MPA), namely the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park (ECLSP), which became an exclusive no-take area in 1986. In 2000, the Government approved the creation of an initial five Marine Reserves in the north and central Bahamas. Since then, steady progress has been made towards the establishment and management of new protected areas, and there are now 27 declared national parks, most of which are managed by the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) and a number of marine reserves managed by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR).

27. The Bahamian economy is dependent primarily on tourism and on the financial services sector, which were responsible for significant growth and stability over the past decades, but which have both been negatively impacted by the current global financial crisis. This, together with rising energy and food prices, has resulted in reductions in fiscal revenue, rising unemployment, and increases in crime and social issues. Efforts are being made towards the diversification of the economy, with transshipping an important and growing sector, especially in Grand Bahama, and with a number of oil drilling explorations underway or planned. Other significant sectors of the economy are agriculture and fisheries. The Bahamas has a stable political system, and recently (May 2012) witnessed a change of administration.

28. Protected areas are the primary tool for biodiversity conservation, but they are also critically important to economic development, particularly because of their contribution to tourism. MPAs are also especially important to support fisheries and other components of coastal livelihoods. Marine biodiversity can be affected by unsustainable harvesting of resources, pollution, and habitat destruction and degradation. With economic diversification and the growth of sectors such as marine transportation and oil extraction, threats to biodiversity are likely to increase in the future, while this biodiversity, especially the mangrove and reef ecosystems, has a crucial role to play in enhancing resilience and facilitating adaptation to climate change.

29. The Bahamas has a strong and effective institutional framework for biodiversity conservation and environmental management: the BNT and the DMR are the two national institutions responsible for protected area management, while the Ministry of the Environment and its Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (BEST) Commission provide the overall policy and regulatory framework. A growing number of civil society organisations are involved in biodiversity issues and conservation programmes at local level. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in capacity in the country, thanks in large part to the return to the country of recent graduates with a keen interest in natural resource management and sustainable development, to the training provided by this and other projects, but also perhaps to a change of approach, with closer collaboration between management agencies, local communities, civil society organisations and the scientific community.

B. The Project

30. This project finds its origin in the Seventh Conference of the Parties of the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) held in 2004, which adopted the global Programme of Work on Protected Areas. Following the endorsement of this Programme of Work by the Government of The Bahamas, a National Implementation Strategy Partnership (NISP) was established to serve as a mechanism to lead and promote implementation at the national level. Recognising the need for additional support to the national park system, especially with respect to management effectiveness and financing, and in support of the Bahamas 2020 Declaration (May 2008) by which the Government of The Bahamas expressed its commitment to preserve the country's marine and terrestrial environments, to meet the

CBD targets and to conserve at least 20 per cent of the country's near-shore marine resources by 2020, the NISP took the initiative to design this project.

31. As stated in the project document, the “primary goal of the project is to conserve globally important marine habitats and species within The Bahamas as well as those species of the wider Caribbean that rely on The Bahamas for nesting, breeding, feeding and migration”. The objective of the project is “to expand protected area coverage of globally significant marine biodiversity and increase the management effectiveness of the national marine protected area network across the Bahamian archipelago”. The project has four components and seeks to achieve five corresponding outcomes:

- Component 1. Creation of sustainable funding mechanism for the national protected area system.
 - Outcome 1: Funding gap of US\$7.0 million reduced by 10-20% through Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF) revenue and other sources of conservation finance
- Component 2. Strengthening and expanding the MPA network
 - Outcome 2: Bahamas MPA Network expanded to 10% of representative marine ecosystems (about 2.5 million hectares)
 - Outcome 3: Management effectiveness of protected areas significantly (50%) and measurably improved by project end
 - Outcome 4: Pilot Sites demonstrate (a) statistically significant lionfish decrease (using experimental approach); (b) statistically significant improvement in overall health of coral reef (coral diversity); socio economic indicators, governance indicators, and reduction in vulnerability.
- Component 3. Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Outcome 5: Sustainable monitoring and evaluation system established and functioning for existing and newly established MPAs and project indicators
- Component 4. Project Management

32. The project was approved by the GEF in November 2009 and effectively began in February 2010. Its expected completion date is February 2014. It is funded by the GEF, implemented by UNEP and executed by the BEST Commission of the Government of The Bahamas. The project cooperation agreement and original project document indicate that it is co-financed and co-executed by the BEST Commission and the DMR, the BNT, TNC and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) – the German Development Bank. The total budget for the project is US\$9,961,600, including US\$2,200,000 of GEF financing.

Table 1: Cash and in-kind contributions to project income

Source	Amount (US\$)	Percentage
<u>GEF Trust Fund</u>	2,200,000	22.1%
<u>Co-financing</u>		
<i>Cash</i>		
BEST Commission	2,000,400	20.1%
DMR	400	0.0%
BNT	400	0.0%
TNC	2,000,400	20.1%
KfW	3,000,000	30.1%
<u>Sub-total</u>	7,001,600	70.3%
<u>In-kind</u>		

BEST Commission	306,000	3.1%
DMR	204,000	2.0%
BNT	125,000	1.3%
TNC	125,000	1.3%
<i>Sub Total</i>	760,000	7.7%
<u>TOTAL</u>	9,961,600	100%

Source: Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA)

C. *Evaluation objectives, scope and methodology*

33. The mid-term evaluation of the project was conducted over a four-month period (May – August 2012), and included the following activities:

- a visit to Nassau (14 – 18 May), with meetings and interviews with institutions involved in the project, and a review of project files and documents at the BEST Commission;
- a meeting with the UNEP Task Manager responsible for this project, and subsequent telephone conversations and e-mail exchanges;
- telephone interviews and e-mail exchanges with other project stakeholders;
- a review of all relevant documents;
- the preparation and submission of an inception report (15 May 2012);
- the preparation and dissemination of a discussion paper (8 June 2012), for the purpose of sharing the preliminary findings of this evaluation, in order to generate further discussion and feedback, and to ensure that the views and expectations of stakeholders could be taken into account and reflected in the final products of this exercise;
- the preparation of a draft evaluation report (21 July 2012), which was circulated by UNEP to project stakeholders, for the purpose of seeking comments and additional information;
- additional interviews to seek clarification and complementary information, especially in areas where there appeared to be divergence of opinion between project partners;
- the preparation of this final draft (7 September 2012).

34. The evaluation's terms of reference stipulate that a participatory approach should be used, whereby key stakeholders would be kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. In order to provide stakeholders with such information and with an opportunity to make inputs, it was decided to prepare and circulate a discussion paper well in advance of the submission of the draft report. Other avenues that were used to facilitate participation and consultation were: (a) maintaining frequent communication with the NPC and the UNEP Task Manager to keep them updated of progress and to seek feedback and additional information along the way, and (b) individual communication, by e-mail, phone and Skype, with key project participants. The evaluation schedule and list of people interviewed are provided in Annex 2.

35. The evaluation process was greatly facilitated by the BEST Commission, and especially the NPC, who responded promptly and adequately to every request for information, and provided feedback whenever requested. Adequate support was also provided by the UNEP Task Manager. The evaluation was however delayed, and its results somewhat affected, by the failure of one of the co-executing agencies and co-financing partners to provide financial information on the status of its co-

financing contribution, in spite of several requests. All NISP members were interviewed during the consultant's visit to Nassau, except the Director of the DMR, who was at the time fully involved in a workshop, but who subsequently provided comments and inputs to the first draft of this report. Annex 5 provides a brief response to the comments which contradict the findings of the evaluation and could not be accommodated in this final report.

36. The process and methods used in this evaluation have been consistent with the provisions of the terms of reference presented in Annex 1. All interviews were conducted using an open-ended interview guide, which was sent to project stakeholders in advance and was tailored to each interviewee as appropriate. The interview guide template is provided in Annex 3.

II. Project Performance and Outputs

A. Overview of the project's Theory of Change

37. Annex 7 presents the Theory of Change (ToC) of the project. There are two specific pathways that are at the core of this project's ToC:

Pathway 1: The establishment of a national protected areas fund will lead to a significant reduction in funding gap, and a reduction in funding gap will lead to improved conservation of biodiversity

This pathway assumes that:

- The co-financing partners will meet their commitments as stated in the project document
- The fund will attract enough capital to generate sufficient revenue to achieve a significant reduction in the funding gap
- The fund will attract enough capital to generate the level of revenue required to finance its operations as an independent body
- The fund will attract revenue, in addition to the contribution of this project's co-financing partners
- The fund will be complemented by other funding sources

Pathway 2: Increased knowledge and capacity will lead to increased coverage of protected areas, and increased coverage of protected areas will lead to improved conservation of biodiversity

This pathway assumes that:

- Data will be available to inform planning decisions
- There is organisational capacity to implement planning decisions and sustain management
- The results obtained in the pilot projects will be replicable at national level
- Partner agencies and other actors in the field of conservation in The Bahamas executed activities that are complementary and supportive of the project

B. Attainment of objectives and planned results

Component 1

Expected outcome 1: Funding gap of US\$7.0 million reduced by 10-20% through BPAF revenue and other sources of conservation finance

Main outputs produced to date:

- BPAF Bill prepared
- Legal consultant recruited and opinion sought on design and status of BPAF
- Funding leveraged from UNEP-CAR/RCU
- Funding raised from Summit Series, WAITT Foundation and Kerzner Marine Foundation

38. *The funding gap has not been significantly reduced, the project has not yet established a sustainable financing mechanism, and it is doubtful that the project will be able to achieve the objective and realise the outcome expected under this Project Component 1.* The design of this Component and work carried out over the past 2 years have been centred on the creation of the BPAF, based on commitments by the Government of The Bahamas, KfW, TNC and the GEF to capitalise the fund. Since the start of the project, a significant amount of time and effort have been spent on activities aimed at establishing the BPAF through a Bill enacted in Parliament. This legislative process has not yet been concluded, and project stakeholders give several reasons for this situation, including: (a) the fact that the version of the Bill that was submitted to Parliament was not the final version prepared by the project, and included some elements that were incompatible with national law, and (b) the need to assess the implications of the proposed creation of the CBF and to incorporate the provisions of an eventual Vertical Agreement between the BPAF and the CBF, especially to deal with fund transfer modalities.

39. While there is no doubt that these delays are indeed responsible for the fact that the BPAF has not yet been formally registered, there are a number of other important issues that have affected, or will affect, the realisation of the objective and outcome of Component 1, and that are actually even more significant than the delays in the legal establishment of the Fund. These include:

- the decision made by KfW² and TNC to proceed with the establishment of the CBF and to allocate the funds originally committed to this project to the capitalisation of that regional fund instead. This means that most of the funds expected for the capitalisation of the BPAF are no longer available for this purpose, and that only a fixed percentage of the proceeds of investments made by the CBF would be available to the BPAF, on the condition of its ability to generate 1:1 matching funds after an initial period of 2 years;
- the assumption made by the project's NCC that the funds committed by the Government of The Bahamas would remain available for the capitalisation of the BPAF, even if these funds were not used or allocated during the fiscal years for which they were budgeted. Because the funds were not accessed at the time when they were provided, they are not included in current budget allocations, and fulfilment of the Government's financial commitment to the project would require a new decision by the Cabinet of Ministers, and a resulting budget allocation.

40. There is also a recent development which could have further implications for the project and for The Bahamas, as a German governmental audit has determined that German funding through the CBF could not be allocated to The Bahamas because that country is not eligible to Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding from Germany. KfW and TNC have therefore agreed that they would reallocate their respective funding to the CBF (see Table 2 below for original capitalisation plan) as follows:

- the total contributions will remain unchanged, i.e. US\$12,100,000 from KfW and US\$8,000,000 from TNC;
- the total of the country allocations will remain unchanged;
- half of TNC's original earmarked contribution to these seven countries will be reallocated to The Bahamas, for a revised total of US\$5 million;
- the original KfW allocation to The Bahamas (US\$3 million) will be reallocated to the seven other countries.

² In the case of KfW, this decision was actually reflected in the letter of commitment sent to the GEF Secretariat on 29 April 2009, and it is therefore surprising that a co-financing contribution from KfW, in the amount of USD 3 million, was still mentioned and considered in the project document approved by the GEF, and that project activities were initiated and carried out as if this funding was still available to the BPAF.

Table 2: CBF original capitalisation plan

	KfW	TNC	GEF	Gov't	TBD	Total
Antigua & Barbuda	\$ 900,000	\$ 600,000	\$1,500,000			\$ 3,000,000
Bahamas	\$ 3,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$ 500,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$10,000,000
Dominican Republic	\$ 3,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$ 250,000		\$4,750,000	\$10,000,000
Grenada	\$ 900,000	\$ 600,000	\$1,500,000			\$ 3,000,000
Jamaica	\$ 1,600,000	\$1,000,000	\$ 750,000		\$1,650,000	\$ 5,000,000
St. Kitts & Nevis	\$ 900,000	\$ 600,000	\$1,500,000			\$ 3,000,000
St. Lucia	\$ 900,000	\$ 600,000	\$1,500,000			\$ 3,000,000
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	\$ 900,000	\$ 600,000	\$1,500,000			\$ 3,000,000
Total	\$12,100,000	\$8,000,000	\$9,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$8,900,000	\$40,000,000

Source: CBF Operations manual, May 2012.

41. The status of the co-financing commitments to the capitalisation of the BPAF through this project (cash contributions) is now as follows:

Table 3: Status of co-financing commitments to the capitalisation of the BPAF

Project co-financing partner	Original commitment to the BPAF (US\$)	Status of commitment to the BPAF	Comments
Government of The Bahamas through the BEST Commission	2,000,000	Funds not available	Would require a new Cabinet decision and a new budget allocation ³
The Nature Conservancy	2,000,000	Contribution will be made to the CBF, and amount has been increased to US\$5 million in order to replace funding from KfW, which can no longer be allocated to The Bahamas through CBF	This evaluation has not been able to determine the precise status of this commitment ⁴
KfW – German Development Bank	3,000,000	KfW had first indicated that this funding would be reallocated to the CBF, but it has now been determined that German funding cannot be used for The Bahamas	See paragraph 40 above for further information on this recent modification in the original CBF capitalisation plan
GEF Trustee, through UNEP	500,000	Commitment unchanged	A decision on the programming of these funds would be required if the BPAF is not established during the course of the project

³ It is encouraging to note that, in the recent Budget Debate in the Parliament of The Bahamas, the Minister of the Environment and Housing affirmed his Government's and Ministry's commitment to the establishment of the BPAF. At the same time, one must remain aware of the current financial and fiscal realities faced by the Government of The Bahamas, and of the fact that there is no allocation to the BPAF in the national budget for the current fiscal year.

⁴ In an interview with a TNC representative (18 May 2012), it was indicated that USD 1,295,000 have been raised and set aside, to be provided (to the CBF) once the BPAF has been established. UNEP had previously received an e-mail dated June 17, 2011 from TNC indicating that approximately \$667,000 had so far been raised, but has not received any further written updates regarding specific amounts.

Sources: Interviews with project co-financing partners.

42. *In light of the status of these original co-financing commitments, one can no longer expect the project to result in the establishment of the BPAF as a separate institution with full capacity to operate as an independent funding mechanism.* Such an institution would require a recurrent budget that covers the administrative expenses of the Fund, taking into account: the minimal personnel requirements (most likely: one Executive Director, one Technical Officer, one Financial Officer, and one Administrative Officer⁵); the cost of evaluating, providing, managing and monitoring grants in a country where travel and other logistical costs can be very high; the commitment to hire an Investment Manager; the need to sustain the operations of the Board and its Committees; and the costs associated with the management of a relationship with a UK-registered Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. In the current global and national economic climate, with prevailing interest rates, and taking into account the need to provide protection to manage market volatility and weather market extremes, it is now highly unlikely that the BPAF could reach the level of capitalisation of the Fund that would be needed to ensure its feasibility and yield an appropriate spending level⁶.

43. *The achievement of outcome 1 as originally designed would now be dependent on the good performance of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. While significant progress has been made towards the legal establishment of the CBF, it is also clear that time and successful fundraising will be required to allow it to realise its overall objectives as a regional fund, and it is highly unlikely that the CBF will be able to channel funds to The Bahamas before the end of this project.* There are several issues here:

- the contribution from the Government of The Bahamas (US\$2 million) is no longer available;
- it is unlikely that GEF funds committed to the BPAF (US\$0.5 million) could be re-programmed for the capitalisation of the CBF;
- the funds earmarked as “TBD” (US\$8,9 million) have not yet been identified;
- as explained in paragraph 40 above, The Bahamas would not be able to benefit from proceeds of funds provided to the CBF by KfW;
- this implies that CBF financing for this country would be entirely based on the contribution of TNC, with a current commitment of US\$5 million;
- TNC indicates that it has made some progress toward its overall capitalisation pledge (US\$8 million) and that it is preparing to make a first instalment to the CBF at the end of this year, but no confirmed figure is available, and TNC also indicates that fundraising efforts have been hindered by the delay in formal legal establishment of the CBF and by the lack of progress in countries establishing the national trust funds⁷;
- when this contribution is made by TNC, the CBF will need time to invest the funds, generate income and plan disbursements⁸;

⁵ It is considered good international practice for funds to have transparent, efficient and fair systems and procedures for the assessment of the proposals it receives from applicants. This can only be done if the Fund has adequate human, technical and financial resources to conduct independent assessments of proposed projects, as well as ex-post verification of the selection process.

⁶ In considering this issue, one should take into account the provisions of Article 27 of the proposed Bill, which stipulates that “the Fund shall use no more than fifteen percent (15%) of its annual budget for administrative expenses”, but with an exception given for the first three financial years, where the ceiling will be 25%.

⁷ E-mail communication from TNC to UNEP, 28 August 2012.

⁸ At present, partners leading the process of registering and establishing the CBF indicate that it should be able to begin disbursing funds to national level trust funds by late 2013 (assuming that these funds would have become operational, i.e. are legally registered, have appointed a board, have put in place administrative support, have identified project for first year funding, and have signed the Vertical Agreement). In the best scenario possible, this means that funds will become available only a few weeks before the end of this GEF-funded project.

- good progress is being made in the establishment of national funds in a number of countries, especially in Jamaica where a process is underway to merge the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica and the Forest Conservation Fund into an entity that will be eligible for CBF funding, but the legal processes involved in the countries of the Eastern Caribbean are typically long and one cannot be assured that they will be completed quickly.

44. *This project in The Bahamas has however been realised progress towards a reduction of the funding gap, thanks to successful complementary fundraising efforts by NISP partners and other agencies.* The main achievements in this regard include:

- funding provided by the Regional Coordinating Unit of the Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CAR/RCU) through the Caribbean Challenge project, for a total amount of approximately US\$70,000. This has included a training of trainers workshop, a Medium-Size Grant executed by BNT, and the participation of Bahamian colleagues in regional workshops and conferences. There is also in the pipeline an opportunity of support for a Learning Exchange project, in the amount of US\$10,000 (subject to the submission and approval of a revised proposal);
- the grants received from the Summit Series (US\$500,000 to TNC for management planning at the Berry Islands Marine Reserve) and from the WAITT Foundation (US\$860,000 over three years for planning and management activities in three recently declared protected areas: Andros West Side, Berry Islands and Bimini);
- funding from the Kerzner Marine Foundation for a project to facilitate the expansion of Andros National Park, which is implemented by TNC in collaboration with BNT;
- increased private sector involvement, with financial and in-kind support to project activities, notably at the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park, and more generally to protected area management and conservation work in the country.

There is no evidence to suggest that all these achievements come as a direct result of the project, but it can be safely assumed that the project has contributed to creating and sustaining mechanisms of collaboration and to build capacities which have played a critical role in these fundraising efforts.

Component 2

Expected outcome 2: Bahamas MPA Network expanded to 10% of representative marine ecosystems (about 2.5 million hectares)

Expected outcome 3: Management effectiveness of protected areas significantly (50%) and measurably improved by project end

Expected outcome 4: Pilot Sites demonstrate (a) statistically significant lionfish decrease (using experimental approach); (b) statistically significant improvement in overall health of coral reef (coral diversity); socio economic indicators, governance indicators, and reduction in vulnerability.

45. Main outputs produced to date:

- Baseline of protected areas prepared with the Rapid Assessment and Prioritisation of Protected Areas Management (RAPPAM)⁹ methodology and the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)¹⁰
- List of potential sites identified
- Data gathered and draft plans prepared for two protected areas
- Conservation planning consultancy initiated, with a broad mandate that includes updating the national-level ecological gap assessment, identifying priority ecosystems and sites for MPA designation, providing inputs into the drafting of legal decrees and zoning regulations for new MPAs, and developing management plans
- Communications consultancy initiated, for the purpose of supporting all project activities related to awareness, education, community involvement, public relations and training
- Pilot project at ECLSP well underway with baseline and monitoring surveys undertaken, training provided, a business plan for the ECLSP prepared, and a comprehensive monitoring programme designed and tested
- Pilot project on lionfish control initiated
- Mapping of reef resilience and reef – mangrove connectivity completed for Exuma with potential for extension to the whole country
- Decision made to relocate mangrove restoration project

46. *The project has provided a strong framework for the identification and selection of protected areas in the country.* A list of 95 potential sites has been prepared, active discussion has taken place among NISP agencies regarding priorities and opportunities, and recent decisions regarding new protected areas have been made on that basis (thanks in part to this process, three new protected areas were declared in early 2012). Work currently being initiated under a conservation planning consultancy, as part of this Project Component 2, will strengthen this framework and provide the basis for future planning efforts.

47. *Since the launch of this project, the number and area coverage of marine protected areas in the country have been significantly increased.* As noted above, in early 2012 two new National Parks were gazetted, namely the West Side of Andros and Fowl Cays National Park in Abaco, while the Conception Island National Park was extended with the inclusion of a marine area. This came in complement to the gazetting of five Marine Reserves in 2009¹¹. While there is no evidence that these new declarations of protected areas come as a direct result of project activities, there is little doubt that the process of protected area establishment in the country is helped by the momentum generated by this project and by the coordination provided by the NISP. The gazetting of these new protected areas is also a demonstration of the commitment of the Government of The Bahamas and other stakeholders in the country to achieve of the objectives of this project.

48. *The title of the project speaks to the strengthening of a “network” of protected areas. While the project has not yet achieved much in this regard, it is building the basis required for this to be*

⁹ RAPPAM is a methodology that provides protected area planning and management agencies with a country-wide overview of the effectiveness of protected area management, threats, vulnerabilities and degradation. It provides follow-up recommendations, and is an important first step in assessing and improving protected area management. The main instruments are a questionnaire and an analysis framework.

¹⁰ METT is a rapid assessment tool based on a scorecard questionnaire. It provides a mechanism for monitoring progress towards more effective management over time. It is used to enable protected area managers, partners and donors to identify needs, constraints and priority actions to improve the effectiveness of management.

¹¹ Several project documents, including the half-yearly reports, mention the establishment of four protected areas (South Berry Island Marine Reserve, Crab Cay Marine Reserve, No Name Marine Reserve and Exuma-Jewish Cay Marine Reserve, with a total area of 37,714 hectares), as achievements of the project. It should however be noted that these four sites were gazetted in December 2009, while the project effectively commenced in early 2010 (first disbursement made on 4 February 2010).

realised, and this should remain a key objective of the project. The conservation planning consultancy, which has recently been initiated, will play a major role in this respect, as it will provide the basis for filling gaps and defining priorities. The work of the NISP is also important, as it allows the agencies to have a coordinated approach, to exchange information and to achieve economies of scale. It will be critical for the project not to lose sight of this networking objective, both in terms of protected area coverage (representativeness) and in terms of institutional design (cooperation, partnerships).

49. *The assessments (RAPPAM and METT – see paragraph 52) done by the project indicate that there has been a noticeable enhancement of management effectiveness.* The METT Marine METT score has been increased from 0.328 to 0.368, while the RAPPAM/METT/Marine METT level has increased from 0.331 to 0.335. These increases are due primarily to the recruitment of additional staff, the drafting of management plans for several sites, the development of a business plan for the ECLSP, and the various consultation and communication processes. These results can be attributed primarily to the work being done by the partner agencies with the additional funding raised (see paragraph 44 above) and to the pilot demonstration projects. Further enhancements can be expected with the recent initiation of the conservation planning consultancy.

50. *The three pilot demonstration projects have not all progressed at the same pace, with significant delays and issues having affected progress in two of the projects.* The status of their achievements and progress can be summarised as follows:

- Pilot demonstration project 1, Invasive Alien Species, executed by DMR: this project started late, primarily because of delays in setting up a separate bank account to be managed by DMR (see paragraph 70 below), but it is now underway, with baseline surveys carried out, equipment purchased and its use demonstrated, sites for experimental removal of lionfish selected, and training provided. It may however be challenged by the fact that the staff responsible for the project has now left the Department. It is too early to expect any impacts and, with such a short amount of time remaining, it is unlikely that the project will deliver its expected outcome (a statistically significant decrease in lionfish population), but it will hopefully create conditions for this to be achieved at a later stage;
- Pilot demonstration project 2, Incorporating Climate Change and Mangrove Restoration into Conservation Planning, executed by TNC: this project actually has two somewhat distinct components, one focusing on the mapping of resilience and reef–mangrove connectivity, and the other aimed at testing and documenting mangrove restoration. On that second component, a literature review and baseline studies have been completed, and data have been compiled, but this has led to the conclusion that mangrove restoration would not be needed in the site surveyed. A new location has therefore been selected on the island of New Providence, but work on restoration has not begun. Meanwhile, work on mapping and analysing trends and factors of resilience is well advanced. This pilot project is therefore yielding valuable data, but the evaluation has not obtained the evidence that this pilot demonstration project will achieve its objective of “demonstrating incorporation of climate change and mangrove conservation into conservation planning”;
- Pilot demonstration project 3, Tourism and Coral Reef Health, executed by BNT: this project is well advanced, having started as originally planned with the recruitment of a full-time Coordinator in July 2010. Many activities have been completed, including a literature review, baseline and monitoring surveys, the preparation of a business plan for the ECLSP, the conduct of a business training workshop, and the development of a monitoring programme well tailored to The Bahamas. In addition to its direct outputs, the project has helped to improve the relationship between BNT and the local community (Black Point), it has increased the BNT’s presence in the project areas (with visits as well as the hiring of local personnel), it has begun demonstrating the benefits that can be derived by local communities, and it has strengthened collaboration with the scientific community. The business plan that has been developed is very comprehensive, perhaps a bit ambitious, but it certainly provides a

very good tool, and a template that can be used for other protected areas. A training activity on tourism guide will take place shortly. This pilot project will most likely achieve its objectives of improved MPA management and improved linkages with tourism in ECLSP.

Component 3

Expected outcome 5: Sustainable monitoring and evaluation system established and functioning for existing and newly established MPAs and project indicators

51. Main outputs produced to date:

- Overall monitoring plan designed
- Baseline of protected areas prepared with RAPPAM and METT instruments, with new assessment done in 2012
- Reef Check training provided
- Baselines and monitoring programmes in place at pilot project sites

52. *Useful activities have been conducted in the field of monitoring and evaluation, and a good basis has been created towards the establishment of a system, but more work is needed to ensure that the system is established and eventually becomes functional.* At the beginning of the project (workshop held in April 2009), monitoring methods and guidelines were developed, based on the use of two instruments, the METT and the RAPPAM methodologies. These methods and guidelines are clear and appear suitable, but most project stakeholders see the RAPPAM and the METT more as administrative requirements put forward by a donor than as tools that can assist them in management decisions. Most of the people interviewed for this evaluation said that they had not made use of that information, and most found the process of filling out the forms particularly demanding. “There must be simpler ways to monitor”, said one colleague, “it’s really time consuming”. The project has also provided useful training in the Reef Check methodology, a key component of an eventual monitoring system.

53. *The project has adequate resources at its disposal to design and establish a comprehensive and effective monitoring and evaluation system for MPAs, but it has not yet made full use of its potential.* Under budget line item 5302, US\$210,000 are available for “MPA capacity building”, with the understanding that this is for training programmes, some of which could and should focus on monitoring and evaluation systems and procedures. Also, the work being done under pilot demonstration project 3 is very important and relevant to this Outcome 5, but this work would greatly benefit from a training component, which is not currently part of the project. These elements, together with the METT and RAPPAM assessments and the Reef Check methodology¹², are significant advances in monitoring and evaluation, but the project is not yet at the stage where these have been structured and consolidated into a coherent and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system for MPAs in the country.

54. *The project places much emphasis on the target of MPA coverage, but attention needs to be paid to the management processes that will affect the ability of the project to achieve such targets.* Ultimately, in this project, it is the management processes, the capacities, the institutional arrangements and the investments that one should be able to measure, and it is at that level, much more than at the level of a percentage of national territory, that it will be possible to assess the impact and the performance of the project. Yet this aspect is not well covered in current monitoring activities, which focus either on biodiversity (Reef Check) or on management effectiveness in individual protected areas.

¹² Reef Check’s reef monitoring methods are designed to be carried out by teams of experienced recreational divers or local fishers, trained and led by a scientist, and to produce data that is relevant and useful to managers. They help local communities and organisations monitor coral reefs by providing the information needed for reefs to be managed in a sustainable manner.

Other achievements

55. *In addition to the impacts already made and the outputs already produced as direct results of the project, this project has also had beneficial impacts, particularly on institutional capacity in the country.* The project has been the main focus of the work of the National Implementation Strategy Partnership (NISP) over the past four years, and this is an extremely valuable mechanism of coordination and communication. As indicated by a member of one of its agencies, “the NISP has built a culture of collaboration among organisations, some believe that it was always like that but that’s not true, the NISP has helped us to work better together, especially when we were developing the proposal for this project”. It is also clear that the project has enhanced the capacity of the BEST Commission, by bringing additional human resources (in a context of staff reduction and budget constraints). These positive impacts can also be seen at the technical level and in the field: “we now have a benthic team here” says one of the scientists involved, “this is very different from what it was only a few years ago”, and this is thanks to the Reef Check training, to the pilot demonstration projects, and to the fact that the project supports and creates opportunities for local experts.

56. Other organisations have also benefited from the project in a number of ways, especially thanks to the pilot projects and to local level training activities. In the case of the project executed by the BNT, the project has brought in a full-time staff, and supports other staff time for specific activities. Thanks to these activities, the Trust has been able to increase its presence on the ground, and not only in the ECLSP. Organisations also cite a number of qualitative impacts of the project, such as “an even stronger relationship with the scientific community”, or “a better understanding of the business dimension, the sustainability dimension – this has been a real cultural change for us, and we now see protected areas quite differently”. The positive impacts of the project also manifest themselves in the fact that there are already some spin-off research initiatives, some of which have been made possible thanks to the capacity built by the project.

57. *Another significant achievement, which can be attributed, in part, to the project, is the ratification by The Bahamas of the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean, known as the Cartagena Convention.* While this recent decision cannot be attributed to a specific activity of the project, it is clear that the ongoing collaboration between UNEP and The Bahamas in this project, as well as the involvement of the UNEP-CAR/RCU in activities that are complementary to and supportive of this project, have encouraged and contributed to this important decision.

Relevance

58. *The project is highly relevant to conservation and natural resource management priorities in The Bahamas.* The richness and global importance of the country’s biological diversity are well known, and fully justify the objectives and activities of this project. From a national and local perspective in The Bahamas, the project is extremely relevant, as it contributes to national conservation priorities and to development objectives, especially in tourism. The goal of building a true network of protected areas, with functional cooperation among the various elements and with inclusion of all priority areas and representative ecosystems, responds to a real and timely need. Current and projected trends in economic development, notably with the expansion of industrial and shipping sectors, only serve to increase the justification and pertinence of this project, as new and expanding economic sectors may cause increased negative impacts on the environment and on biological diversity.

59. *Some of the activities undertaken by this project, especially as part of the three pilot demonstration projects, are innovative, and should yield lessons, methods and tools that are directly relevant to conservation needs and priorities in The Bahamas and in the rest of the Caribbean region.* The potential negative impact of the alien invasive lionfish on biodiversity is extremely significant, and a pilot project aimed at contributing to finding ways to control the populations of that invasive species in MPAs is therefore a clear priority in the country and in the region as a whole. Work being

done by BNT and its team of scientists on the identification of critical resource thresholds and on the use of such information to inform tourism planning is very relevant and innovative. Similarly, work on ecosystem resilience and connectivity will provide information, methods and lessons that could then be applied to reef management and mangrove restoration throughout the country.

60. *Interesting questions are raised by several project participants regarding the relationship between the objective of increased protected area coverage and that of improved management effectiveness.* There is a consensus that the 20% target provides a very useful focus that helps galvanise support, but some of the actors feel that it would be relevant to broader conservation objectives only if it was applied qualitatively to the most critical and important ecosystems. It would be possible for The Bahamas to put 20% of its coastal and marine areas under protected status and yet achieve little in species and ecosystem conservation because of a poor selection of the areas to be protected. The pertinence of this target could therefore possibly be enhanced with additional targets defined for each habitat.

61. *The relevance of the work to be carried out in pilot project 2 on mangrove restoration is however more questionable.* Much work has been done on mangrove restoration in many parts of the world, and it is doubtful that a pilot project in The Bahamas could yield new lessons and methods, especially one that has not yet started and is expected to be completed by early 2014. At present, one gets the feeling that this activity is being pursued because it is in the project document, but without a clear and convincing argument that it will contribute to the overall goal and specific outcomes of the project.

Effectiveness

62. *The extent to which project outcomes have been achieved so far is discussed at the beginning of section II B (Attainment of objectives and expected results). Considering the achievements summarised above, the project has been effectively implemented and executed, but there are three issues that must be noted: (a) the delays and uncertainties surrounding the execution of Component 1, (b) the fact that critical activities related to protected area planning and management effectiveness, under Component 2, have only recently been initiated, and (c) delays and execution issues affecting two of the pilot projects.*

63. *The issues that relate to Component 1, and more specifically to the establishment of the BPAF, are complex, more complex than what is expressed in project reports and other documents, and the project should have addressed them earlier and more effectively.* The delays and obstacles encountered in the process of formally creating the BPAF are cited in project reports and other documents as the main source of concern; but the main threats to the feasibility and viability of the proposed financing mechanism do not come from these delays, they come from the decision of KfW and TNC to use the funds originally committed to this project to capitalise the CBF instead of the BPAF, and they come from the fact that the funds committed by the Government of The Bahamas are not presently available because they were not used when the budget allocations were made (see paragraphs 40 and 41 above). This information was available to NISP partners and other project stakeholders, yet it appears that the implications of the changes to the original agreements and co-financing commitments had not been fully assessed, and that activities aimed at the creation of the BPAF were carried out as originally designed, while adjustments would have been needed (options were considered by the NISP, but these discussions did not lead to specific decisions).

64. *The project may have suffered from weak strategic direction in the initial phase.* Project documents suggest that there was an early focus on the pilot demonstration projects, on work aimed at setting up the BPAF, and on a few training activities, possibly at the expense of the holistic approach towards conservation planning and management effectiveness. “There was some confusion at the beginning”, says one of the people involved, “there was too much focus on the pilot projects, as if each agency had to take its piece of the project. An Inception Workshop was held at the start of the project,

yet it seems that project stakeholders had difficulty focusing on the big picture and looking at the project in a holistic way”¹³. With specific respect to Project Component 1, it is also possible that the project remained too focused on the original design, and did not give enough consideration to alternative options. As one of the actors puts it, “it’s possible that our strategy has been too dependent on the BPAF”.

65. *Key elements of the project have only recently been initiated, or will soon begin, namely the three main consultancies (conservation planning, communications, and legislation) through which most of the technical input (including gap analysis, protected area planning and designation, legal instruments, awareness, education, training) is to be provided, and it is therefore not possible to assess their impact at this time.* With respect to the legislation consultancy, the following observations can be made regarding the likelihood of it achieving expected results:

- the ability and desirability of the legal consultant working on the financial mechanism will be determined by the decisions that will be made regarding that mechanism;
- one of the tasks required from the legal consultant is to “undertake a legal analysis of what is necessary in order to facilitate the goal of 20% of the coastal area of The Bahamas being protected and the legal tools required to ensure proper management through financial sustainability”, and it will be very challenging, especially since the ability of the country to place 20% of its coastal territory under protection and to achieve financial sustainability is not primarily a legal issue.

66. *The project is well connected to other initiatives and must be seen as one component of a much larger process of research and management in the country. This increases its effectiveness.* For example, some of the work of this project, especially that undertaken under the pilot demonstration project executed by the BNT, builds on what had been done earlier as part of the Bahamas Biocomplexity Project. This continuity is providing data over a longer time frame, and is thus enabling scientists to assess change over a significant time frame. Similarly, work on this pilot demonstration project has allowed for the continuation of earlier work on the Nassau grouper. The pilot project on lionfish is, for its part, connected to two regional initiatives, namely a GEF-UNEP project on alien invasive species and the formulation of a regional strategy for lionfish control supported by the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). This is a very positive characteristic of this project, as most of its activities can be placed within a much larger ensemble of national and regional initiatives and processes, and as it is able to benefit from valuable synergies.

67. *The pilot projects are executed more as discrete small projects than as real pilot activities aimed at testing, documenting and disseminating.* In order to be effective, pilot projects need explicit strategies and mechanisms for monitoring, lesson learning and replication, but one does not get the impression that these are in place, except to some extent in the project executed by BNT. This is, to some extent, a reflection of the weaknesses of the project in the area of monitoring and evaluation, a weakness that could easily be remedied with a more strategic approach during the final phase of project execution.

Efficiency

68. *The project has made, and continues to make, good use of skills and capacities, in a country where expertise is necessarily limited because of the small size of institutions.* Colleagues in The

¹³ A very specific circumstance may also be partly responsible for this: the person who led the design process within the NISP, and who efficiently facilitated all PPG activities, left her position soon after the completion of the PPG. “We did not really know what to do with the project then”, says a staff member of one of the NISP agencies, “it took us some time to get going”.

Bahamas often cite the lack of expertise as a significant constraint, and it is true that the pool of professionals with relevant experience and expertise is small, but it is also obvious that these local experts are well qualified, highly motivated and very knowledgeable of local issues and conditions. The fact that some individuals have been and are involved in the project in various capacities is not a problem: it is a reflection of the reality of small island states, and it serves the project well. Similarly, the project has been able to use highly qualified and reputable external experts who have for a long time been associated with conservation and resource management work in The Bahamas. Performance of national and international consultants has been satisfactory, except in one instance, where a contract was cancelled because of poor performance and non-delivery of outputs (and it is to the credit of project management that an unsatisfactory performance was dealt with rapidly and effectively).

69. *Two of the three main consultancies are now underway, but delays were encountered in the recruitment of the communication specialist, and this may affect this activity.* The main reason for the delay in recruitment is that the candidates originally selected withdrew from the recruitment process, indicating that the budget for the consultancy was insufficient to execute all activities satisfactorily. While this evaluation is not in a position to judge the suitability of the budget set aside for this activity, it is obvious that there are other issues which have hampered and delayed this activity, especially the fact that the terms of reference may actually be too broad and too diverse. Recommendations in this regard are therefore made in section IIIII.C.

70. *One specific issue that has affected the efficient execution of pilot demonstration project 1 is that of the separate bank account for that project.* One of the requirements of the GEF is that project funds must be independently audited, but this would not be possible if funds were deposited in the consolidated fund, and the DMR did not have authority to establish separate bank accounts. While this has caused substantial delays, because of the need for authorisation from the Treasury, and while the option of managing the project directly through the BEST Commission could have been considered, it appears that it was the right choice to stick to this arrangement, for at least two reasons: (a) the DMR now has the facility, and it is available for future projects, (b) it is a more efficient and transparent arrangement, and it does not place an additional administrative burden on the BEST Commission.

71. *This project, as most externally-funded projects in The Bahamas, has been affected by the high costs of operations, especially for local travel, and by the fact that funding agencies often fail to take this reality into account.* “They come to Nassau, they have meetings in government buildings”, says one of the project participants, referring to representatives of external agencies visiting The Bahamas, “and they do not realise how costly and how difficult it is to implement a conservation project in this country”. Colleagues involved in projects and processes in The Bahamas, including TNC and UNEP staff, are well aware of this reality, but they often find it difficult to convey it to others who have little or no experience of working in the field in the country.

72. *The main issue that has affected efficiency in project execution has been the departure of the first National Project Coordinator, with a period of five months until the recruitment of her successor in September 2011.* During that time, delays were experienced, and the capacity of the BEST Commission to coordinate activities was significantly reduced. It is however obvious that there have been significant improvements in the management of the project and the delivery of its outputs since the appointment of the current NPC, who is described by all as efficient, pro-active and committed. There is good communication between the NISP/NCC and the NPC, who appears fully responsive to the guidance she receives from the NISP/NCC and from UNEP.

73. *The project’s very purpose is to bring positive environmental impacts, through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and it is already achieving its purpose.* The project is based on a number of key assumptions, starting with the understanding that MPAs are a suitable instrument of biodiversity conservation and management, and that enhanced management effectiveness, capacity-building and sustainable financing will strengthen these MPAs. The project will therefore bring positive environmental impacts through improved conservation and MPA management.

Ratings

74. It is difficult and somewhat unfair to the implementing and executing agencies to rate the attainment of objectives and planned results by simply examining the project as a whole, because of the issues that have affected the execution of Component 1. The objectives and planned results of this Component 1 will not be fully attained, for reasons which are explained in paragraphs 38 to 43 above, and which are primarily, if not entirely, attributable to the decisions made by co-financing partners. Yet, if the project does not succeed in establishing the BPAF as originally designed, this should not be seen as a failure of the implementing and executing agencies, and it should not affect the other components of the project.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Attainment of project objectives and results	The objectives and results of Component 1 are unlikely to be achieved, for reasons that are explained in this report. In spite of this, the project will eventually achieve very important results, and rating has been assigned accordingly	MS
1. Effectiveness	Again, it is necessary here to separate Component 1 from the other project Components. The project has been largely effective, except for the establishment of the BPAF	HU for Component 1 S for other Components
2. Relevance	The project is highly relevant to the needs of the Bahamas and to the GEF strategies	HS
3. Efficiency	The project is being managed quite efficiently, with good systems and only minor delays (without considering the issues affecting Component 1, which are not issues of efficiency)	S

C. *Sustainability and catalytic role*

Sustainability

75. *It is too early to assess the sustainability of project interventions, especially because of the limited progress made on the objectives of Component 1.* In many respects, the very purpose of this project is to build the sustainability of the MPA network, and this has not yet been achieved. But a number of significant steps and results have been realised, that will all contribute to sustainability, including:

- the strengthening of all participating agencies, and of the NISP as an effective coordinating mechanism;
- the enhancement of the relationship between the various actors in government, civil society, communities, the private sector and scientific organisations.

76. These two factors contribute directly to the enhancement of institutional sustainability, and there is little doubt that there is capacity, within The Bahamas, to sustain the processes initiated or supported by this project. Political factors are also favourable, as reflected by the contribution of the Minister of the Environment and Housing to the recent budget debate in Parliament.

77. The main concerns, with respect to sustainability, relate to the financial aspects, because of the challenges encountered in the execution of Component 1, and because of the country's current economic performance, with negative impacts on fiscal revenue. Yes, in spite of this unfavourable context, the Government of The Bahamas continues to make substantial contributions to protected area management, and funding is being raised from a variety of other sources.

Catalytic role and replication

78. *The project has the potential to play a strong catalytic role, but this will depend, to a large extent, on the results obtained by the pilot projects, and on the overall project's ability to design and execute a comprehensive and effective system of monitoring and evaluation.* If successful, the pilot projects will yield many useful and replicable lessons, tools and methods, but the dimension of lesson learning, documentation and dissemination needs to be strengthened. Similarly, and as noted in section III.C below, Component 3 must be fully executed during the next phase, and a significant portion of the training activities must be devoted to the dissemination of tools and methods, to the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems, and to the integration of the METT and RAPPAM methodologies.

79. *At the policy and institutional level, the project has not had a strong catalytic role, but it has strengthened, and will undoubtedly continue to strengthen, a number of important processes.* For example, the NISP is not a direct creation of this project, but the project is the focus of most of its work, and this contributes to institutional collaboration and coordination. The national policy framework for biodiversity conservation and protected area management exists independently of this project, but the project further strengthens it, and provides it with implementation mechanisms and resources. Awareness is already raised, at national and community levels, but the communication and training activities that will be executed during the final phase of the project will further enhance it.

Ratings

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
B. Sustainability of project outcomes	The main concern is the financial sustainability. If the project makes the right choices with respect to the future of Component 1, however, it should still produce sustainable outcomes.	MU
1. Financial	The main threat to sustainability is and will be coming from the external economic environment and from the choices of co-financing partners	MU
2. Socio-political	The socio-political and institutional contexts are largely favourable to the sustainability of project interventions, and the project contributes to strengthening them	L
3. Institutional framework		L
4. Environmental	The project is on course to achieve significant environmental impacts, and the sustainability of these impacts will depend on the successful implementation of all project activities during the remainder of the project	L
C. Catalytic role	The project's catalytic role is not yet performed, but it could become significant	MS

D. Processes affecting attainment of project results

Project design and preparation

80. *The overall design of the project appears adequate, with a good mix of activities aimed at responding to the needs identified during the design phase.* The objectives and components are adequate and clearly formulated in the project document. The only major concern relates to Component 1 and its expected outcome, which has become unfeasible, but this is not an issue of project design, it has come in part as a result of changes in the commitments of co-financing partners, in part because the GEF accepted a letter of commitment that was inconsistent with the proposal and budget, and in part because of delays in execution of some activities.

81. A few other issues can be mentioned in relation to the original design:

- the design of the pilot demonstration projects is somewhat unclear, and so are the reasons for selecting the original site for the mangrove restoration project. Project stakeholders indicate that, in their view, there may not have been enough flexibility in the design, and it also seems that it would have been preferable to organise its work as two distinct sets of activities (mapping, modelling and analysis of resilience and reef – mangrove connectivity on the one hand, and mangrove restoration on the other);
- pilot demonstration project 3 would benefit from a structured training programme to ensure the sustainability of the monitoring activities, but this activity is not currently included in the work plan and budget (it could however easily be covered under budget line item 5302);
- funding available for pilot project demonstration 3 also appears insufficient to sustain research activities at current level;
- the terms of reference of the communications consultancy, and especially the specific objectives spelled out in section 4 of those terms, are extremely broad, possibly too broad to ensure quality results (and this may in part explain the difficulty in recruiting a suitable consultant);
- funding available to the conservation planning consultancy, which is a critical part of the project, may prove insufficient, especially the level of funding – and thus expert time – available to the development of legal decrees for approval and expansion of protected areas, the development of detailed zoning regulations for marine reserves, and the formulation of management plans for marine protected areas. Several actors involved in marine protected area management in The Bahamas point to consultation and participation as key weaknesses and challenges of the processes to date, and the project should therefore ensure that enough time and resources are available to individual MPA planning processes. “This is a key issue here in The Bahamas”, says someone involved in protected area planning, “partly because of distance and costs, and partly because of the way our national parks were first established, we do not have a strong tradition of participation, it’s changing, but it’s changing slowly, and that’s a big issue”.

82. *Much was achieved during, and thanks to, the preparatory phase of this project, with a design process that was rigorous, well organised and efficiently implemented, and with the production of useful materials.* At the initiative of TNC, the NISP was created, and it has provided a very useful mechanism for coordination of conservation and resource management policy and initiatives at the national level. During that initial phase, with the project preparation grant (PPG) provided by the GEF in 2007 – 2008, a number of consultation and design activities were held, and four important assessments were conducted: a gap analysis, a study of management effectiveness, an assessment of capacity and a study of sustainable financing. All these activities were conducted efficiently, and they have provided a strong baseline to the project. The NISP also took responsibility for preparing the project document, with support from UNEP. Participants in the process of project formulation describe it as a team exercise, with a staff member of one of the NISP agencies providing coordination, and with all agencies making their input. Compared to that of many other GEF projects, this design process

has been quite efficient, delivering a complete proposal backed by solid analyses and assessments in less than a year.

83. *The project, and especially its pilot demonstration activities, may however have suffered from insufficient stakeholder participation in project design.* “We were pressed with time”, says one of the colleagues involved in the preparation of the project document, “but we should have gone to the local communities. We relied primarily on the data we already had and on second-hand information, but if we had taken more time to consult and visit sites, we would have designed the project a bit differently”. Another participant echoes this view: “it was 16 of us, we felt we knew, but we did not have a detailed knowledge of what the reality was at community level”.

Implementation approach and adaptive management

84. *The project’s implementation arrangements and approach have been adequate and effective.* The mechanisms for project management envisaged in the project document have all been put in place and have all operated effectively. The NISP¹⁴ is a particularly useful arrangement, but its benefits to the project have not been fully realised. Since its creation in 2004 at the initiative of TNC, the NISP has proven to be a very useful mechanism for coordination and communication among the key agencies involved in conservation and natural resource management in the country. The NISP has also provided the formal instrument for the coordination of this project, with the composition of the NISP being the same as that of the National Coordinating Committee (except that the UNEP Task Manager sits on the NCC). The evidence available to this evaluation however suggests that the NISP has not been as effective as it could have been, especially during the initial phase of the project. Several reasons are given to explain this, including the fact that the first NPC may not have been fully comfortable with or sufficiently experienced to provide strategic guidance to the overall project, as well as an apparent tendency on the part of member agencies to give priority to the pilot demonstration projects.

85. *Evidence made available to this evaluation indicates that the project is well managed.* Administrative processes are effective, efficient, and consistent with UNEP and GEF standards, and reporting, procurement and other procedures are properly followed. Work plans and reports are submitted on time and in the required formats¹⁵, meetings are properly recorded and partner agencies report regularly on their activities and maintain good communication with the BEST Commission, which is described by all involved as an efficient and competent organisation. Its procedures are consistent with those that apply to GEF projects (e.g. requirement of three pro-forma invoices for procurement) and no significant difficulty or delay has been encountered. Some of the actors indicate that the amount of administrative work required is high, but that it does not prevent them from executing planned activities.

Stakeholder participation, country ownership and public awareness

86. *The project benefits from a strong partnership among the key institutional actors.* As noted elsewhere in this report (see paragraphs 48 and 55 in particular), a key feature of institutional arrangements in the fields of conservation and environmental management in The Bahamas is the existence of the NISP, which provides a very useful platform for cooperation among four key actors. The NISP partners have a strong sense of ownership of the project, and participate fully in its management and coordination.

¹⁴ The designation and function of the NISP as the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) has been an effective and suitable arrangement. Too often, externally funded projects require new coordinating arrangements, which constitute a burden for the executing agencies and do not necessarily add value to the existing institutional framework. It has been a wise decision to make the NISP the NCC for this project.

¹⁵ One of the resource people involved in the project however notes that “we submit the reports on time, but we’re not always getting feedback, it’s more an administrative requirement, but we also need some discussion, we wish [the NISP] would give us more feedback”.

87. *Beyond the core group of NISP partners, ownership of the overall project is weak, but this is not a source of major concern.* Projects have short time frames, while institutions remain, and what matters here are the strength, legitimacy and approaches of the national institutions and their external partners. All four co-executing agencies have strong local partnerships, and their missions and programmes are known and “owned” at national and local levels. There is good country ownership of the MPA agenda, and this is what the project should continue to nurture. With respect to public awareness, there are strong on-going programmes, and the project is about to embark on communication activities that will further enhance the awareness of biodiversity and MPAs among the general public, local communities in and near protected areas, and policy makers.

88. *Public participation is not yet a strong component of the project, but it could and should become a key element of its approach in the future.* With the recent initiation of the conservation planning and communication consultancies, and with planned training activities, the project has the opportunity to enhance participation by involving stakeholder in the gap analysis and in MPA planning and establishment, by designing management arrangements that facilitate participation and by using communication as a vehicle for mobilisation and empowerment.

Financial planning and management

89. *Evidence made available to this evaluation indicates that the project’s financial management systems are adequate and efficient, and that financial planning has been generally adequate.* Financial reports are submitted on time and in the required formats. An independent financial audit was conducted for fiscal year 2010, which highlighted only one minor concern (the need for a greater segregation of financial duties within the Ministry of the Environment), and a draft report on the 2011 has been submitted to the BEST Commission. On a few occasions, delays have been experienced in disbursements and reimbursements, but these have not been sufficiently severe to affect project quality and efficiency. All procurement is done according to acceptable standards, with clear terms of reference and invitations to apply.

90. *The budget has been and remains generally adequate, but the expenditure ratio is low and some adjustments to the budget may be needed.* Annex 6 presents actual costs and expenditure ratios at 31 March 2012. These ratios are low, but most can be explained by the status of project activities: (a) funds earmarked for the capitalisation of the BPAF have not yet been spent, (b) the consultancies planned under Components 1 and 2 have now been initiated, and expenditure is currently being made, and (c) most of the training activities need to be based on the results of the conservation planning consultancy, which is being implemented. However, there are areas where the low ratio of expenditure is a source of concern and a symptom of weaknesses or challenges in project execution:

- while expenditure on the pilot project executed by the BNT is on track, expenditure on the project executed by the DMR (7.66%) and TNC (15.07%) are very low, and this is a reflection on the performance of these projects, for reasons that are explained elsewhere in this report;
- there has been no expenditure on the MPA capacity-building budget line, where an amount of US\$210,000 is allocated. While it is accepted that these funds are intended primarily for activities arising out of the conservation planning consultancy, it remains a concern that, at this late stage, there does not seem to be a clear plan for the execution of these activities, while there are critical, already identified needs (especially in monitoring and evaluation, as well as in the project executed by the BNT) that could be covered under this budget line;
- significant funds (US\$86,000) are available for miscellaneous project management costs, including supplies, equipment, travel and administrative support. The ratio of expenditure on these items is very low (4.58%), but a more effective use of these funds would undoubtedly increase efficiency in project management and execution.

91. Other aspects of financial management and performance are discussed elsewhere in this report and do not need to be repeated here:

- status of co-financing commitments to the BPAF, see section II B;
- status of other co-financing contributions, see Annex 6;
- performance in leveraging additional funds, see section II B.

UNEP supervision and backstopping

92. *The project has clearly benefited from a good relationship between the UNEP Task Manager and the agencies involved in execution in The Bahamas, and the support and back-stopping provided by UNEP have been adequate.* One of the positive factors here has undoubtedly been continuity, as the Task Manager was involved from the project design stage. There have been instances when communication may not have been as efficient and effective as one would have wanted it to be, but this has not hampered execution in any significant way, at least not since the appointment of the current NPC, who displays strong management skills and is able to move forward even if feedback or guidance are delayed. The UNEP Task Manager is described by project partners in The Bahamas as very supportive, knowledgeable of local needs and conditions, and efficient. The evidence gathered by this evaluation indicates that the various project interim reports (PIR) provide an accurate account of progress, and that the UNEP Task Manager has provided good support and backstopping to the NCC whenever necessary.

Monitoring and evaluation

93. To date, monitoring and evaluation processes and procedures implemented by the project have focused primarily on four elements: the RAPPAM and METT assessment tools, the sustainability scorecard, Reef Check training and surveys, and baseline and field monitoring as part of the pilot demonstration projects. These are adequate and should be sustained. The only weaknesses of the system at the moment are: (a) the fact that the RAPPAM and METT tools are perceived by most of the local actors as a burdensome process which is not really adding value to their work, and (b) the absence of indicators and activities that would allow for the monitoring and assessment of the impact of management on the values already identified and assigned to the various protected areas. These issues are addressed in section III.C below.

Ratings

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
D. Stakeholders involvement	There is a very good level of involvement among national institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, but the level of participation in and awareness of the project beyond this inner circle is much lower	S
E. Country ownership / driven-ness	There is a strong ownership of the project by the national agencies directly involved, and it is these agencies that are driving project execution, with good support from the implementing agency	HS
F. Achievement of outputs and activities	As noted elsewhere, it is somewhat difficult to rate this criterion, because of the peculiar issues affecting the execution of Component 1, where the level of achievement is low. But it is satisfactory for most of the activities in Component 2, and the project has enough time ahead of it to ensure that most outputs are achieved	MS
G. Preparation and readiness	The project was designed in a participatory fashion by all the key agencies, the project preparation project was managed efficiently, and it produced a well-designed project with a number of useful and	HS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	relevant background documents, baselines and analyses	
H. Implementation approach	The project is being implemented effectively and efficiently	S
I. Financial planning and management	Financial systems and procedures are good and are followed adequately.	S
J. Monitoring and Evaluation	The project has conducted useful activities and has built a good basis for monitoring and evaluation, but it has not yet established a comprehensive system that is owned, understood and managed by national stakeholders	MU
1. M&E Design	The original design is good, but it now needs to be tailored to priorities needs and existing (or expected) capacities	MS
2. M&E Plan Implementation	A comprehensive implementation plan remains needed and indicators linked to the values of MPAs should be identified and monitored	MU
3. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	Budgeting is adequate, but expenditure needs to be accelerated, and some activities need to be added	S
K. UNEP Supervision and backstopping	This evaluation did not identify any issue or concern in this regard	HS

E. Complementarity with UNEP programmes and strategies

94. *The project is fully consistent with UNEP's strategies and programmes, and contributes to the achievement of their objectives in The Bahamas and in the region.* The project promotes the ecosystem-based approach, it contributes to the sustainable management of ecosystems while also focusing on restoration, and it helps place marine protected areas in the wider system of national planning and development. Its objectives and activities are aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan. The approaches and methods used by the project are also consistent with those proposed by UNEP globally, including pilot projects, experimentation and the development of methodologies, partnerships with financial institutions, and monitoring and evaluation. When completed, the project will have contributed to several of the expected accomplishments of UNEP's current medium-term strategy and programme of work¹⁶, especially with respect to the sub-programme on ecosystem management (increased integration of an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes, increased capacity to utilise the ecosystem approach) and the sub-programme on environmental governance (increased implementation of national environmental obligations and achievement of national environmental priority goals, targets and objectives through strengthened laws and institutions).

95. *The synergies between this project and the wider programmes, strategies and policies of UNEP are further enhanced by the involvement of and relationship with the UNEP-CAR/RCU and the SPAW Protocol and Programme.* Under the Caribbean Challenge project funded by the Government of Italy and implemented by UNEP-CAR/RCU within the framework of the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers (CaMPAM) network, capacity-building activities have been undertaken, a small-grant project is being implemented by the BNT and Bahamian colleagues have participated in two regional training programmes. While the UNEP-CAR/RCU is not directly involved in the coordination of this project, it was consulted at the design stage, it sees this project as a useful contribution to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Cartagena Convention and the SPAW Protocol, and it provides direct support to various elements of this project. The recent ratification of the SPAW Protocol by the Government of The Bahamas increases opportunities for collaboration.

¹⁶ UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013 and Programme of Work 2010-2011

96. *It is however regrettable that the project's efforts in sustainable financing have not been more closely linked to and inserted in the overall framework provided by the Cartagena Convention, the SPAW Protocol and the Caribbean Environment Programme.* The difficulties faced by project Component 1 in the establishment of the BPAF must be placed and analysed against the region's broader institutional landscape and in the context of other initiatives in sustainable financing. Creating sustainable institutions is a challenge in all parts of the world, but it is a particularly serious challenge at the regional level in the insular Caribbean, primarily because of political and geographic fragmentation. In spite of the challenges, the region has succeeded in building a strong inter-governmental framework under the auspices of the Cartagena Convention. It is therefore regrettable that this and other GEF-funded projects focusing on sustainable financing in the region have failed to link to and build on that institutional and political capital.

97. *The project does not give specific attention to gender issues relevant to protected area management.* These should be taken into account in future activities, together with other issues of social equity. The three areas of work where these issues should be directly considered are: (a) the activities of the communications consultancy, which should identify stakeholders, identify and analyse equity issues (particularly as it relates to reliance on biodiversity and possible impacts of MPA management on livelihoods) and consider these issues in participation, education and training, (b) the activities of the conservation planning consultancy, to ensure that all stakeholders in protected area management, including the most marginalised and disadvantaged among them, are given real opportunities to participate in planning processes, and (c) the inclusion of livelihood-related and gender-specific criteria in the selection of monitoring indicators.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Conclusions

Summary assessment

98. This is, in many respects, a good and potentially successful project, a project that will achieve most of its objectives, but with one major concern, namely the lack of progress in, and the likely unfeasibility of, establishing and operating the BPAF as originally designed and intended. In order to respond to this challenge, the implementing and executing agencies need to face the issues and make the decisions that are now needed to put Component 1 on a new, realistic path.

Evaluation ratings

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Attainment of project objectives and results	The objectives and results of Component 1 are unlikely to be achieved, for reasons that are explained in this report. In spite of this, the project will eventually achieve very important results, and rating has been assigned accordingly	MS
1. Effectiveness	Again, it is necessary here to separate Component 1 from the other project Components. The project has been largely effective, except for the establishment of the BPAF	HU for Component 1 S for other Components
2. Relevance	The project is highly relevant to the needs of the Bahamas and to the GEF strategies	HS
3. Efficiency	The project is being managed quite efficiently, with good systems and only minor delays (without considering the issues affecting Component 1, which are not issues of efficiency)	S
B. Sustainability of project outcomes	If the project makes the right choices with respect to the future of Component 1, it will produce outcomes that will be sustainable	L
1. Financial	The main threat to sustainability is and will be coming from the external economic environment and from the choices of co-financing partners	MU
2. Socio-political	The socio-political and institutional contexts are largely favourable to the sustainability of project interventions, and the project contributes to strengthening them	L
3. Institutional framework		L
4. Environmental	The project is on course to achieve significant environmental impacts, and the sustainability of these impacts will depend on the successful implementation of all project activities during the remainder of the project	L
C. Catalytic role	The project's catalytic role is not yet performed, but it could become significant	MS
D. Stakeholders involvement	There is a very good level of involvement among national institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, but the level of participation in and awareness of the project beyond this inner circle is much lower	S
E. Country ownership / driven-ness	There is a strong ownership of the project by the national agencies directly involved, and it is these agencies that are driving project execution, with good support from the implementing	HS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	agency	
F. Achievement of outputs and activities	As noted elsewhere, it is somewhat difficult to rate this criterion, because of the peculiar issues affecting the execution of Component 1, where the level of achievement is low. But it is satisfactory for most of the activities in Component 2, and the project has enough time ahead of it to ensure that most outputs are achieved	MS
G. Preparation and readiness	The project was designed in a participatory fashion by all the key agencies, the project preparation project was managed efficiently, and it produced a well-designed project with a number of useful and relevant background documents, baselines and analyses	HS
H. Implementation approach	The project is being implemented effectively and efficiently	S
I. Financial planning and management	Financial systems and procedures are good and are followed adequately.	S
J. Monitoring and Evaluation	The project has conducted useful activities and has built a good basis for monitoring and evaluation, but it has not yet established a comprehensive system that is owned, understood and managed by national stakeholders	MU
1. M&E Design	The original design is good, but it now needs to be tailored to priorities needs and existing (or expected) capacities	MS
2. M&E Plan Implementation	A comprehensive implementation plan remains needed and indicators linked to the values of MPAs should be identified and monitored	MU
3. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	Budgeting is adequate, but expenditure needs to be accelerated, and some activities need to be added	S
K. UNEP Supervision and backstopping	This evaluation did not identify any issue or concern in this regard	HS

B. *Lessons learned*

99. *The experience of this project can provide useful lessons to The Bahamas, and to the Caribbean region as a whole, with respect to the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms. Preliminary observations and conclusions include:*

- although there had been a number of earlier initiatives (e.g. the Jamaica Protected Areas Trust Fund), a new and more intense wave of efforts towards the establishment of conservation trust funds and other financing mechanisms in this region began a decade ago, before the global financial crisis. Some of the assumptions that could be made then regarding fundraising opportunities, returns on investments and the ability of Caribbean governments to generate fiscal revenue and allocate some of that revenue to conservation may no longer be valid, and there could be a danger in promoting and creating instruments that may not be viable or appropriate in the current economic and political context;
- the justification for promoting a regional mechanism (in this instance the CBF) is clearly valid, as it provides for economies of scale and for investment and revenue opportunities not available to smaller, national funds, but the design of a regional fund in this region presents a number of administrative and political challenges. “This one-size-fits-all approach cannot work in this region”, says a Caribbean professional with extensive experience in fundraising,

“the countries are too different”. The facts that there is no regional organisation involved, that a leading regional agency withdrew its commitment to offer secretariat facilities and that governments of the region do not appear overly enthusiastic, in spite of all the efforts deployed over the past four years to establish a regional mechanism, should be sources of concern to the promoters of this initiative;

- lessons from other regions of the world suggest that a regional conservation fund is most effective and relevant when it relies on effective national funds, and the case of the CBF confirms that the success of this regional financing mechanism will depend, to a large extent, on the existence of functional and effective national funds;
- in the short and medium term, the establishment of a regional fund may actually be an obstacle to building national funds, as illustrated by the case of The Bahamas, because it could reduce the ability of Caribbean governments to raise contributions to national endowment funds. The existence and operation of such a national fund are however stipulated, in the CBF Operations Manual, as conditions of a country’s participation in the regional fund. This may put into question the overall design of these regional and national mechanisms as presently proposed and promoted;
- the fact that the CBF is now registered in the United Kingdom is cited by some actors in The Bahamas and elsewhere in the region as a potential obstacle, as some governments may be reluctant to transfer funds from their Treasury to a UK-based charity, even if they are part of the governance of that charity. The reasons for selecting the option of registering as a UK charity are fully understandable and valid, and there are several cases of functional national and regional funds in other parts of the world that are registered in different countries (especially UK and USA), but these reasons will have to be well explained, and the promoters of the CBF will need to remain aware of issues and sensibilities associated with this choice.

100. *Building sustainability in protected area management and conservation requires more than simply sustainable financing.* One of the strengths of this project is that it does not focus exclusively on financing mechanisms, but includes a range of complementary activities in conservation planning, management effectiveness, communications and field testing. At the same time, one of its weaknesses is that the execution of its components did not proceed at the same pace, and it is possible that the component on sustainable financing has suffered from the fact that the project has been slow in delivering results on the ground, and that its communication activities have not yet effectively started. Projects such as this should consider all dimensions of management, and should ensure that they are all addressed, either by the project itself or by complementary initiatives.

101. *Targets are useful instruments in development planning and management generally, and in conservation more specifically, but they must be used and applied wisely, and can at times divert attention from more essential objectives.* In domains as complex as the conservation of biological diversity, simple targets such as the percentage of national territory under protected area status can be somewhat misleading, because they can distract attention from more relevant qualitative objectives. The most important conservation objectives for a country like The Bahamas are the conservation of its endemic, threatened and locally important species, the preservation of representative samples of all ecosystems, and the sustainable use of biodiversity for social and economic development. It is possible to reach a simple target of protected area coverage and yet miss these far more relevant management objectives.

102. *Increasing protected area coverage and enhancing management effectiveness are not necessarily converging and mutually-reinforcing objectives, and protected area managers need to define their priorities and strategies very carefully.* Several of the documents produced by this project make the implicit assumption that the two objectives are mutually-reinforcing, at times synonymous. But the experience of this and other projects suggests that this is not the case. “We should not be adding for adding sake”, says one of the consultants linked to the project, “we have many areas that

are not effectively managed, and creating new areas should not be done at the expense of what we already have". This is a dilemma that is faced by most countries, and that cannot be resolved at the expense of management effectiveness. Because area coverage is far easier to measure than management effectiveness, because funding agencies – notably the GEF – at times appear to favour quantitative over qualitative measurements of impact, and because project managers are under pressure to deliver measured results, there is a danger that too much attention will be given to the expansion of coverage, to the detriment of management effectiveness.

103. *High-level political statements do not automatically lead to policy commitment and implementation.* The Bahamas Declaration of 2008 was highly significant, and it was interpreted internationally as a very important development. With specific respect to financing mechanisms, the commitment of the Cabinet of Ministers to make a financial contribution to the BPAF was a major achievement, and The Bahamas are indeed perceived in the region and internationally as having made huge progress in setting up a financial mechanism. Yet the BPAF is not yet a legal entity, some fundamental questions regarding its operations have not yet been resolved, and most of the funds originally committed to its capitalisation are no longer available for that purpose. The contrast between the official, political pronouncements and the actual achievements is striking, and it may illustrate the complex nature of policy-making, the need to engage a wider range of stakeholders (including senior civil servants) in policy processes, and the value of advocacy and other forms of communications to support policy implementation.

104. *Coordination among actors in countries is extremely useful, and there are many benefits to be gained from establishing a permanent coordinating mechanism among governmental and civil society organisations involved in conservation.* The experience of the NISP has been very positive, and has greatly helped this project as well as other initiatives in the country. One danger, however, is that it can become a closed group, and that its efficiency and effectiveness can come at the expenses of wider consultation and participation.

C. Recommendations

Component 1 – sustainable funding mechanism

105. *The implications of the decisions made by KfW and TNC to allocate to the CBF the funds originally earmarked for the capitalisation of the BPAF, and of the ruling that KfW funds cannot be used to generate funding for The Bahamas (with the subsequent decision to reallocate contributions between KfW and TNC) should be fully assessed and properly communicated to all stakeholders.* More specifically:

- the GEF Secretariat should be notified of issues and options, and should be reminded of its acceptance of a letter from KfW (dated 29 April 2009) that did not represent a co-financing commitment to this project, contrary to GEF requirements. It should also be informed that KfW's co-financing commitment will now be met by TNC, for a total of US\$5 million;
- KfW and TNC should not assume that participation in workshops and receipt of circular letters are sufficient to secure genuine commitment from countries and institutions. While KfW and TNC have convened a number of workshops and have made good efforts to consult and involve partners, it is clear that there have been communication gaps and deficiencies in this process. Indeed, it should be appreciated that countries with acute funding needs will be keen to participate in discussions and processes related to financing, but such participation does not necessarily imply a full understanding of the implications or a commitment to implementation, especially when these processes are led by a funding agency;
- the Government of The Bahamas should formally request from KfW and TNC a detailed and substantiated update on the status of establishment and capitalisation of the CBF, with

quantified and timed projections of revenue generation and funding opportunities for The Bahamas under an eventual vertical agreement between the BPAF and the CBF;

- on the basis of the response received to this request, the Government of The Bahamas should determine the desirability and feasibility of it remaining involved in the CBF and should consider the option of re-opening negotiations with KfW and other current and potential partners in national and regional financing mechanisms.

106. *With respect to the project outputs that specifically relate to the establishment of the BPAF in Project Component 1, this evaluation has concluded that the option of establishing the BPAF as an autonomous body with full operational capacity is not feasible in the short term, because the capital available to the BPAF will not be sufficient to provide, from its investment, at least four times the recurrent cost of the Fund. It has also concluded that the option of relying exclusively on the CBF is too risky, since the extent to which the CBF will meet its capitalisation targets is now uncertain, and impractical, because it is highly unlikely that the Government of The Bahamas would agree to the transfer of its funds to a UK-registered CBF. Therefore, project partners should consider three more viable options:*

- Option a: proceed with the legal establishment of the BPAF, but with the understanding that its management and operations could not be assumed by a new organisation, and that the BPAF would have to enter into an agreement with an existing institution – most likely the BNT – to give it the mandate to manage the Fund on its behalf,
- Option b: cancel plans to establish the BPAF, but use the funds available to capitalise the existing trust fund at the BNT¹⁷, and
- Option c: cancel plans to establish the BPAF and modify the outcome and outputs of component 1 to focus on building the fundraising capacity of NISP partners as well as other actors, especially community-based civil society organisations. The pros and cons of these three options, and the next steps required in order to assess the feasibility of each, are summarised in the table below.

Table 4: Options for the future of project Component 1

	Option (a): BPAF legally created and fund managed by an existing organisation	Option (b): funds used to capitalise the existing trust fund at BNT	Option (c): replace funding mechanism by fundraising and financing strategy
Pros	Creates a national fund that can use available capital and yet operate effectively Allows for a vertical agreement between BPAF and CBF, and for BPAF to benefit from CBF funding Preserves the option of establishing an independent BPAF when conditions permit	Makes funding available immediately, and eliminates the risk of losing GEF funding for capitalisation Uses the systems and capacities that already exist within the BNT	Allows for immediate action, assuming an agreement from the GEF to use its funding for Component 1 for this purpose Brings tangible benefits to a range of governmental and civil society organisations
Cons	Is subject to legal and political process to establish BPAF, which may cause further delays, with risk of losing GEF funds if process is not	Limits (but does not eliminate) the option of establishing an independent BPAF at a later stage	May eliminate opportunity to access CBF funds Eliminates the option of using project resources to establish an independent BPAF at a later stage

¹⁷ This is called the Heritage Fund, and its current capital is USD 3.5 million.

	Option (a): BPAF legally created and fund managed by an existing organisation	Option (b): funds used to capitalise the existing trust fund at BNT	Option (c): replace funding mechanism by fundraising and financing strategy
	completed by end-of-project		

107. The evaluation considers that option c above is the least desirable option, primarily because it could prevent The Bahamas from accessing CBF funding. *It therefore recommends either option a or option b, and the choice should be based on an immediate assessment, by the NISP/NCC, of the time frame required for the conclusion of the processes and negotiations leading to the legal establishment of the BPAF.* If the NISP/NCC concludes that the time frame is likely to be too long, or impossible to determine with certainty at this stage, option b should be selected and acted upon decisively, and project funds should be used to:

- develop a business plan, operational plan and budget for the fund;
- develop grant application and award guidelines and procedures, with an autonomous governance and decision-making arrangement;
- determine overhead and management costs and fees,
- draft and negotiate a memorandum of understanding between NISP partners to guide the establishment and management of this fund by the BNT;
- negotiate a vertical agreement between the BNT and the CBF.

108. *On the other hand, if option a is selected and if it is decided to proceed with the submission of the BPAF Bill to Parliament, it would be advisable, before doing so, to conduct a final round of consultations to ensure that all provisions are fully consistent with national policy.* In particular, it would be useful to give attention to the inclusion, in Article 23 (1) (g) of “other fees, levies taxes and fines” as one of the possible sources of revenue of the Fund. The use of taxation as a source of revenue for specific funding mechanisms is a delicate issue¹⁸, and there have been cases of conflicts, in other countries, when funds assumed a power of taxation that is normally reserved to the Ministry responsible for Finance. It may therefore be advisable to employ more specific language that identifies the entities empowered to charge and allocate such fees, levies, taxes and fines to the Fund. Another question that should perhaps be examined is the fact that, as currently designed, the governance of the BPAF would be largely dominated by two organisations (BNT and TNC) that are also potential grantees of the Fund¹⁹, since they will have two out of three votes to appoint the other eight members of the Board. Potential conflicts of interest should be avoided and clear rules and procedures should therefore be drawn up and adopted.

¹⁸ It is particularly delicate in the Caribbean, where conservation organisations often cite the tourism sector as a potential source of revenue through taxation, and use the results “willingness to pay” surveys as evidence of the feasibility of targeting this source, but where governments are generally reluctant to impose additional taxation on the industry, and where the private sector typically resists such taxation, at times citing corporate responsibility schemes and environmental standards as preferred avenues to contribute to conservation and environmental sustainability.

¹⁹ It is considered good international practice to ensure that the process of decision making within a fund is fair and transparent. This may not be an issue at present, considering that much of the work in protected area planning and management in the country is carried out by BNT and TNC, but the situation may be significantly different a few years down the road, especially when one considers the current, encouraging trend of institutional strengthening and capacity-building in community-based civil society organisations. This could lead to potential tensions and conflicts of interest at a later stage.

109. *All implications of the Vertical Agreement between the CBF and the national trust funds should also be properly evaluated.* In particular, the provisions of Article IV (Conditions Precedent to Payment) regarding the matching contribution to be provided by the national fund may present some challenges, especially if most or all of the capital funds originally committed to the BPAF are actually paid to the CBF instead. This may present another argument in favour of option b above, since the capital already accumulated by the BNT could be considered as matching contribution.

110. *In its examination of future options for financing, project stakeholders should be informed by experiences in other countries and regions, and should take advantage of current work being done by a number of agencies, especially under the auspices of the Conservation Funding Alliance (CFA).* There are many lessons to be learned from the experience of others, and there are several options available to the manager of this project.

Component 2 – strengthening and expanding the MPA network

111. *Project management should provide all necessary support to the three main project consultancies (conservation planning, legislation and communications) and ensure that they are carried out in a complementary and mutually-reinforcing manner.* These consultancies are essential to the success of the project, and they need to be well managed and supported. The conservation planning consultancy should, in many respects, be the exercise on which many activities converge, because the gap analysis will provide extremely important information that will define other activities. The three consultants should operate as an integrated team, with good internal communication and joint planning of activities, in order to optimise their impacts. The NPC should facilitate this process, by convening periodic meetings of the team and organising joint work planning sessions.

112. In order to optimise the impacts and benefits of the work of the conservation planning consultants, it is recommended that the option of reviewing their work plan and budget be considered, following the current phase of work and after the stakeholder workshop, as there may be a need for more time and resources allocated to the activities related to specific protected areas, including the preparation of management plans, the development of zoning regulations, and the drafting of legal decrees in collaboration with the legal consultant.

113. In order to optimise the impacts and benefits of the work of the legal consultant, it is recommend that:

- his work on the proposed BPAF and any other national instrument be designed only after a decision has been made regarding the future of that funding mechanism;
- other activities related to legal decrees, zoning regulations and financial mechanisms for individual protected areas be carried out in very close collaboration with the conservation planning consultancy.

114. With respect to communication activities generally, and more specifically to the communications consultancy which has very recently been initiated, the following recommendations can be offered:

- the design of this project – as testified by the language used in many project documents – appears implicitly guided by the assumption that there existed adequate policy support for the project and its objectives. As noted in paragraph 103, the reality has proven different, and high level pronouncements did not translate into all the policy measures needed to establish a complete and sustainable network of marine protected areas in The Bahamas. Much of the project’s work in communication should therefore be targeted to policy-makers and senior managers, to strengthen the argument in favour of protected areas and build support for the objectives and activities of the NISP agencies and their partners;

- the activities conducted as part of the pilot demonstration projects and as part of the conservation planning consultancy will require substantial support in communications, especially as it relates to community involvement and public relations;
- it may be unrealistic and somewhat unwise for the project's communication activities to include a long-term communication strategy for the MPAs, including a system-wide public awareness campaign. There are organisations involved in public education around MPAs in the country, and such work is best done in a sustained manner, over the medium and long term, by established institutions with in-house capacity for communications, education and public awareness (as is the case with BNT and TNC);
- considering the importance of the two areas mentioned above (policy-level advocacy, and site-specific public information and involvement), of the need to retain training activities, and in light of the limited resources available for this consultancy, it would be advisable to focus the work of the communication specialist on those three areas. Otherwise, the project may produce many plans and materials, but it is doubtful that it will achieve its desired communication outputs.

115. Two other interesting opportunities should be mentioned in relation to the execution of Project Component 2:

- in the planning and management of protected areas in The Bahamas, new opportunities exist, thanks to the creation or growth of a number of vibrant community-based organisations that are concerned with issues of conservation and environmental sustainability, such as the One Eleuthera Foundation, the Andros Conservancy and Trust and the Friends of the Environment and Nature's Hope in South Andros. Project activities, especially those that are part of the conservation planning consultancy as well as the capacity building activities under budget line item 5302, should take advantage of these opportunities and should aim at consolidating this promising institutional framework;
- the recent ratification by The Bahamas of the SPAW Protocol offers additional possibilities of collaboration and synergies with UNEP and with the Caribbean Environment Programme. Under the SPAW Programme, protected areas could soon be listed, according to a set of Guidelines and Criteria for the Evaluation of Protected Areas to be listed under the SPAW Protocol. As soon as the mechanism for listing is put in place, The Bahamas could nominate some of its protected areas, as this would be a way to give them additional visibility and to build national, regional and international support.

Component 2 – pilot demonstration projects (output 2.4)

116. Five specific recommendations are offered with respect to the execution of the three pilot projects:

- pilot project 1: the option of expanding the mapping work (of reefs, and of reef – mangrove connectivity) to the national scale, using high resolution imagery, should be seriously considered
- pilot project 1: the desirability and feasibility of moving ahead with the mangrove restoration project should be reviewed, as this activity may no longer be relevant, and resources allocated to it could be used for more critical purposes. This issue and this option should be considered by the NCC at the earliest opportunity;

- pilot project 2: all efforts should be made to accelerate execution, with revised, more realistic objectives that would complement those of other activities aimed at controlling the lionfish invasion in The Bahamas and regionally;
- pilot project 3: the option of increasing its budget in order to allow it to sustain research activities until the end of the project should be considered;
- pilot projects 1 and 3: results and methods developed (e.g. in monitoring, GIS applications, reef assessment) should be used in future training and capacity-building activities (budget line item 5302).

117. In all three cases, it is also recommended that the NCC request the co-executing agencies to provide a summary of existing and expected results and outputs, as well as a draft plan for documentation and dissemination. These should then be used by the NCC and the NPC as elements of the work plan in training and capacity-building.

Component 3 – monitoring and evaluation

118. Three specific recommendations are offered with respect to this component:

- that the plan for monitoring protected area management effectiveness that was developed in 2009 be reviewed on the basis of the outputs of the current conservation planning consultancy and of pilot projects 1 and 3. This review should lead to two main outputs: (a) the selection of a small number of monitoring indicators attached to the values already identified for each of the protected areas, and (b) a work plan for the measurement of these indicators developed for execution during the final phase of the project. This could best be done at a technical workshop convened by the NISP, with the participation of NISP agencies together with as many of the projects consultants as possible, especially those currently assisting with pilot projects 1 and 3;
- that the opportunities offered by current mapping work in pilot project 2 be used to develop a country-wide map of reefs;
- that training be provided in RAPPAM and METT methodologies, with the involvement of participants in tailoring these instruments to the needs of The Bahamas.

Component 4 – project management

119. *Current arrangements for project management are suitable and should be maintained, but it would be useful to strengthen the role of the NISP/NCC in providing strategic guidance and overall supervision to the project:* there is a clear need for the NISP to play a more strategic role in the project (including in monitoring and evaluation), while continuing to serve its project oversight and administrative function. This could be achieved through a number of simple rules and measures, such as:

- ensuring that every meeting is structured around an agenda in three parts: (a) monitoring and evaluation, including an assessment of impacts and progress, and an identification of current and emerging issues and opportunities, (b) project implementation, status of activities, identification of priorities and challenges, and (c) project administration issues;
- identifying, in advance of each meeting, one or a small number of themes or issues to be discussed, with adequate preparation, and with the use of external expertise when possible and applicable;

- ensuring that all main project stakeholders, including the leaders of the pilot demonstration projects, the relevant staff of the NISP agencies and key consultants attend and participate in meetings as appropriate.

Revisions as a result of the mid-term evaluation

120. The project is at a critical juncture, and has the opportunity to make important decisions that will determine its eventual success. The following steps and processes are recommended:

- building on the outputs of this evaluation, the NCC should examine options and make strategic decisions, especially in relation to Project Component 1;
- opportunity should be taken of the workshop on sustainable financing that will be organised by TNC to examine these and other matters. In light of the importance of the issues surrounding Project Component 1 and of the options that need to be considered, this workshop should be seen as an opportunity for participatory analysis and decision-making, using independent external facilitation and inputs from other regions with comparable experiences and challenges. The workshop should, among other things, decide on a new outcome for Component 1, since the current outcome is considered unattainable. The NISP should be directly involved in the design of this workshop;
- the stakeholder workshop(s) planned for this year as part of the conservation planning consultancy should be conceived and run as a main project planning event that would determine priorities and needs, especially as it relates to new MPAs and to strengthening management effectiveness;
- taking the results of these three processes, and the financial data at 30 June 2012, the NCC should convene a project planning workshop, ideally in late September or October, which would recommend revisions to the project results framework, work plan and budget.

121. Assuming that decisions regarding the future of Project Component 1 are made and implemented quickly and that other project activities continue to progress as planned, it is unlikely that the project will require an extension, and it would be preferable if project partners could continue execution with the understanding and objective that project completion will take place as planned in February 2014.

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of reference of the evaluation

Mid-term Evaluation of the Project “Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected Area Network – The Bahamas”

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

A. Project General Information²⁰

Table 1. Project summary

GEF project ID:	3729	IMIS number*:	GFL/2328-2712-4B11
Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity	GEF OP #:	
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	BD-SP1, BD-SP2/ Objective 1	GEF approval date*:	2 November 2009
Implementing Agency:	UNEP	Executing Agency:	Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (BEST) Commission
Approval date:	27 January 2010	Date of first disbursement*:	4 February 2010
Actual start date:	30 March 2010	Planned duration:	48 months
Intended completion date*:	February 2014	Actual or Expected completion date:	February 2014
Project Type:	Full Size Project	GEF Allocation*:	US\$2,200,000
PPG GEF cost*:	US\$50,000	PPG co-financing*:	US\$30,000
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	US\$7,761,600	Total Cost*:	US\$10,041,600
Mid-term review/eval. (planned date):	February 2012	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	
Mid-term review/eval. (actual date):	April 2012	No. of revisions*:	0
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	28 February 2011	Date of last Revision*:	0
Disbursement as of 30 June 2011*:	US\$ 486,123	Date of financial closure*:	N/A
Date of Completion*:	N/A	Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2011:	
Total co-financing realized as of 30 June 2011:	US \$209,373 ²¹	Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 30 June 2011*:	US\$ 154,279.15
Leveraged financing:	US\$58,850 ²²		

B. Project Rationale²³

1. The existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in The Bahamas comprise approximately 154,011 hectares spread over ten national parks and three marine reserves. They include coastal and open ocean sites inclusive of seabird nesting sites, turtle nesting beaches, coastal mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs and spawning aggregation sites. Management effectiveness for these areas is affected by challenges including: management and enforcement in an archipelago spread over a very large marine area, site access, lack of sufficient mechanisms for sustainable funding, and lack of staff in adequate

²⁰ Source: UNEP GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR) Fiscal Year 2010

²¹ In addition, as part of the TNC co-financing commitment to the Bahamas GEF project, TNC has committed a total of \$2 million toward the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund endowment specifically earmarked for the Bahamas. As of June 2011 (one-third of the way through the implementation phase of this GEF project), TNC has set aside one-third of this amount (approximately \$667,000) and expect to reach the full \$2 million contribution by the end of this four-year project.

²² UNEP/CEP and Government of Italy support to the Caribbean Challenge specific to the Bahamas.

²³ Source: Project Document

numbers and with required technical skills. Monitoring of these sites has occurred over the years, but not on a regular or consistent basis to track trends, such as impacts of threats or success of mechanisms implemented to address threats. Key threats to the protected area system of The Bahamas include: invasive species, cross-boundary issues/surrounding land, unsustainable exploitation of fishery resources, climate change and tourism and tourism-related conversion and tourism planning processes (e.g. ecologically valuable sites).

2. Much work has been done to develop and expand the Bahamas National Protected Area System (BNPAS). Greatest successes have been achieved with terrestrial protected areas with The Bahamas already achieving the 2010 conservation goal of 10% set by the Programme of Work on Protected Areas. The greatest deficiency in the system is related to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with less than 1% of the country set aside for these.

3. The project seeks to build a sustainable national Marine Protected Area network for The Bahamas and thus enable it to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), as well as other obligations under this Convention. One of the project components involves the development of sustainable financing mechanisms for the Bahamas National Protected Area System (BNPAS) which will benefit the system into perpetuity, not just during the life of the project as well as the demonstration projects which address specific threats to MPAs and have the potential to be replicated for other PA systems globally.

4. The project addresses the biological diversity focal area, specifically Long-term Objective 1 (to catalyse sustainability of PA systems). The focus is on Strategic Programme 1 (sustainable financing of PA systems at the national level) and Strategic Programme 2 (increasing representation of effectively managed marine PA areas in PA systems). It seeks to increase revenue of protected area networks at the national level through establishing a PA trust fund and other sustainable finance mechanisms that will support management of MPAs. Increasing representation of effectively managed MPAs into the national PA system will also take place through improving management effectiveness of existing MPAs by an average of 50 percent and increasing the overall coverage of MPAs within the national network.

5. The project also addresses biodiversity Long-term Objective 2 (to mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes/seascapes and sectors with a focus) and Strategic Program 5 (Fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services) through the demonstration project activities related to sustainable tourism including development of a model for the selected MPA and developments adjacent to it.

6. The project design incorporates not only key biodiversity issues, but also Climate Change Focal Area Strategy, Long-term Objective 8 (to support pilot and demonstration projects for adaptation to climate change) through the demonstration project on incorporating climate change and mangrove restoration into conservation planning

7. Adherence to these strategic objectives also assist in implementing some of the Millennium Development Goals 7(a) and 7(b), particularly those related to environmental sustainability and poverty reduction, while meeting the priorities identified by the COP of the CBD and the Programmes of Work on Protected Areas and Marine and Coastal Biodiversity. Poverty reduction will be achieved through the conservation of marine resources used by local communities as a primary source of protein intake and the sale of fisheries resources.

8. The project also has relevance to the International Waters Strategic Program 1 on restoring and sustaining of coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biological diversity through the demonstration projects' activities on lionfish, mangrove restoration and sustainable tourism.

C. Project objectives²⁴ and components

9. According to the Project Document, the primary **goal** of the project is to *conserve globally important marine habitat and species within The Bahamas as well as those species of the wider Caribbean that rely on The Bahamas for nesting, breeding, feeding and migration*. The immediate project **objective** is to *expand protected area coverage of globally significant marine biodiversity and increase the management effectiveness of the national marine protected area network across the Bahamian archipelago*.

10. The project addresses shortfalls in financial needs, gaps in MPA coverage and representation together with threats to the MPA system through the following components:

Table 2. Project Components and Outputs

Component	Outputs
1. Creation of sustainable funding mechanism for the national	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced detailing of legal and administrative structure of Bahamas Protected Area Fund (and endorsement by the Government of The Bahamas);

²⁴ Terms such as development objective, long-term objective, outcomes etc. used in the following section are the ones used in the Project Document. Their use does not necessarily fit the internationally recognized definitions of those terms and the MTE Team will have to take this into account.

Component		Outputs
	protected area system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of an Asset Management Policy and Fundraising Strategy; • Development and implementation and 5-Year Business Plan; • Development of complementary sources of conservation finance; and • Production of an Operational Manual outlining the legislative, financial and administrative structure of the Protected Area Trust Fund
2.	Strengthening and expanding the MPA network	2.1 Assessment, scientific and technical analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection and analysis of updated data on priority ecosystems for input into siting decisions, inclusion in management plans and in revised Master Plan (to be completed by project end).
		2.2 Legal and Regulatory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal decrees drafted and approved for expansion of Marine Reserve Network based on existing Ecological Gap Analysis for The Bahamas (and regionally coordinated priorities). • Zoning for marine reserves detailed and incorporated into national land use planning process, adopted and approved by the Department of Marine Resources and Ministry of the Environment. • Management plans, including zoning and regulatory framework to be developed for 5% of the near-shore and shelf marine habitat within the Marine Reserve Network
		2.3 Capacity building & Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing, infrastructure and funding mechanisms established for 5% of the nearshore and shelf marine habitat as identified in the Master Plan. • Training programs developed and implemented for MPA personnel and Protected Area Trust Fund beneficiaries (communities, NGOs, students and other relevant stakeholders) in collaboration with the SPAW Training of Trainers Programme on MPA management • National Communications Strategy, including knowledge management developed and implemented with added intent of scaling up successful demonstration projects.
		2.4 Pilot demonstration projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive alien species – Lionfish control in MPAs • Incorporating climate change and mangrove restoration into conservation planning • Development of a sustainable tourism model for an MPA
3.	Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management effectiveness monitored in calendar years 1, 2 and 4 of the project using RAPPAM and METT tools • Monitoring status of biodiversity indicators and management effectiveness indicators of project interventions. • Training for MPA personnel and beneficiaries in monitoring techniques. MPA personnel and other key stakeholders will be trained in Reef Check methodology.
4.	Project Management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is managed by the National Implementation Strategy Partnership (NISP) agencies led by the BEST Commission. The project team includes staffing with the following skill sets: project administration and management, trust fund management, together with sectoral experts in biodiversity, climate change, economics, GIS mapping, tourism and fisheries. The project will be guided by a National Coordination Committee (NCC), composed of representatives from the various pertinent thematic sectors, private sector, NGOs and key project partners, including the Ministry of the Environment, Department of Marine Resources, Bahamas National Trust, and The Nature Conservancy. Additional stakeholders such as UNEP (and/or UNEP/CEP),

Component	Outputs
	CABI, and other relevant groups will participate in annual NCC Meetings with a view towards providing guidance and steering the implementation of the project.

D. Project area and main stakeholders

11. The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is a part of the Caribbean Islands hotspot. It is a unique sub-tropical archipelagic nation with a total area of 325,000 km² and a total land area of 13,930 km². It is located some 80 km east of the state of Florida (USA) at its northwestern point and some 80 km north of Cuba. As an archipelago, the country has 700 islands and cays, of which 22 are inhabited. The largest island is Andros.

12. The existing marine protected areas (MPAs) in The Bahamas comprise approximately 154 thousand hectares spread over ten national parks and three marine reserves. They include coastal and open ocean sites inclusive of seabird nesting sites, turtle nesting beaches, coastal mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs and spawning aggregation sites.

13. The primary project stakeholders include the following:

- Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (BEST) Commission – The environmental arm of the Ministry of the Environment, this agency focuses on ‘green’ environmental issues like biodiversity, climate change and land degradation. It represents the Government of The Bahamas at negotiations of multilateral environmental agreements. They also provide expert advice to the Government on environmental policy, legislation and environmental impacts of development projects in The Bahamas.
- Bahamas National Trust (BNT) – Established by law in 1959, the Bahamas National Trust is a non-Governmental organization mandated to manage the National Parks System in The Bahamas and hold these lands in trust for the Bahamian people. They currently manage 25 national parks across the Bahamian archipelago.
- Department of Marine Resources (DMR) – A division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, the Department of Marine Resources is charged with management of the marine resources of the country. This includes management of the Marine Reserve Network that has recently been established in The Bahamas with the formal declaration of boundaries for three reserves. The network is projected to have as many as thirty reserves once fully established.
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – TNC is a non-profit conservation organization with offices throughout the world. Its Northern Caribbean Office in The Bahamas is a key NISP partner. The Conservancy has made significant financial and technical contributions to the Bahamas National Protected Area System since establishment of its office in The Bahamas in 2004.

14. Other stakeholders involved in execution of the project include: Department of Lands and Surveys; Ministry of the Environment; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Tourism; National Biodiversity Committee; National Climate Change Committee; Office of the Prime Minister; Royal Bahamas Defence Force; Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation; Dive operators; Fishermen; Scuba divers; and Tour operators.

E. Executing Arrangements

15. UNEP is the GEF-designated Implementing Agency (IA) for the project, responsible for overall project supervision to ensure consistency with GEF and UNEP policies and procedures, and is expected to provide guidance on linkages with related UNEP and GEF funded activities. UNEP also has a responsibility for regular liaison with the Executing Agency (EA) on substantive and administrative matters, and for participating in meetings and workshops as appropriate. The UNEP Task Manager (TM) and Financial Management Officer (FMO) should provide assistance and advice to the EA on project management (e.g. revisions of work plan and budgets) and policy guidance in relation to GEF procedures, requirements and schedules. The TM and FMO are responsible for clearance and transmission of financial and progress reports to the GEF. UNEP is expected to review and approve all substantive reports produced in accordance with the schedule of work.

16. The BEST Commission of The Bahamas is the Executing Agency (EA) of the project, responsible for administrative and financial management of the project. The EA is responsible for timely production of financial and progress reports to UNEP.

17. BEST has established a National Coordinating Committee (NCC) and appointed a National Project Coordinator (NPC). The NCC is responsible for managing the execution of project activities, inclusive of reviewing and advising on the main outputs of the MPA FSP, ensuring that the environmental policy of the Government is fully reflected in the MPA FSP, ensuring effective communication and decision-making, and assisting with mobilization of expertise as needed for proper execution of the MPA FSP outputs. On an annual basis the NCC meets with all executing partners including UNEP CAR/RCU, UNEP DGEF and TNC to fulfil steering mechanism responsibilities including: oversight of project

implementation, monitoring of project progress, strategic and policy guidance and to review and approve annual work plans and budgets.

18. The NISP partners (as referenced in the previous section) are represented on the NCC. Each NISP partner is responsible for a pilot project as follows:

- DMR Lionfish control in MPAs
- TNC Incorporating climate change and mangrove restoration into conservation planning
- BNT Development of a sustainable tourism model for a MPA

F. Project Cost and Financing

19. The GEF provides financing to the project in the amount of US\$2.2 million, which puts the project in the Full-size Project (FSP) category. The project is expected to mobilize an additional plus US\$7 million in co-financing, from the Government of The Bahamas (US\$2 million), The Nature Conservancy (US\$2 million) and KfW (US\$3 million)—for a total budget of US\$9.96 million. Of this foreseen amount, a full US\$7 million is expected to capitalize the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF-\$2.5 million) and its associated draw down from the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF-\$5 million). The most recent Quarterly Expenditure Report (December 31, 2011) reports that by 30 June 2011, the project had effectively disbursed US\$240,550 of the GEF grant – just 11 percent and as of June 30, 2011, has mobilized some US\$200,900 in co-financing for ongoing activities. The low disbursement rate is in large part due to the delays in setting up the BPAF and CBF, although key partners have confirmed that they shall set aside a conditional US\$3 million (KfW) and US\$667,000 (TNC).

G. Project Implementation Issues²⁵

20. According to the Project Implementation Reports and Mission Reports, progress towards technically specific outcomes has been slow, but viewed as surmountable.

21. The major concern is the speed of progress on the enactment of the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF) Bill and associated Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF). The Government of the Bahamas committed \$2.0 million in cash co-financing for the establishment of the BPAF. However without the passage of the BPAF legislation, the Ministry of Finance does not have instructions as to where to transfer these earmarked funds. Without the passage of the BPAF Bill, there may be loss of access to the corresponding CBF earmarked for The Bahamas, possibly resulting in partial or full cancellation of the GEF support for the project.²⁶

22. The BPAF Bill was amended and it includes the vertical agreement to accommodate the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF). Passage of the BPAF Bill was originally foreseen for the 3rd quarter of 2010, but despite repeated efforts, was not successful due to internal politics. The BPAF will be presented to the new government in the 2nd quarter of 2012.

23. The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) was expected to be officially incorporated as a UK-based charity in 2012 with a view towards making the CBF fully operational so that it can start to channel funding in early 2013. This is also experiencing substantive delays in formation.

24. The departure of the National Project Coordinator (NPC) in April 2011 caused some operational and procedural delays as the project went through nearly 5 months before the recruitment of a replacement. These delays are only now being resolved in terms of moving technical components forward.

25. Project executing partners continued to work on delivery of technical project components and expansion of the Westside National Park of Andros, announced at the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Bahamas National Trust, has brought the project 400,000 ha closer to its MPA expansion goal. The project partners, and particularly the Department of Marine Resources (DMR), need to update and promulgate new MPAs if the project is to achieve its end targets. NISP Partners have been urged to systematically identify and update priorities for gazetting of new MPAs and it was agreed that this element would be a regular feature of all NISP meetings (which occur quarterly) and sometimes more frequently.

²⁵ The issues discussed here have been derived from PIR FY 10 and Mission Report Sept. 19-23, 2011, therefore they do not form the opinion of the UNEP Evaluation Office.

²⁶ Mission Report September 19-23, 2011.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

A. Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

26. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy²⁷ and the UNEP Evaluation Manual²⁸ Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the Project “**Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected Area Network – The Bahamas**” is undertaken half way through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The MTE will assess project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes and impacts, including their sustainability.

27. The MTE has the following primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to date and of the likelihood of outcomes and impact in the future; (ii) to meet accountability requirements; (iii) to identify the challenges and risks to achievement of the project objectives and derive corrective actions needed for the project to achieve maximum impact and sustainability. In addition, the MTE is expected to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the Executing Agency and its partners, UNEP, the GEF and their partners. It will focus on the following sets of **key questions**, based on the project’s Logframe and current implementation issues, which may be expanded by the consultants as deemed appropriate:

28. **What are the key challenges to project implementation and what remedies can be proposed?** What are the main issues underlying any significant delays incurred so far in project execution? How can these issues be addressed within the limits of existing resources and within the project timeframe?

29. **What progress has been made to expand marine protected area coverage of globally significant marine biodiversity?** What is the progress made in increasing the management effectiveness of the national MPA Network including progress on their activities related to capacity building, communication, development of policy and regulatory frameworks, scientific and technical assessment and analysis?

30. What progress has been and can be made on the development of sustainable funding mechanisms for the national marine protected area system? How advanced are the arrangements for developing a legal and administrative structure for the Bahamas Protected Area Fund (BPAF) and other sources of conservation finance? In the current context, what can realistically be achieved in the time remaining to the project and are there alternative actions that can be explored?

31. **What is the status of the pilot projects?** What can realistically be achieved in the time remaining to the project? Is the capacity of the NISP partners adequate to support the timely execution of the demonstration projects within the remaining time frame? If not, how can this aspect be improved? Is the operational, managerial and administrative support deployed by the Executing Agency to support the demonstration projects adequate to the task at hand? If not, how can this aspect be improved? In the current context, what can realistically be achieved in the time remaining to the project? Do the demonstration projects have a good strategy in place for monitoring, lesson learning and replication?

32. **Can the project realistically achieve its intended outputs and objectives within the time remaining?** If not, what would be a more realistic time frame or what activities should be prioritized so that the main outputs and objectives can still be achieved in a timely manner?

33. **What is the status of M&E of the project implementation?** Has the project established an effective evaluation and monitoring system and is the capacity for M&E among MPA personnel sufficient? What is the status of the use of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)?

B. Overall Approach and Methods

34. The MTE of the Project “**Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected Area Network – The Bahamas**” will be conducted by one independent consultant under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office (Nairobi), in consultation with the UNEP DEPI Task Manager.

35. The MTE will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts.

36. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

²⁷ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPevaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>
²⁸ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPevaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

37. A **desk review** of project documents²⁹ including, but not limited to:

- Relevant background documentation, *inter alia* UNEP and GEF policies, strategies and programmes;
- Project design documents including the Stakeholder participation plan; Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the logical framework and project financing;
- Project reports such as progress and financial reports from the BEST Commission Steering Committee meeting minutes; annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) and relevant correspondence;
- Documentation related to project outputs

38. **Interviews**³⁰ with:

- Project management and execution support in the BEST Commission;
- UNEP Task Manager (Washington DC) and Fund Management Officer (Nairobi);
- Representatives of the National Implementation Strategy Partnership (NISP) agencies led by the BEST Commission,
- Representatives of the Department of Marine Resources, Bahamas National Trust, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).
- Representatives of the UNEP-Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP-CAR/RCU), SPAW, Regional Activity Centre aimed at implementing the protocol concerning specially protected areas and wildlife in the Caribbean region (RAC-SPAW), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM/Caribbean Challenge), etc.
- Major co-financing partners: KfW (Peter Hilliges, Martin Luz); TNC International and Caribbean Offices (Phil Kramer, Sheldon Cohen, Rob Weary)

39. **Country visit.** The Consultant will visit the project in The Bahamas. Although the project does include pilot sites, these will not be visited because of the four sites three are open water sites with research based work and no infrastructure, and one is yet to become operational. A session(s) can be arranged with all partners to provide presentations of all activities (separately or combined), results, conclusions and ongoing works for the project pilots. It can be arranged for the consultants and project managers to be present to answer any questions and provide clarification. Photos and videos where available will also be presented. This would be held in Nassau.

C. *Key Evaluation principles*

40. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification was not possible, the single source will be mentioned³¹. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

41. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to a **minimum set of evaluation criteria** grouped in four categories: (1) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and the review of outcomes towards impacts; (2) Sustainability and catalytic role, which focuses on financial, socio-political, institutional and ecological factors conditioning sustainability of project outcomes, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling of project lessons and good practices; (3) Processes affecting attainment of project results, which covers project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership/driven-ness, project finance, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation systems; and (4) Complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes. The lead consultant can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

42. **Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with UNEP strategies and programmes is not rated. Annex 2 provides detailed guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

43. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, the evaluators should consider the difference between **what has happened with** and **what would have happened without** the project. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

²⁹ Documents to be provided by the UNEP and the BEST Commission are listed in Annex 5.

³⁰ Face-to-face or through any other appropriate means of communication

³¹ Individuals should not be mentioned by name if anonymity needs to be preserved.

44. Particular attention should be given to identifying implementation challenges and risks to achieving the expected project objectives and sustainability. Therefore, when reviewing progress to date, the “**why?**” question should be at front of the consultants’ minds all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance is to date, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance is as it is, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category 3 presented below). This should provide the basis for the corrective actions recommended by the evaluation and the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultants to explain “why things happened” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere assessment of “where things stand” today.

D. Evaluation criteria

1. Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

45. The evaluation should assess the relevance of the project’s objectives and the extent to which these were effectively and efficiently achieved or are expected to be achieved.

a) *Achievement of Outputs and Activities:* Assess, for each component, the project’s success in producing the programmed outputs, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness. Briefly explain the degree of success of the project in achieving its different outputs, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section 3 (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project results).

b) *Relevance:* Assess, in retrospect, whether the project’s objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with: i) national environmental priorities; ii) the UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation; and iii) the GEF Biodiversity focal area, strategic priorities and the relevant operational program(s).

c) *Effectiveness:* Assess whether the project is on track in achieving its main objective “to expand protected area coverage of globally significant marine biodiversity and increase the management effectiveness of the national MPA Network” and its component objectives as per the Results Framework. Briefly explain what factors are affecting the project’s achievement of objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section 3.

d) *Efficiency:* Assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution to date. Describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to implement the project within its programmed budget and timeframe. Analyse how delays have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. Wherever possible, compare the cost and time over results ratios of the project with that of other similar projects. Give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

e) *Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROI):* Reconstruct the logical pathways from project outputs over achieved objectives towards impacts, taking into account performance and impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders, using the methodology presented in the GEF Evaluation Office’s ROI Practitioner’s Handbook³² (summarized in Annex 6 of the TORs). Appreciate to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute to changes in stakeholder behaviour as regards increased management effectiveness of the national MPA Network.

2. Sustainability and catalytic role

46. **Sustainability** is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the project while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the project but that may condition sustainability of benefits. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent an exit strategy for the project has been prepared and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. The evaluation will have to ascertain that the project is looking further than its immediate outputs.. Application of the ROI method will assist in the evaluation of sustainability.

47. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:

a) *Socio-political sustainability.* Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the

³² http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/Impact_Eval-Review_of_Outcomes_to_Impacts-RoI_handbook.pdf

programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project? What is the project doing to ensure this socio-political sustainability of results and benefits?

b) *Financial resources.* To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources³³ will be or will become available to implement the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact? What concrete efforts is the project making to ensure financial sustainability of results and benefits?

c) *Institutional framework.* To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements so far, such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining project results and to lead those to impact on human behaviour and environmental resources? How is the project contributing to the sustainability of these institutional achievements?

d) *Environmental sustainability.* Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits? How is the project dealing with these?

48. **Catalytic Role and Replication.** The *catalytic role* of GEF-funded and UNEP-implemented interventions is embodied in their approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in pilot activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches can work. UNEP and the GEF also aim to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national, regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project, namely to what extent the project is:

a) *catalyzing behavioural changes* in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of: i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects; ii) strategic programmes and plans developed; and iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at a national and sub-regional level;

b) providing *incentives* (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviour;

c) contributing to *institutional changes*. An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-piloted approaches in the national demonstration projects;

d) contributing to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);

e) contributing to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from Governments, the GEF or other donors;

f) creating opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyze change (without whom the project would not have achieved all of its results).

49. *Replication*, in the context of UNEP and GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). The evaluation will assess the approach adopted by the project to promote replication effects and appreciate to what extent actual replication has already occurred or is likely to occur in the near future, with special attention to the three pilot projects underway. What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of project experiences and lessons?

3. Processes affecting attainment of project results

50. **Preparation and Readiness.** Are the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the project was designed? Is the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Are the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities well negotiated? Are counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Are adequate project management arrangements in place? Have lessons from other relevant projects been properly incorporated in the project design and implementation? Are lessons learned and recommendations from Steering Committee meetings adequately being integrated in the project approach? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.?

³³ Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, other development projects etc.

51. **Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management.** This includes an analysis of approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project's adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

- a) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document are being followed and are effective in delivering project outputs and outcomes. Have pertinent adaptations been made to the approaches originally proposed?
- b) Assess the role and performance of the units and committees established and the project execution arrangements at all levels;
- c) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management by the BEST Commission and NISP Partners at the country level. How well is management able to adapt to changes during the life of the project?
- d) Assess the extent to which project management is responsive to direction and guidance provided by the Steering Committee and UNEP;
- e) Identify administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influence the effective implementation of the project, and how the project partners try to overcome these problems.

52. **Stakeholder³⁴ Participation and Public Awareness.** The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing project partners, government institutions and private interest groups. The assessment will look at the approach(es) used to identify and engage stakeholders in project design and implementation. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project's objectives? What is the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during the course of implementation of the project?

53. The ROI analysis should assist the consultants in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathway from activities to achievement of outputs and objectives to impact.

54. **Country Ownership and Driven-ness.** The evaluation will assess the performance of The Bahamas, namely:

- a) in how has the Government of The Bahamas assumed responsibility for the project and providing adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received so far from the various partners involved in the project and the timeliness of provision of counter-part funding to project activities;
- b) to what extent the political and institutional framework of The Bahamas been conducive to project performance;
- c) to what extent has The Bahamas promoted the participation of communities and their non-governmental organisations in the project; and
- d) how responsive The Bahamas been to NISP Partners coordination and guidance, and to UNEP supervision recommendations.

55. **Financial Planning and Management.** This requires the assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. The MTE will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:

- a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources are available to the project and its partners;
- b) Appreciate other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might influence project performance;
- c) Present to what extent co-financing has materialized so far as compared to what was expected at project approval. Report country co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in

³⁴ Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 3).

d) Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.

56. **UNEP Supervision and Backstopping.** The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP has a contribution to make. The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP including:

- a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- b) The emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
- c) The realism and candour of project reporting and ratings (i.e. are PIR ratings an accurate reflection of the project realities and risks);
- d) The quality of documentation of project supervision activities; and
- e) Financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision.

57. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The evaluation will appreciate how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation is being used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

a) *M&E Design.* Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The timeframe for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should be specified. The evaluators will use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:

- Quality of the project logframe as a planning and monitoring instrument: compare and assess the Logframe in the Project Document and the Logframe used in the Project Implementation Review reports to report progress towards achieving project objectives;
- SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
- Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable?
- Arrangements for monitoring: Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate? In how far were project users involved in monitoring?
- Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets and deadlines been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Are there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
- Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and is funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

b) *M&E Plan Implementation.* The evaluation will verify that:

- the M&E system is operational and facilitates timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;
- annual project reports and Progress Implementation Review (PIR) reports are complete, accurate and with well justified ratings;

- the information provided by the M&E system is really being used to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.

4. Complementarities with the UNEP strategies and programmes

58. UNEP aims to undertake GEF funded projects that are aligned with its own strategies. The evaluation should present a brief narrative on the following issues:

- Linkage to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and POW 2010-2011.* The UNEP MTS specifies desired results in six thematic focal areas. The desired results are termed Expected Accomplishments. Using the completed ROI analysis, the evaluation should comment on whether the project makes a tangible contribution to any of the Expected Accomplishments specified in the UNEP MTS. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described. Whilst it is recognised that UNEP GEF projects designed prior to the production of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS)³⁵/ Programme of Work (POW) 2010/11 would not necessarily be aligned with the Expected Accomplishments articulated in those documents, complementarities may still exist.
- Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)*³⁶. The current and intended outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.
- Gender.* Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring take into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Appreciate whether the intervention is likely to have any lasting impacts on gender equality and the relationship between women and the environment. Are there any unresolved gender inequalities that could affect sustainability of project benefits?
- South-South Cooperation.* This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

E. The Evaluation Consultant

59. For this evaluation, one independent consultant will be hired, from the region. The consultant should have graduate level education in an environmental-related field with at least 15 years of working experience in the following: (a) Evaluation of environmental projects; (b) Participatory natural resource management, particularly marine ecosystems and marine protected area management; (c) Sustainable financing mechanisms; and (d) Good knowledge of UNEP/GEF work.

60. The **Consultant** will be responsible for coordinating the data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, and preparing the main report.

61. By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that (s)he has not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize her/his independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, (s)he will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of his/her contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

F. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

62. The Evaluation Consultant will prepare a 2-3 page **inception report** containing his/her approach to the evaluation, the evaluation methods that s/he will employ, and a must also include a desk based Theory of Change to review the design of the project

63. The inception report will be submitted for review by the Evaluation Office before the Consultant conducts any field visits.

64. **The main evaluation report** should be brief (no longer than 35 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 1. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate.

³⁵ <http://www.unep.org/PDF/FinalMTSGCSS-X-8.pdf>

³⁶ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

65. **Report summary.** The Consultant will prepare a 5-10 slide presentation summarizing the key findings, lessons learned and recommendations of the evaluation. This presentation will be presented by the UNEP Task Manager at the next meeting of project stakeholders. The purpose of this presentation is to engage the main project partners in a discussion on the evaluation results and obtain their buy-in into the MTE recommendations.

66. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The Consultant will submit the zero draft report to the UNEP EO at a date previously agreed, and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the EO. The EO will then share the first draft report with the UNEP/DEPI Task Manager for review and comments. UNEP/DEPI will forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders, in particular BEST Commission and NISP Partners, for review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP EO for collation. The EO will provide the comments to the Consultant for consideration in preparing the final draft report. The Consultant will submit the final draft report no later than 2 weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The Consultant will prepare a **response to comments** that contradict the findings of the evaluation team and could therefore not be accommodated in the final report. This response will be annexed to the MTE report to ensure full transparency.

67. Consultations will be held between the Consultant, EO staff, the UNEP/GEF, UNEP/DEPI and key members of the project execution team. These consultations will seek feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons.

68. **Submission of the final Mid-term Evaluation report.** The final report shall be submitted by Email to:

Segbedzi Norgbey, Head
UNEP Evaluation Office
P.O. Box 30552-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: (+254-20) 762 3387
Email: segbedzi.norgbey@unep.org

69. The Head of Evaluation will share the report with the following persons:

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Director
UNEP/GEF Coordination Office
Nairobi, Kenya
Email: maryam.niamir-fuller@unep.org

Ibrahim Thiaw, Director
UNEP/DEPI
Nairobi, Kenya
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70. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site www.unep.org/eou and may be printed in hard copy. Subsequently, the report will be sent to the GEF Office of Evaluation for their review, appraisal and inclusion on the GEF website.

71. As per usual practice, the UNEP EO will prepare a **quality assessment** of the zero draft and final draft report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against both GEF and UNEP criteria as presented in Annex 4.

72. The UNEP Evaluation Office will also prepare a **commentary** on the final evaluation report, which presents the EO ratings of the project based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation team and the internal consistency of the report. These ratings are the final ratings that the UNEP Evaluation Office will submit to the GEF Office of Evaluation.

G. Resources and Schedule of the Evaluation

73. This Mid-term Evaluation will be undertaken by an independent evaluation consultant contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and they will consult with the EO on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility to arrange for his/her travel, obtain documentary evidence, meetings with stakeholders, field visits, and any other logistical matters related to their assignment. The UNEP Task Manager, BEST Commission and NISP Partners

will provide logistical support (introductions, meetings, transport, lodging etc.) for the country visits where necessary, allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

74. The **Consultant** will be hired for 6 weeks spread over a period of three months. (S)He will travel to The Bahamas in May 2012. This will include a 1 week Mission to the project in The Bahamas. Please refer to Annex 7 for a breakdown of the evaluation schedule.

H. Schedule of Payment

Fee Only Contract

75. The consultant will be hired under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) and is NOT inclusive of all expenses such as airfares, in-country travel, accommodation, incidental and terminal expenses. Air tickets will be paid separately by UNEP and 75% of the DSA for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel and communication costs will be reimbursed on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

76. The Consultant will receive 40% of the honorarium portion of his/her fee upon acceptance of a draft report deemed complete and of acceptable quality by the EO. The remainder will be paid upon satisfactory completion of the work.

77. In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these TORs, in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

78. If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. within one month after the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

Annex 1. Annotated Table of Contents of the Main Report

Project Identification Table	An updated version of Table 1 in section I.A. of these TORs
Executive Summary	Overview of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. It should encapsulate the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons. The main points for each evaluation parameter should be presented here (with a summary ratings table), as well as the most important lessons and recommendations. Maximum 4 pages.
I. Evaluation Background	
A. Context	A. Overview of the broader institutional and country context, in relation to the project's objectives.
B. The Project	B. Presentation of the project: rationale, objectives, components, intervention areas and target groups, milestones in design, implementation and completion, implementation arrangements and main partners, financing (amounts and sources), modifications to design before or during implementation.
C. Evaluation objectives, scope and methodology	C. Presentation of the evaluation's purpose, evaluation criteria and key questions, evaluation timeframe, data collection and analysis instruments used, places visited, types of stakeholders interviewed, and limitations of the evaluation.
II. Project Performance and Impact	
A. Attainment of objectives and planned results B. Sustainability and catalytic role C. Processes affecting attainment of project results D. Complementarity with UNEP programmes and strategies	This section is organized according to the 4 categories of evaluation criteria (see section D of these TORs) and provides factual evidence relevant to the questions asked and sound analysis and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report. Ratings are provided at the end of the assessment of each evaluation criterion.
III. Conclusions and Recommendations	
A. Conclusions	This section should summarize the main findings of the evaluation, told in a logical sequence from cause to effect. It is suggested to start with the positive achievements and a short explanation why these could be achieved, and, then, to present the less successful aspects of the project with a short explanation why. The conclusions section should end with the overall assessment of the project. Findings should be cross-referenced to the main text of the report (using the paragraph numbering). The overall ratings table should be inserted here (see Annex 2).
B. Lessons Learned	Lessons learned should be anchored in the main findings of the evaluation. In fact, no lessons should appear which are not based upon a conclusion of the evaluation. The number of lessons learned should be limited. Lessons learned are rooted in real project experiences, i.e. based on good practices and successes which could be replicated or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made which should be avoided in the future. Lessons learned must have the potential for wider application and use. Lessons should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and specify the contexts in which they may be useful.
C. Recommendations	As for the lessons learned, all recommendations should be anchored in the conclusions of the report, with proper cross-referencing, and their number should be limited to 5 or 6. Recommendations are actionable proposals on how to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities), specific in terms of who would do what and when, and set a measurable performance target. In some cases, it might be useful to propose options, and briefly analyze the pros and cons of each option.
Annexes	These may include additional material deemed relevant by the evaluator but must include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation TORs 2. Evaluation program, containing the names of locations visited and the names (or functions) of people met 3. Bibliography 4. Summary co-finance information and a statement of project expenditure by activity (See annex 3 of these TORs) 5. Details of the project's 'impact pathways' and the 'ROtI' analysis

	<p>6. Technical working papers 7. Brief CVs of the consultant</p> <p>MTE reports will also include any formal response/ comments from the project management team and/ or the country focal point regarding the evaluation findings or conclusions as an annex to the report, however, such will be appended to the report by UNEP Evaluation Office.</p>
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Examples of UNEP GEF project Evaluation Reports are available at www.unep.org/eou.

ANNEX 2. EVALUATION RATINGS

The evaluation will provide individual ratings for the evaluation criteria described in section II.D. of these TORs. Some criteria contain sub-criteria which require separate ratings (i.e. sustainability and M&E). Furthermore, an aggregated rating will be provided for Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency under the category “Attainment of project objectives and results”.

Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU).

In the conclusions section of the report, ratings will be presented together in a table, with a brief justification cross-referenced to the findings in the main body of the report. Please note that the order of the evaluation criteria in the table will be slightly different from the order these are treated in the main report; this is to facilitate comparison and aggregation of ratings across GEF project evaluation reports.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Attainment of project objectives and results		HS → HU
1. Effectiveness		HS → HU
2. Relevance		HS → HU
3. Efficiency		HS → HU
B. Sustainability of project outcomes		HL → HU
1. Financial		HL → HU
2. Socio-political		HL → HU
3. Institutional framework		HL → HU
4. Environmental		HL → HU
C. Catalytic role		HS → HU
D. Stakeholders involvement		HS → HU
E. Country ownership / driven-ness		HS → HU
F. Achievement of outputs and activities		HS → HU
G. Preparation and readiness		HS → HU
H. Implementation approach		HS → HU
I. Financial planning and management		HS → HU
J. Monitoring and Evaluation		HS → HU
1. M&E Design		HS → HU
2. M&E Plan Implementation		HS → HU
3. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities		HS → HU
K. UNEP Supervision and backstopping		HS → HU

Rating of Attainment of project objectives and results. A compound rating is given to the category based on the assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. This aggregated rating is not a simple average of the separate ratings given to the evaluation criteria, but an overall judgement by the consultants. Relevance and effectiveness, however, will be considered as critical criteria. This means that the aggregated rating for Attainment of objectives and results may not be higher than the lowest rating on either of these two criteria.

Ratings on sustainability. According to the GEF Office of Evaluation, all the dimensions of sustainability are deemed critical. Therefore, the overall rating for sustainability will not be higher than the lowest rating on the separate dimensions.

Ratings of monitoring and evaluation. The M&E system will be rated on M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and budgeting and funding for M&E activities (the latter sub-criterion is covered in the main report under M&E design) as follows:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Satisfactory(S): There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Unsatisfactory (U): There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The Project had no M&E system.

M&E plan implementation will be considered critical for the overall assessment of the M&E system. Thus, the overall rating for M&E will not be higher than the rating on M&E plan implementation.

Annex 3. Project costs and co-financing tables

Project Costs

Component/sub-component	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)

Co-financing

Co-financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Government (mill US\$)		Other* (mill US\$)		Total (mill US\$)		Total Disbursed (mill US\$)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
- Grants									
- Loans									
- Credits									
- Equity investments									
- In-kind support									
- Other (*)									
-									
-									
TOTALS									

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

Annex 4. Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

All UNEP evaluation reports are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the draft evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

GEF Report Quality Criteria	UNEP EO Assessment	Rating
A. Did the report present an assessment of relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives in the context of the focal area program indicators if applicable?		
B. Was the report consistent and the evidence complete and convincing and were the ratings substantiated when used?		
C. Did the report present a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes?		
D. Were the lessons and recommendations supported by the evidence presented?		
E. Did the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?		
F. Did the report include an assessment of the quality of the project M&E system and its use for project management?		
UNEP additional Report Quality Criteria		
G. Quality of the lessons: Were lessons readily applicable in other contexts? Did they suggest prescriptive action?		
H. Quality of the recommendations: Did recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented? Did the recommendations specify a goal and an associated performance indicator?		
I. Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)		
J. Did the report structure follow EOU guidelines, were all requested Annexes included?		
K. Were all evaluation aspects specified in the TORs adequately addressed?		
L. Was the report delivered in a timely manner		

$$\text{Quality} = (2*(0.3*(A + B) + 0.1*(C+D+E+F)) + 0.3*(G + H) + 0.1*(I+J+K+L))/3$$

The Totals are rounded and converted to the scale of HS to HU

Rating system for quality of Evaluation reports: A number rating between 1 and 6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1.

Annex 5. Documentation list for the evaluation to be provided by the UNEP Task Manager and BEST National Project Coordinator, and NISP Partners

- Project design documents
- Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
- Supervision mission reports
- Project progress reports
- Financial reports
- Project revision documentation including budget revisions (as applicable)
- Correspondence and Management memos related to project (as applicable)
- Other documentation of supervision feedback on project outputs and processes (e.g. comments on draft progress reports, etc.).

Annex 6. Introduction to Theory of Change / Impact pathways, the ROI Method and the ROI Results Score sheet

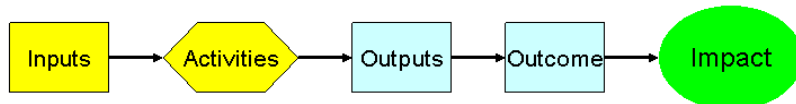
Terminal evaluations of projects are conducted at, or shortly after, project completion. At this stage it is normally possible to assess the achievement of the project’s outputs. However, the possibilities for evaluation of the project’s outcomes are often more limited and the feasibility of assessing project **impacts** at this time is usually severely constrained. Full impacts often accrue only after considerable time-lags, and it is common for there to be a lack of long-term baseline and monitoring information to aid their evaluation. Consequently, substantial resources are often needed to support the extensive primary field data collection required for assessing impact and there are concomitant practical difficulties because project resources are seldom available to support the assessment of such impacts when they have accrued – often several years after completion of activities and closure of the project.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to enhance the scope and depth of information available from Terminal Evaluations on the achievement of results **through rigorous review of project progress along the pathways from outcome to impact**. Such reviews identify the sequence of conditions and factors deemed necessary for project outcomes to yield impact and assess the current status of and future prospects for results. In evaluation literature these relationships can be variously described as ‘Theories of Change’, Impact ‘Pathways’, ‘Results Chains’, ‘Intervention logic’, and ‘Causal Pathways’ (to name only some!).

Theory of Change (ToC) / impact pathways

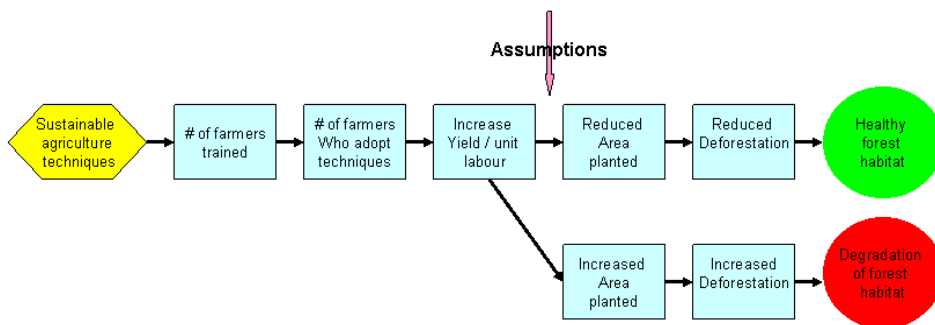
Figure 1 shows a generic impact pathway which links the standard elements of project logical frameworks in a graphical representation of causal linkages. When specified with more detail, for example including the key users of outputs, the processes (the arrows) that lead to outcomes and with details of performance indicators, analysis of impact pathways can be invaluable as a tool for both project planning and evaluation.

Figure 1. A generic results chain, which can also be termed an ‘Impact Pathway’ or Theory of Change.



The pathways summarise casual relationships and help identify or clarify the assumptions in the intervention logic of the project. For example, in the Figure 2 below the eventual impact depends upon the behaviour of the farmers in using the new agricultural techniques they have learnt from the training. The project design for the intervention might be based on the upper pathway assuming that the farmers can now meet their needs from more efficient management of a given area therefore reducing the need for an expansion of cultivated area and ultimately reducing pressure on nearby forest habitat, whereas the evidence gathered in the evaluation may in some locations follow the lower of the two pathways; the improved faming methods offer the possibility for increased profits and create an incentive for farmers to cultivate more land resulting in clearance or degradation of the nearby forest habitat.

Figure 2. An impact pathway / TOC for a training intervention intended to aid forest conservation.



The GEF Evaluation Office has recently developed an approach that builds on the concepts of theory of change / causal chains / impact pathways. The method is known as Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROI)³⁷ and has three distinct stages:

- a. Identifying the project's intended impacts
- b. Review of the project's logical framework
- c. Analysis and modelling of the project's outcomes-impact pathways

The **identification of the projects intended impacts** should be possible from the 'objectives' statements specified in the official project document. The next stage is to **review the project's logical framework** to assess whether the design of the project is consistent with, and appropriate for, the delivery of the intended impact. The method requires verification of the causal logic between the different hierarchical levels of the logical framework moving 'backwards' from impacts through outcomes to the outputs; the activities level is not formally considered in the ROI method³⁸. The aim of this stage is to develop an understanding of the causal logic of the project intervention and to identify the key 'impact pathways'. In reality such process are often complex; they often involve multiple actors and decision-processes and are subject to time-lags, meaning that project impact often accrue long after the completion of project activities.

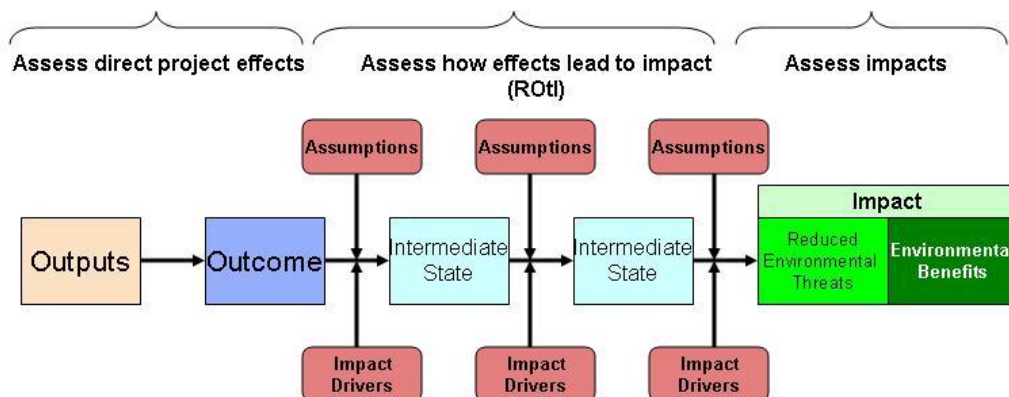
The third stage involves analysis of the 'impact pathways' that link project outcomes to impacts. The pathways are analysed in terms of the '**assumptions**' and '**impact drivers**' that underpin the processes involved in the transformation of outcomes to impacts via **intermediate states** (see Figure 3). Project outcomes are the direct intended results stemming from the outputs, and they are likely to occur either towards the end of the project or in the short term following project completion. **Intermediate states** are the transitional conditions between the project's immediate outcomes and the intended impact. They are necessary conditions for the achievement of the intended impacts and there may be more than one intermediate state between the immediate project outcome and the eventual impact.

Impact drivers are defined as the significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts and **can be influenced** by the project / project partners & stakeholders. **Assumptions** are the significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts but are largely **beyond the control of the project** / project partners & stakeholders. The impact drivers and assumptions are ordinarily considered in Terminal Evaluations when assessing the sustainability of the project.

Since project logical frameworks do not often provide comprehensive information on the processes by which project outputs yield outcomes and eventually lead, via 'intermediate states' to impacts, the impact pathways need to be carefully examined and the following questions addressed:

- o Are there other causal pathways that would stem from the use of project outputs by other potential user groups?
- o Is (each) impact pathway complete? Are there any missing intermediate states between project outcomes and impacts?
- o Have the key impact drivers and assumptions been identified for each 'step' in the impact pathway.

Figure 3. A schematic 'impact pathway' showing intermediate states, assumptions and impact drivers (adapted from GEF EO 2009).

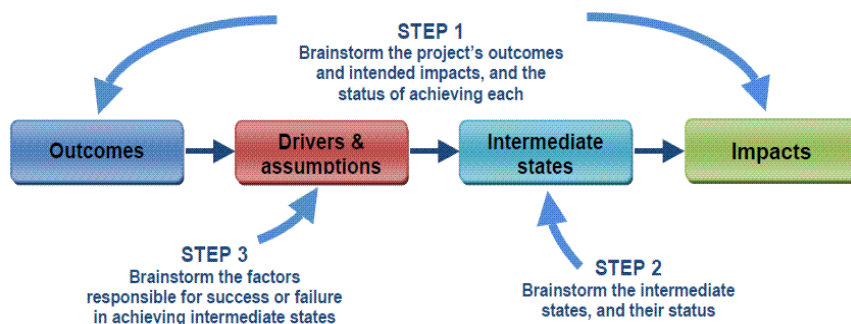


³⁷ GEF Evaluation Office (2009). ROI: Review of Outcomes to Impacts Practitioners Handbook. [http://www.gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/Evaluation Office/OPS4/Roti%20Practitioners%20Handbook%2015%20June%202009.pdf](http://www.gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/Evaluation%20Office/OPS4/Roti%20Practitioners%20Handbook%2015%20June%202009.pdf)

³⁸ Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources to generate outputs is already a major focus within UNEP Terminal Evaluations.

The process of identifying the impact pathways and specifying the impact drivers and assumptions can be done as a desk exercise by the evaluator or, preferably, as a group exercise, led by the evaluator with a cross-section of project stakeholders as part of an evaluation field mission or both. Ideally, the evaluator would have done a desk-based assessment of the project's theory of change and then use this understanding to facilitate a group exercise. The group exercise is best done through collective discussions to develop a visual model of the impact pathways using a card exercise. The component elements (outputs, outcomes, impact drivers, assumptions intended impacts etc.) of the impact pathways are written on individual cards and arranged and discussed as a group activity. Figure 4 below shows the suggested sequence of the group discussions needed to develop the ToC for the project.

Figure 4. Suggested sequencing of group discussions (from GEF EO 2009)



Once the theory of change model for the project is complete the evaluator can assess the design of the project intervention and collate evidence that will inform judgments on the extent and effectiveness of implementation, through the evaluation process. Performance judgments are made always noting that project contexts can change and that adaptive management is required during project implementation.

The ROTI method requires ratings for outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the 'intermediate states' at the time of the evaluation. According to the GEF guidance on the method; *"The rating system is intended to recognize project preparation and conceptualization that considers its own assumptions, and that seeks to remove barriers to future scaling up and out. Projects that are a part of a long-term process need not at all be "penalized" for not achieving impacts in the lifetime of the project: the system recognizes projects' forward thinking to eventual impacts, even if those impacts are eventually achieved by other partners and stakeholders, albeit with achievements based on present day, present project building blocks."* For example, a project receiving an "AA" rating appears likely to deliver impacts, while for a project receiving a "DD" this would seem unlikely, due to low achievement in outcomes and the limited likelihood of achieving the intermediate states needed for eventual impact (see Table 1).

Table 1. Rating scale for outcomes and progress towards 'intermediate states'

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project's intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

Thus a project will end up with a two letter rating e.g. AB, CD, BB etc. In addition the rating is given a '+' notation if there is evidence of impacts accruing within the life of the project. The possible rating permutations are then translated onto the usual six point rating scale used in all UNEP project evaluations in the following way.

Table 2. Shows how the ratings for 'achievement of outcomes' and 'progress towards intermediate states translate to ratings for the 'Overall likelihood of impact achievement' on a six point scale.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

In addition, projects that achieve documented changes in environmental status during the project’s lifetime receive a positive impact rating, indicated by a “+”. The overall likelihood of achieving impacts is shown in Table 11 below (a + score above moves the double letter rating up one space in the 6-point scale).

The ROtI method provides a basis for comparisons across projects through application of a rating system that can indicate the expected impact. However it should be noted that whilst this will provide a relative scoring for all projects assessed, it does not imply that the results from projects can necessarily be aggregated. Nevertheless, since the approach yields greater clarity in the ‘results metrics’ for a project, opportunities where aggregation of project results might be possible can more readily be identified.

Results rating of project entitled:							
		Rating (D – A)		Rating (D – A)		Rating (+)	Overall
Outputs	Outcomes		Intermediary		Impact (GEBs)		
1.	1.		1.		1.		
2.	2.		2.		2.		
3.	3.		3.		3.		
	Rating justification:		Rating justification:		Rating justification:		

Scoring Guidelines

The achievement of **Outputs** is largely assumed. Outputs are such concrete things as training courses held, numbers of persons trained, studies conducted, networks established, websites developed, and many others. Outputs reflect where and for what project funds were used. These were not rated: projects generally succeed in spending their funding.

Outcomes, on the other hand, are the first level of intended results stemming from the outputs. Not so much the number of persons trained; but how many persons who then demonstrated that they have gained the intended knowledge or skills. Not a study conducted; but one that could change the evolution or development of the project. Not so much a network of NGOs established; but that the network showed potential for functioning as intended. A sound outcome might be genuinely improved strategic planning in SLM stemming from workshops, training courses, and networking.

Examples

Funds were spent, outputs were produced, but nothing in terms of outcomes was achieved. People attended training courses but there is no evidence of increased capacity. A website was developed, but no one used it. (Score – D)

Outcomes achieved but are dead ends; no forward linkages to intermediary stages in the future. People attended training courses, increased their capacities, but all left for other jobs shortly after; or were not given opportunities to apply their new skills. A website was developed and was used, but achieved little or nothing of what was intended because users had no resources or incentives to apply the tools and methods proposed on the website in their job. (Score – C)

Outcomes plus implicit linkages forward. Outcomes achieved and have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and decisions made among a loose network is documented that should lead to better planning. Improved capacity is in place and should lead to desired intermediate outcomes. Providing implicit linkages to intermediary stages is probably the most common case when outcomes have been achieved. (Score - B)

Outcomes plus explicit linkages forward. Outcomes have *definite and explicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts. An alternative energy project may result in solar panels installed that reduced reliance on local wood fuels, with the outcome quantified in terms of reduced C emissions. Explicit forward linkages are easy to recognize in being concrete, but are relatively uncommon. (Score A)

Intermediary stages:

The **intermediate stage** indicates achievements that lead to Global Environmental Benefits, especially if the potential for scaling up is established.

“Outcomes” scored C or D. If the outcomes above scored C or D, there is no need to continue forward to score intermediate stages given that achievement of such is then not possible.

In spite of outcomes and implicit linkages, and follow-up actions, the project dead-ends. Although outcomes achieved have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts, the project dead-ends. Outcomes turn out to be insufficient to move the project towards intermediate stages and to the eventual achievement of GEBs. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and among participants in a network never progresses further. The implicit linkage based on follow-up never

materializes. Although outcomes involve, for example, further participation and discussion, such actions do not take the project forward towards intended intermediate impacts. People have fun getting together and talking more, but nothing, based on the implicit forward linkages, actually eventuates. (Score = D)

The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced result, barriers and/or unmet assumptions may still exist. In spite of sound outputs and in spite of explicit forward linkages, there is limited possibility of intermediary stage achievement due to barriers not removed or unmet assumptions. This may be the fate of several policy related, capacity building, and networking projects: people work together, but fail to develop a way forward towards concrete results, or fail to successfully address inherent barriers. The project may increase ground cover and or carbon stocks, may reduce grazing or GHG emissions; and may have project level recommendations regarding scaling up; but barrier removal or the addressing of fatal assumptions means that scaling up remains limited and unlikely to be achieved at larger scales. Barriers can be policy and institutional limitations; (mis-) assumptions may have to do with markets or public – private sector relationships. (Score = C)

Barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. Intermediary stage(s) planned or conceived have feasible direct and explicit forward linkages to impact achievement; barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. The project achieves measurable intermediate impacts, and works to scale up and out, but falls well short of scaling up to global levels such that achievement of GEBs still lies in doubt. (Score = B)

Scaling up and out over time is possible. Measurable intermediary stage impacts achieved, scaling up to global levels and the achievement of GEBs appears to be well in reach over time. (Score = A)

Impact: Actual changes in environmental status

“Intermediary stages” scored B to A.

Measurable impacts achieved at a globally significant level within the project life-span. . (Score = ‘+’)

Annex 7. Tentative Evaluation Schedule

Milestones	Date	Remarks
Start contract	01 May 2012	
Inception report	09 May 2012	Report to be reviewed by EO
Field work	14-20 May 2012	Does not include visits to the pilot sites however presentations of ongoing activities will be conducted by the project partners
Zero draft report to UNEP EO	4 June 2012	Report to be reviewed by EO
Revised first draft report to EO	15 June 2012	Report is sent out for comments to stakeholders;
Collated stakeholders’ comments sent from EO to consultant	9 July 2012	2 weeks to get comments from stakeholders
Final report	16 July 2012	
End contract	30 July 2012	

Annex 2: Evaluation schedule and people interviewed

Evaluation schedule, May –September 2012

The main steps in this evaluation process to date have been as follows:

- 1 May: contract signed, work initiated
- 14 May: meeting with UNEP Task Manager, and travel to Nassau
- 15 – 19 May: interviews, meetings and review of documents in Nassau
- 21 May – 8 June: additional interviews by phone and Skype, review of documents and preparation of discussion paper
- 11 June: distribution of discussion paper
- 2 – 12 July: additional interviews and requests for missing information and financial data
- 10 – 19 July: preparation of draft final report
- 20 July: submission of draft final report
- August: collection of additional information, review and integration of comments into revised final draft of the report
- 3 September: submission of final draft report

People interviewed

BEST Commission, Government of The Bahamas

- Stacy Lubin-Gray, Environmental Officer
- Rochelle Newbold, National Project Coordinator, Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected Area Network – The Bahamas project
- Philip Weech, Director

Bahamas National Trust

- Eric Carey, Executive Director
- Lynn Gape, Deputy Executive Director
- Tamica Rahming, Director of Science & Policy
- Krista Sherman, GEF Full Size Project Coordinator

Ministry of the Environment, Government of The Bahamas

- Judy Simmons, Accountant

Ministry of Finance, Government of The Bahamas

- Simon Wilson, Director, Economic Planning

The Nature Conservancy

- Felicity Burrows, Marine Conservation Specialist, Northern Caribbean Office
- Eleanor Phillips, Program Director, Northern Caribbean Program
- Robert Weary, Director, Conservation Finance, Caribbean Program

UNEP

- Sharira Khawaja, Fund Management Officer, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation
- Kristin McLaughlin, Task Manager, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation

- Alessandra Vanzella-Khouri, SPAW Programme Officer, Regional Coordinating Unit, Caribbean Environment Programme

Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) – the German Development Bank

- Martin Lux, Project Manager, Latin America and the Caribbean

Project consultants

- Daniel Brumbaugh, Senior Conservation Scientist, Center for Biodiversity and Conservation, American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA
- Craig Dahlgren, Senior Research Scientist, Perry Institute for Marine Science, Florida, USA
- Sharrah Moss, HD Wells Professional Writing Services, The Bahamas
- Stacey Moultrie, SEV Consulting Group and HD Wells Professional Writing Services, The Bahamas
- Peter Mumby, Australian Coral Reef Society and School of Biological Sciences, University of Queensland, Australia

Other resource people

- Cheryl Dixon, Caribbean Development Bank, Barbados
- Nicole Leotaud, Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, Trinidad and Tobago
- Keith Nichols, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, Belize
- Spencer Thomas, Councillor, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Chairman, Sustainable Development Council, Grenada
- Roxanne Valentine, Project Manager, Strengthening the Operational and Financial Sustainability of the National Protected Area System project, National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), Jamaica

Annex 3: Interview guide

“An evaluation is a systematic and impartial assessment of an intervention. It aims at determining the five major criteria of relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the intervention and contributions of the involved partners. The evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful”. (UN evaluation guidance)

1. Knowledge of and role in project?
2. Recent evolution of protected areas “landscape” in the Bahamas: awareness, policy, behaviour, institutions, capacity, planning, budgets and investments, implementation and management effectiveness?
3. How much of that evolution is attributable to the project? What is the evidence? Did the project make the right choices? Use the right process? How does the project fit in that larger “landscape”?
4. What is the relevance of sustainable financing initiatives to the current and future needs and priorities of protected areas in the Bahamas?
5. What is the relevance of improving management effectiveness to the current and future needs and priorities of protected areas in the Bahamas?
6. What is the relevance of expanding protected area coverage to the current and future needs and priorities of protected areas in the Bahamas?
7. Contribution of the project to GEF strategies and objectives?
8. What have been the main activities and outputs? How effective?
9. Comments on efficiency of project implementation: any issue? any strong point? anything that should have been done differently? better?
10. Comments on the process of project design: who took the initiative? who was involved and who was not? how were choices made?
11. Comments on the contents of project design: suitable? realistic? any issues? any strong points?
12. The actors and the partnerships in project implementation: who is involved? who is not involved but should be? how strong and durable are the partnerships?
13. The role of UNEP, project supervision and support, how effective and efficient?
14. The future: what next? how sustainable are current and planned project activities?
15. Lessons learned? Reflections on the concepts and the initial assumptions?

Annex 4: Bibliography

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Letter of commitment from KfW, sent by Stefan Rischer, Principal Project Manager and Lutz Horn-Haacke, Senior Project Manager to Hon. Earl Deveaux, Minister of the Environment, dated 29 April 2009

Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) for the Medium Size Project “Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected Network”, signed by UNEP and the BEST Commission

Advice of the UNEP Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) on a lionfish control project within GEF project 3729, Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected Area Network (The Bahamas); and GEF project 3813, Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean (Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago), 19 June 2009

Final Report: Consultancy as STAP Representative to GEF Projects in the Bahamas Inception Workshop. March 2010. Submitted and presented by John W. McManus

Annual Work Plans submitted by BEST, BNT, DMR and TNC

Work Plan for Conservation Planning Consultancy, May 2012.

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Jamison E., S. Moultrie and S. Lubin-Gray. 2009. Protected area management effectiveness in The Bahamas: Establishing a monitoring baseline and prioritising actions for improvement

METT data files, 2009.

Sakonnet Group. 2009. Bahamas Marine Reserve Initiative, Communications Plan. DRAFT

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Project Supervision Plan

The Bahamas Protected Areas Fund Bill, 2011. A Bill for an Act to Provide for the Establishment and Regulation of the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund and for Matters Connected Thereto.

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Documents related to the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund

Caribbean Biodiversity Fund: Sustainable financing for PA systems. PowerPoint presentation by Spencer Thomas and Robert Weary, February 2010

Aide Mémoire, Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, Preparation mission, Washington, DC and Barbados, March 23 - 25, 2010

Operational Manual for the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. Draft version of 21 May 2012.

Articles of Association of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. Confidential draft version of 21 May 2012.

Miscellaneous correspondence related to the creation, incorporation and operations of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund

Documents related to SPAW and to the Caribbean Challenge

UNEP-CAR/RCU. Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol and Wildlife Newsletter, No. 6, May 2012

Supporting the Caribbean Challenge: linking sites, connecting managers & building capacity, PowerPoint presentation by UNEP-CAR/RCU, March 2010.

UNEP Factsheet on the Caribbean Challenge. March 2010.

Caribbean Challenge Initiative, An effort to safeguard the Insular Caribbean's marine and coastal environment for future generations. Overview document published by The Nature Conservancy and CaMPAM (under UNEP), 2012

Gombos, M., A. Arrivillaga, D. Wusinich-Mendez, B. Glazer, S. Frew, G. Bustamante, E. Doyle, A. Vanzella-Khoury, A. Acosta, B. Causey, C. Rolli and J. Brown. 2011. A Management Capacity Assessment of Selected Coral Reef Marine Protected Areas in the Caribbean. Commissioned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP), the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) and by the UNEP-CEP Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM).

Miscellaneous documents related to protected areas in The Bahamas

Thurlow, K.G. and M. Palmer. 2007. The Bahamas Ecological Gap Analysis. The Nature Conservancy, Northern Caribbean Program, Nassau, The Bahamas

Exploring the West Side of Andros Island, The Bahamas. A brochure published by The Nature Conservancy, the Bahamas National Trust and Andros Conservancy and Trust. No date.

Miscellaneous documents related to sustainable financing of conservation

Draft versions of studies currently undertaken on behalf of the Conservation Finance Alliance

KfW Guidelines on Conservation Endowment Funds in German Financial Cooperation

Annex 5: Response to comments on the MTE Report

The consultant received detailed and useful comments on the first draft version of this report from UNEP (Evaluation Office and Task Manager) and from all co-executing agencies, as well as from several consultants. Most comments came in the form of corrections and additional information, for which the evaluator is grateful, and which have been taken into account in the revision of this report. There are however six comments which contradicted the findings of the evaluation, and which are therefore not reflected in this document:

1. With respect to paragraph 42, TNC indicated that the statement is “not true, BPAF could contract out these services to an existing entity”. It is the view of the evaluator that the statement is correct, as the creation of the BPAF as a new entity was indeed part of the design of the project and this section of the report is concerned with the attainment of original objectives. The option of contracting out the services is considered as part of the recommendations.
2. KfW and TNC asked for an updating of the report to indicate that the process of formally registering the CBF is completed, but the evaluator has not received the requested evidence to support this information.
3. TNC commented that part of the information contained in paragraph 108 is incorrect, but the paragraph is based on the text of The Bahamas Protected Areas Fund Bill, 2011 as provided to the evaluator by BEST. The document was carefully reviewed by the evaluator, who can confirm that the information provided in this paragraph is correct.
4. Comments provided by UNEP indicated that statements regarding participation as contained in paragraphs 81, 83 and 87 were somewhat contradictory. The report indeed concludes that processes of protected area planning and management in The Bahamas are not very participatory, and it also says that limited knowledge and ownership of the project beyond a core group of partners cannot be seen as a weakness or a constraint. This is because what matters is not the ownership of the project *per se*, what matters is awareness of and participation in protected area planning and management in the country. Efforts have been made in the revision of the report to clarify the points made.
5. TNC commented that the “report does not address the fact that the UNEP GEF project was to also develop other sustainable finance mechanisms besides the BPAF, yet this is never addressed in the document (key shortcoming)”. This is incorrect. The project was expected to develop “complementary sources of conservation finance”, according to the project document and the PCA, not other sustainable finance mechanisms. The report looks at the project’s performance with respect to the complementary sources of conservation finance.
6. TNC also commented that “The Bahamas MTE should only focus on the issues in the Bahamas and not elsewhere”, but it is the view of this evaluator, confirmed by his findings and by most reviewers of the first draft version of this report, that this project, and especially its Component 1, could not be examined outside of the regional context, and especially the role, impact and expected of the CBF. Indeed, both KfW and TNC also noted that the CBF should be considered as a suitable financing mechanism for The Bahamas.
7. Unattributed quotes have been used in this report to illustrate specific points. Two reviewers asked for these to be either attributed or removed. The author however decided to keep them in this final draft,

because quotes help to make a text more readable. It would not however be possible to attribute them, as interviewees were told that their statements and opinions would not be attributed.

8. TNC disagreed with the views provided in footnote 18, indicating that results of a “survey which was completed for the Bahamas [...] clearly demonstrated that visitors are willing to pay a fee to help manage the Bahamas protected area system”. This information is useful, but it is not pertinent to the point made in that footnote and in paragraph 108, the point that is made there refers to the reluctance of Caribbean governments to introduce additional taxation on tourism, a position that has been explicitly taken by the Government of The Bahamas.

Annex 6: Co-finance information and statement of project expenditure by activity

Project Costs³⁹

Component/sub-component	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost (at 31 March 2012)	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
1. Sustainable funding			
Consultants	43,500	12,000	27.59
Meetings	17,500	1,375	7.86
BPAF capitalisation	500,000	0	0
2. MPA network strengthening			
Consultants	127,000	17,400	13.70
Training and meetings	45,000	60	0.13
Pilot project (BNT)	320,000	124,610	38.94
Pilot project (DMR)	261,000	20,000	7.66
Pilot project (TNC)	340,000	51,237	15.07
3. M&E			
Reef Check training	51,000	22,535	44.19
Management effectiveness	15,000	0	0
MPA capacity-building	210,000	0	0
4. Project management:			
Project personnel	130,000	56,055	43.12
Audits	19,000	2,250	11.84
Evaluations	35,000	0	-
Other	86,000	3,936	4.58
TOTAL	2,200,000	311,458	14.16

Co-financing⁴⁰

³⁹ Total figures for the various components have been broken down to provide the information that is the most significant for the purpose of this evaluation.

Co financing (Type/Source)	UNEP Financing		Government (BEST, DMR)		Other (KfW, BNT TNC)		Total		Total Disbursed
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Grants	0	\$70,426			0	\$1,040,000 ⁴¹		\$1,445,426	\$1,445,426
Loans									
Credits									
Equity investments									
In-kind support			\$510,000	(BEST - 218,310 DMR- 22,832) \$241,143	\$250,000	(BNT- \$100,078 +TNC 1,760) \$101,838	\$760,000	\$342,981	342,981
Cash			\$2,000,800	(DMR) \$400 ⁴²	\$5,000,800	(BNT) \$83,710 ⁴³	\$7,001,600	\$84,110	\$84,110
Totals	0	\$70,426	\$2,510,000	\$241,543	\$5,250,800	\$1,225,548	\$7,761,600	\$1,537,517	\$1,537,517

⁴⁰ These figures are from a final but unsigned version of the report on the status of co-financing contributions at 30 June 2012.

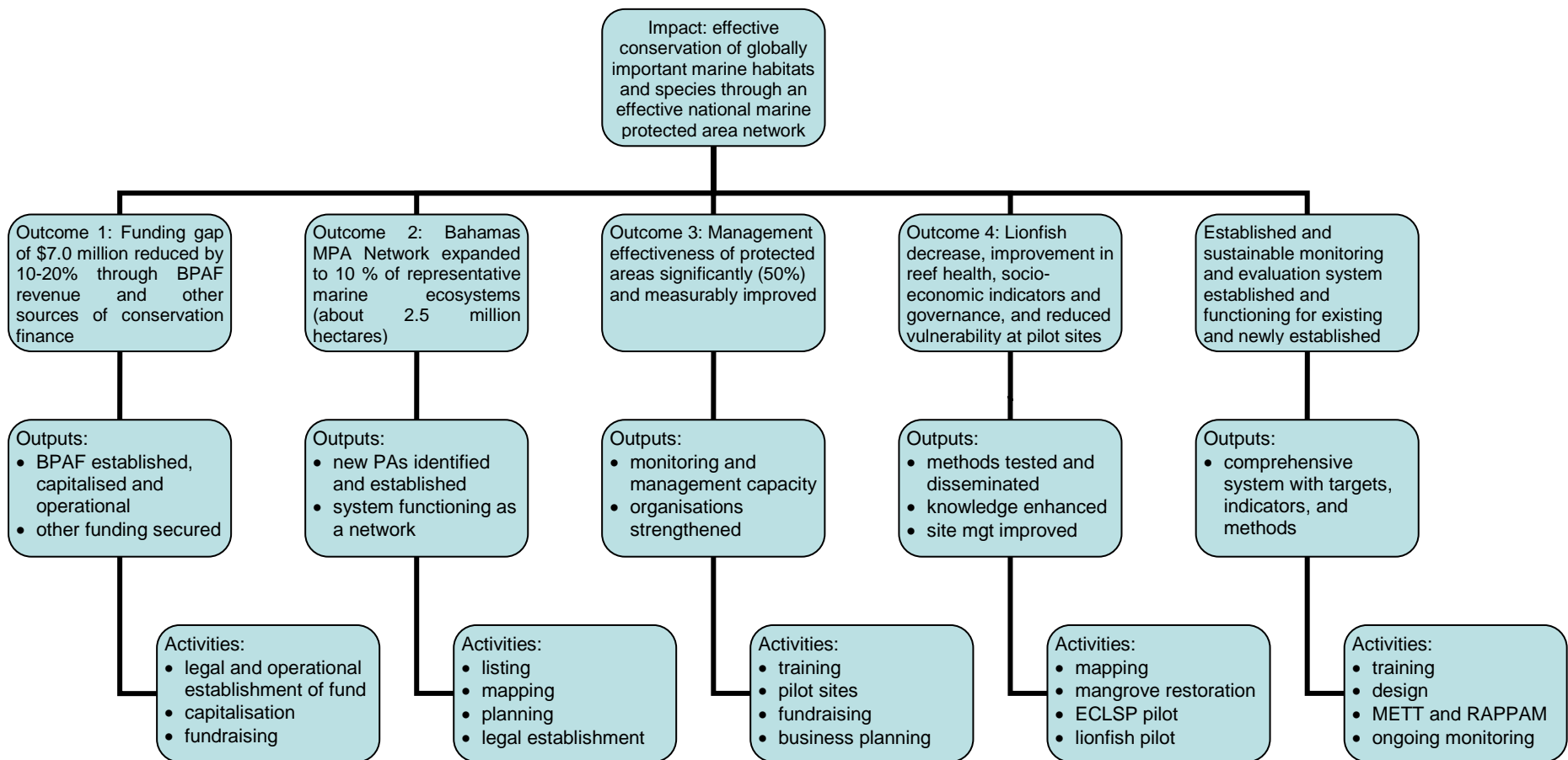
⁴¹ These additional 3 grants were raised by TNC from three foundations (WAITT, Kernzer and Summit) and used for the purposes of closing the funding gap for conservation finance as per outcome 1.

⁴² The report on the status of co-financing contributions at 30 June 2012 also includes the current year's commitment from the Treasury of The Bahamas for an installment \$500,000 to the BPAF, but this figure has not been taken into account here, as there is no evidence that these funds are available and have been budgeted for the current fiscal year.

⁴³ The report on the status of co-financing contributions at 30 June 2012 also includes \$667,000 which TNC has raised for the CBF and has indicatively set aside for The Bahamas (as per e-mail from TNC to the UNEP Task Manager). This figure is however not included here, as the evaluation did not obtain evidence that these funded are indeed available, and as funds earmarked for the CBF could not in any case be considered as a co-financing for this project.

Annex 7: Review of theory of change and outcomes to impacts

The project’s overall theory of change (ToC) proposes that the effective conservation of the globally important biodiversity of The Bahamas can be achieved through five complementary outcomes, as described in the diagram below. At this stage in project execution, it is not possible to assess fully the validity of this TOC, but information available to this evaluation suggests that it is indeed valid, that the simultaneous achievement of the five outcomes, if realised, would bring the desired impact, and that the outputs and activities, if implemented efficiently and effectively, are generally adequate to realise these outcomes.



At this stage in project execution, it is only possible to rate the outcomes and to assess the likelihood of outputs realising the outcomes at end-of-project. One of the weaknesses in project design is that – as is so often the case in such projects – the goal that is stated in the project document is extremely broad, and not measurable; it would be desirable to translate it into biodiversity conservation impacts, but this will become possible only when the monitoring and evaluation system (outcome 5) has been established. Indeed, it is one of the conclusions of this evaluation that substantial effort should now be devoted to the design and setting up of the comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system, with the translation of the broad goal of biodiversity conservation and of the broad target of 20% protected area coverage into more specific, measurable targets. In doing so, one challenge will be to consider the project’s focus on biodiversity of global importance, and to develop criteria for this purpose.

There are two specific pathways that are at the core of this TOC and that can be analysed at this stage.

Pathway 1: The establishment of a national protected areas fund will lead to a significant reduction in funding gap, and a reduction in funding gap will lead to improved conservation of biodiversity

Intermediate states and status:

- design of fund: done, with a few remaining questions and issues
- legal establishment of fund: not done
- setting up of fund’s technical and administrative operations: not done
- capitalisation of fund: not done

Assumptions	Review of assumptions
The co-financing partners will meet their commitments as stated in the project document	Contrary to what is stated in the project document, one co-financing partner did not make a commitment to capitalise the national fund Another co-financing partner has indicated that it will not meet its commitment Funding from the Government of The Bahamas is not immediately available
The fund will attract enough capital to generate sufficient revenue to achieve a significant reduction in the funding gap	Funding currently available will not be sufficient, and the pathway will be realised only if the co-financing partners keep their original commitments
The fund will attract enough capital to generate the level of revenue required to finance its operations as an independent body	Funding currently available will not be sufficient to cover operational costs
The fund will attract revenue, in addition to the contribution of this project’s co-financing partners	The current economic and financial environment is very unfavourable to the capitalisation of a conservation trust fund

Assumptions	Review of assumptions
The fund will be complemented by other funding sources	The project and its partners have actually been far more successful at generating funding from more traditional, philanthropic sources and from in-cash and in-kind contributions from local communities, civil societies and the private sector

Drivers	Review of drivers
External economic and financial environment	This environment has become very unfavourable to the type of financing mechanism promoted by the project
Public policies in The Bahamas	While political pronouncements have been and are made in support of the financing mechanism, these have not always been matched by policy and budgetary decisions, and current economic and fiscal priorities in the countries do not create favourable conditions for public investment in a conservation trust fund
External support to conservation in The Bahamas	This remains strong, and creates favourable conditions for project-type funding, but far less for investments into a trust fund, as foundations and bilateral organisations are more inclined to support specific activities with identifiable outputs and results

The main conditions and factors required for project output to yield outcomes (with the assumption that these outcomes will yield impacts) are:

- internal to the project:
 - respect of original commitment by co-financing partners
 - early legal establishment of BPAF
 - capitalisation according to original financing plan
- external to the project:
 - budget allocations
 - improved fiscal and economic performance

Pathway 2: Increased knowledge and capacity will lead to increased coverage of protected areas, and increased coverage of protected areas will lead to improved conservation of biodiversity

Intermediate states and status:

- assessments of management effectiveness: done

- identification of sites to be declared as protected areas: done
- data gathering at pilot sites: ongoing
- formulation of management plans and legal instruments for selected sites: ongoing, done for one Marine Reserve
- provision of training in specific monitoring techniques: ongoing, about to be completed for Reef Check training, other areas to be identified in current conservation planning consultancy
- identification of training needs and design and implementation of training programme for enhancement of management effectiveness: not done

Assumptions	Review of assumptions
Data will be available to inform planning decisions	Information base incomplete. The project would benefit from a country-wide exercise to complete the mapping of reefs and mangroves and the assessment of ecosystem resilience
There is organisational capacity to implement planning decisions and sustain management	There is strong capacity in the country, and the project is contributing to building it, but there are significant budgeting constraints
The results obtained in the pilot projects will be replicable at national level	It is doubtful that pilot project 1 will produce replicable results It is doubtful that the mangrove restoration component of pilot project 2 will produce replicable results Project 3 is already yielding replicable results
Partners agencies and other actors in the field of conservation in The Bahamas executed activities that are complementary and supportive of the project	There are indeed several research and conservation programmes, projects and organisations that complement the work of this project, and that will contribute to the sustainability of its interventions

Drivers	Review of drivers
Economic performance and its impact on fiscal revenue	Constraints exist that limit the capacity of the national budget to support conservation activities
Increased threats to biodiversity	Increased relevance of project

These observations allow for the following ratings:

- outcome rating B – the project’s intended outcomes have not yet been delivered, but could still be delivered by end-of-project. They were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.

- rating on progress toward intermediate states: B – the measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have begun to produce results, but it is too early to tell if they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
- overall likelihood of impact achievement: likely, but only on the conditions that co-financing partners keep their original commitments.

Annex 8: Short biography of the consultant

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Yves Renard works as an independent consultant in sustainable development policy and participatory natural resource management (programme evaluation, policy analysis, facilitation of policy formulation and participatory training exercises, and conduct of review and development processes within organisations involved in resource management and sustainable development). He has a particular interest and extensive experience in participatory approaches to natural resource governance and social development, and in the design of institutions that foster participation and empowerment. Between 1992 and 2001, Yves Renard served as Executive Director of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI). CANARI is a non-governmental organisation that works to foster the development and adoption of policies and programmes in support of increased participation and collaboration in natural resource management.

Since 2002, Yves Renard has been involved in a range of programmes, including: the facilitation of social policy, land policy and environmental policy processes in several Caribbean countries: the coordination of a research project on poverty and the environment; the conduct of a field evaluation, a project design exercise and a training programme in coastal governance in West Africa; the co-facilitation of a regional Caribbean conference on poverty reduction; the conduct of two research projects on tourism policy; and the conduct of short courses, audits, and institutional reviews on behalf of local, national and international organisations. He has also worked on the design of a global programme of action for francophone small island developing states, was part of two evaluation teams of the International Institute for Environment and Development (independent evaluation of a proposal to create a Global Forest Partnership, and evaluation of the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative) and served as team leader for an IIED scoping study of options for investment in Eastern Africa. He has recently assisted IUCN in the design of a Caribbean Initiative and the conduct of a strategic review of its presence in Europe, has evaluated IUCN's energy, ecosystems and livelihoods programme in Oceania and has conducted a review of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the overseas entities of the European Union.

Yves Renard has edited books and published a number of guidelines, articles, papers and reports on issues of natural resource management, sustainable development, culture and community development. He has served and continues to serve on the governing bodies of a number of international, national and community-based organisations. He was the President of the Caribbean Conservation Association between 1995 and 2000, and served as the Caribbean representative on the Council of IUCN in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He is currently the President of Panos Caribbean.

