

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2016

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		2907	
GEF Agency project ID		3424	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Re-engineering the National Protected Area System in Order to Achieve Financial Sustainability	
Country/Countries		Dominican Republic	
Region		LAC	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		SO1-SP1, BD-1	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Managed pilot projects (Asociacion Clemente Melo, and Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano)	
Private sector involvement			
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		December 22 nd , 2009	
Effectiveness date / project start		May 15 th , 2010	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		May 14 th , 2014	
Actual date of project completion		May 14 th , 2015	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	.134	.134
	Co-financing	NA	
GEF Project Grant		3.2	3.03195
Co-financing	IA own	.045	.0325
	Government	.594	1.769945
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	5.0	11.897087
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		3.2	3.16595
Total Co-financing		5.639	13.69953
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		8.839 (from TE)	16.86548
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		October 6, 2015	
Author of TE		Alexandra Fischer	
TER completion date			
TER prepared by		Molly Watts	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)			

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	NA	Satisfactory
Sustainability of Outcomes		Moderately Likely	NA	Moderately Likely
M&E Design		Satisfactory	NA	Satisfactory
M&E Implementation		Satisfactory	NA	Satisfactory
Quality of Implementation		Satisfactory	NA	Satisfactory
Quality of Execution		Satisfactory	NA	Satisfactory
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report		NA	NA	Satisfactory

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project document states that “the global environmental objective of GEF is safeguarding the globally significant biodiversity values of the Dominican Republic.” P.71 Prodoc

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The project’s development objective was the consolidation of the financial sustainability of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS). The three main project outcomes were

- 1) Increased and diversified NPAS funding
- 2) Improved PA management effectiveness and efficiency in priority PAs with highest revenue generation potential
- 3) Co-management arrangements to underwrite PA management costs

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or other activities during implementation?

There were no changes to global environmental objectives, development objectives, or other activities. Some targets were revised following mid-term evaluation.

4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance	Rating: Relevant
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The project was relevant to GEF strategic objective 1: catalyzing the sustainability of protected area systems and Strategic Program 1 (SP-1) Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems at the National Level, as it focuses on addressing inadequate access to reliable funding in protected areas.

The project was also relevant to national development plans, such as the National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, which includes a target focused on strengthening the National Protected Area System by 2016 through implementation of the National Protected Area System Master Plan developed as part of the project.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Satisfactory
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The terminal evaluation rates project results/effectiveness as Satisfactory. This TER agrees with that rating. Although not all output level targets were met, the project was successful in achieving four out of five outcome level targets, notably the establishment of a National Protected Areas Trust Fund (NPATF). The project’s development objective was the consolidation of the financial sustainability of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS).

The project largely achieved its outcome level targets with 4 out of 5 outcome level indicator targets achieved or nearly achieved. In terms of financial capacity of National Protected Areas’ System in Dominican Republic as measured through improvement in the Total Average Score for all protected area sub-systems, scores improved from a baseline of 67 (or 34% of the maximum possible score) to 121 (or 54% of a maximum possible score, just short of the target of a total score of 128.) By the end of the project, the funding gap between available funding and levels needed for management to meet established basic standards for NPAS and PAS had been reduced from 69% to 50%, exceeding the target of reducing the gap to 53%. The number of protected areas in the management effectiveness categories of high, medium and low has not improved, thus this target was not met. Available data suggests that the amount of area with conflicting land cover change in critical terrestrial ecosystems in 18 PAs has been reduced, and that no net negative change in cover in terrestrial ecosystems in the 18 protected areas was registered by the end of the project. The final target, that biological indicators of representative species/ecosystems will be selected during year 1, was also achieved.

The project’s first outcome focused on increasing and diversifying Protected Area financing. This would be achieved by creating sustainable financing strategy and related business plans, operationalizing a protected area patrimonial fund, increasing revenue generated in protected areas through updated visitation fees and improved fee collection, creating a permanent system for valuation of ecosystem benefits and services, creating an online financial management system and fee collection mechanism, and improvement in Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources financial planning and budget execution. The National Protected Areas Trust Fund (NPATF) was established and became operational in 2010. A capital contribution from KfW and TNC, GEF funds and government funding was put into the fund. Of the eight indicators used to track results under this outcomes, three were achieved or exceeded-1) the target of 100,000 in annual funds received by NPAS from innovative financing mechanisms was exceeded, with 573,245\$ generated in 2014, 2)the target of an increase in annual

NPAS revenues from visitor fees to \$2.3m/year was exceeded, with 2.45 million a year in revenues from visitor fees achieved, and an increase in Protected Area Patrimonial Fund equity to at least 3% over the inflation rate was exceeded. Three other indicators were partially achieved, related to improved scores for the Protected Areas on governance frameworks for sustainable PA financing, business planning for cost-effective management, and strengthened tools and systems for revenue generation and mobilization, all as measured using the UNDP Financial scorecard. Two indicators were not achieved—namely an increase in government funds annually expended in NPAS to \$7.1m/year by end of project, and an increase in resources generated by the PA Patrimonial Fund available for investment in PA management above the level of capitalization.

The project’s second outcome was improved Protected Area management effectiveness and efficiency in priority Protected Areas with highest revenue generation potential. Six of the eight targets for this project have been achieved, while another two were partially achieved. Achieved targets related to: strengthened governance framework for sustainable protected areas and strengthened tools and systems for revenue generation as measured by increased scores in UNDP’s financial scorecard, an increase in PA management effectiveness as measured by the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool, an increase by 18 protected areas in the number of PAs with necessary conditions for boosting revenue from visits and other services, an increase in 18 of the number of protected areas with updated or new management plans, and the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system. Targets which were partially achieved were strengthened business planning as measured by an increased score in component 2 of UNDP’s financial scorecard, as well as goals for staffing of technical-administrative NPAS staff with sufficient competence and skills for their role in the protected area system.

The project’s third outcome was co-management arrangements to underwrite PA management costs. Five of six targets under this outcome were reached. The project developed Regulation on the Co-Management of Protected Areas, which was formally approved in 2015, meeting the target of approved rules and procedures for Protected Area co-management by year 1. Additional targets met were the establishment of an operational shared management unit within the Ministry of Environment and the establishment of an operational Shared PA Management Board. The revised target of 3 new and 10 renewed protected area co-management agreements was reached. Additionally, the target of 9 protected areas having legal land ownership by the end of the project was also reached. The project supported the definition and verification of the boundaries of eight pilot protected areas, however they could not be registered in the National Cadastral Survey Register because the state had not yet compensated the legal land owners after designating the PAs. Thus this target was not reached. Finally, the revised target of three pilot projects demonstrating social participation mechanisms and at least 1 private protected area declared by the Ministry managed in accordance with regulations was reached.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Satisfactory
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The terminal evaluation rates efficiency as satisfactory, and this TER agrees with that rating. The project was successful in leveraging substantial co-financing of USD \$13,699,532, more than planned for. Delays

related to hiring consultants in the first years of the project led to a one year extension. The TE also notes that the project was generally cost-effective and that there were no issues with financial management. (TE p.7) 95% of GEF funds were spent by project closure.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Likely
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The TE rates project sustainability overall as moderately likely, finding that efforts to strengthen the governance framework and institutional capacity and establish a National Protected Areas Trust Fund which is already generating funds for reinvestment are strong signs of sustainability. Limitations include the development of deliverables such as the Protected Area business plans later in the project, leaving less time to be institutionalized and implemented.

Financial Sustainability: The TE rates financial sustainability as moderately likely which this TER agrees with, as some moderate risks to financial sustainability exist, while at the same time significant progress has been made toward financial sustainability. The National Protected Areas Trust Fund is significant in terms of contributing to financial sustainability. The Fund is operating and generating interest as of 2015. At the time the TER was written, funding committed through the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund from KfW and TNC was pending signature of a vertical agreement between the Fondo Marena and CBF. Although revenues from the NPAS have nearly doubled during the project lifetime, there have also been budget reductions in the Vice Ministry which have meant that budgetary allocations for NPAS have not necessarily increased. By the end of the project budgetary allocations had largely recovered thanks in part to the project support for improved budget planning.

Institutional and Governance framework: The TE rates sustainability of institutional and governance framework as likely, as the project has successfully strengthened the governance framework. The approval of the co-management regulation in 2015 and the regulation for the declaration of private protected areas or voluntary conservation in 2013 were important to sustainability of project results. The approval of the Law on Payment for Environmental Services is pending approval by the country's Senate, and could provide the regulatory underpinning for the National Strategy for Payment for Environmental Services developed in 2014. In addition to regulation, the Protected Area management plans have also been key tools to guide management at the level of individual protected areas, although four of the 18 have received formal approval. Institutional capacity to manage the protected area system has also been strengthened through capacity building both at the central level and of staff within protected areas. Through the project, some new structures and staff positions have been initiated, indicating the government's commitment to sustaining project results.

Socio-political Sustainability: The TE rates socio-political sustainability as moderately likely, as stakeholders have expressed their commitment to building on project results, though some moderate risks exist. Social support for Protected Area management and biodiversity conservation from nearby communities and society will depend on the effectiveness of business plans, and benefits accruing to communities from co-management and establishment of private reserves. Risks include conflicts related to the pending issue of compensation of community members-this issue will require further attention from the government.

Environmental Sustainability: This element is rated as likely, as no risks were identified to undermine sustainability of results.

5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project achieved greater than expected co-financing, with 13.7 million received compared to an expected 8.6 million. Though details are not provided on what aspects of the project co-financing was used for, the TE notes that this greater than expected co-financing supported the achievement of project results. (TE p.53)

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

There was a one year extension of the project due to delays in the first years in hiring key consultants, and delays throughout the project in finding staff with required expertise. (TE p.53) Thanks to the one year extension, the delay did not affect project outcomes, as the extension provided time to complete deliverables including some Protected Area management and business plans, and to advance negotiations related to the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. (TE p.22) The delivery of these business plans late in the project increased risks to sustainability as it left short time to implement them. Despite this, sustainability of project results is rated as moderately likely.

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

The levels of country ownership varied over the course of the project, increasing over time to satisfactory levels by the project end. In the first few years of the project, it notes that there was insufficient high-level support for the project as it was designed within the ministry, leading to delays in implementation of activities. This support increased substantially, demonstrated in the formal approval of key regulations developed with project support as discussed in the effectiveness section, and the establishment of a Co-Management Unit in the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, a Property Jurisdiction Office, and a PA Maintenance and Signage unit. The government provided co-financing of \$1.8 USD, higher than promised in project documents. Additionally, budget assigned to the Ministry of Environment over the course of the project dipped significantly in 2011-2013 but has since recovered.

6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rates M&E Design at entry as satisfactory. The M&E plan included in the project document includes all relevant activities, including an inception workshop, development of inception report, indicator data collection, steering committee meetings, and mid-term and terminal evaluation reports. A detailed M&E budget is provided, with costs by activity. The results framework includes detailed and relevant indicators. (Prodoc p.75) Some targets, namely those related to changes in scores and number of protected areas included were found to be overly ambitious, and were ultimately revised. (TE p.63)

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rates M&E implementation as satisfactory, which this TER agrees with. The terminal evaluation uses indicator data to support findings, and reports that M&E activities were carried out in a satisfactory manner. From 2012 a full-time M&E specialist was charged with M&E activities and reporting. All relevant M&E activities took place, including the mid-term evaluation which led to specific recommendations which were followed, specifically to modify indicator target levels and to extend the project close date by one year. Project reports and PIRs were completed on time and were of good quality. (TE p.19)

7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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The implementing agency for this project was UNDP. Quality of implementation is rated as satisfactory by the TE and this TER. The project was implemented under the National Implementation Modality with UNDP issuing direct payments to providers. During a four month period when the UNDP country office

was going through internal audit procedures there were some delays in responding with the executing agency, otherwise the UNDP country office was responsive to the EA. UNDP in Dominican Republic has also worked in the past with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources on a number of previous projects, leading to a strong working relationship between the two offices. In terms of project design, aside from some overly ambitious targets project design was sound, and was carried out in a participatory manner with relevant government institutions. (TE p.54)

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The project executing agency was the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Quality of execution is rated as satisfactory by the TE and this TER. According to the TE the Project Management Unit carried out its functions effectively. The PMU worked to ensure that annual deliverables were achieved. The TE finds that delays in hiring key consultants were largely due to lack of high level support and therefore outside of the control of the PMU. The PMU communicated regularly with the UNDP Country office, as well as other governmental departments, and with NGOs that managed pilot projects.

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

Satellite image data from 2012 indicates that there was no loss of wet and moist broad-leaf forested ecosystems compared to project start in the 18 priority protected areas, a positive sign. The area dedicated to short-cycle agriculture was found to have decreased by 2012. 2014 data will be processed in 2015, thus final environmental impacts of the project in this area were not available at the time of the TE. (TE p.60)

8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

As a result of one of the project’s pilot initiatives a carbon offset program was established, with a total of eight producers currently participating in the program who have signed a 10-year agreement with Plan Vivo. (p.33)

In the Francisco Camaano de Deno protected area, the project supported renovations to the Visitor Center with the goal of increasing visitation, including the purchase of solar panels, and supported training and monitoring of a threatened bird species, the *Coccyzus Ruficularis*. A census of protected area users was carried out and training provided on permitted activities. The project also supported construction of a visitor center in the Saltos de Damajagua pilot project, and contributed in various ways to the protected area. (TE p.33)

Finally, the establishment of a Protected Areas Trust Fund has been a significant result of the project. (TE p.61)

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. "Capacities" include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. "Governance" refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems, including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

a) Capacities

The project provided training to 133 park rangers, 70 administrators and 32 provincial directors on skills required for their role in the protected area system. (TE p.47) Scores have increased for legal, policy and regulatory support for revenue sharing within the PA system, legal and regulatory conditions for establishing endowment or trust funds, Economic valuations of PA systems, and improved government budgeting for Protected Area systems, systems for monitoring and reporting on financial management performance, and methods for allocating funds across individual PA sites. (TE p. 38-40)

b) Governance

The Regulation on the Co-Management of Protected Areas developed by the project was formally approved in 2015. Five new co-management agreements were developed and approved during this time as well, all adhering to the new regulation. (TE p.32)

As a result of the project as well, an operational shared management unit within the Ministry of Environment was established as well as an operational Shared PA Management Board. Legal land ownership status was clarified for nine protected areas, while the boundaries of an additional eight were defined, verified and physically delineated. A regulation for the declaration of private protected areas or voluntary conservation was also developed and approved with project funds. (TE p.33)

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

No unintended impacts of the project are noted.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

The TE states that the National Protected Areas Trust Fund, which brings increased revenue generation to the system, and development of new PA management models, has impact at a national level, as does the strengthened Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. (TE p.61)

9. Lessons and recommendations

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

The following are lessons learned described in the TE: (TE p.63)

The project design needs to be realistic in terms of target METT scores. Given that changing protected areas management effectiveness requires time, resources and sufficient infrastructure for staff to carry out their functions, among other elements, the project targets in terms of scores and the number of protected areas included were found to be overly ambitious.

A guideline on the scoring of PAs using METT tool can help ensure consistency in its application. During project implementation, it was determined that the original application of the METT tool had some shortcomings. As such, the values needed to be recalculated and time was lost in this process. Once the necessary revisions were made, a guideline was developed in 2015 to standardize this scoring and adapt it to the national context in terms of language, which has useful, and will continue to be useful post-project.

Sufficient time and resources should be set aside during project execution to pilot implementation of PA business plans. Project funding enabled the first business plans for protected areas to be developed in the Dominican Republic. However, due to delays in finding expertise to develop them, they were only finalized in 2014 and 2015 in the final stage of the project. This meant that there was insufficient time to start implementing any of them during the project and increases the risks to sustainability of these deliverables. It would also have been useful to have included project funds to support the required meetings and logistics for interested local community stakeholders to begin planning priority activities and to support them in identifying funding sources to make some initial investments.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The following are recommendations provided in the TE. (p.64)

Recommendations related to project design based on lessons learned

Establish realistic targets regarding project impact on PA management effectiveness. As mentioned in the lessons learned section, changing PA management effectiveness scores is a process that takes time. It is therefore important that biodiversity projects focused on protected areas develop realistic targets in terms of METT scores and ensure that the number of PAs that they seek to influence is feasible.

Recommendations related to project execution

Strengthen the impact of Project Steering Committees by holding meetings from project outset, ensuring that key issues are discussed, and broadening membership to other key institutions

Ongoing meetings of the PSC from project start-up and broadening the membership to include all key stakeholders could facilitate more rapid approval of project deliverables and maximize project impact. In the case of this project, the Project Steering Committee began to meet on an annual basis in 2013, two and a half years into project execution. In order to address any bottlenecks and provide strategic guidance to increase project impact, PSCs should meet from the first year of the project and minutes of all meetings should be taken and filed. It may also be worth considering the possibility of holding meetings more frequently than once a year (for example, biannually) to increase the potential input of the Committee.

In addition, it is important to ensure that the meeting agenda sets aside sufficient time for discussion of key issues. The tripartite meeting in 2015 only allocated 20 minutes for the project and did not include a discussion on strategic project deliverables such as the economic valuation study, which would have been useful to increase political awareness and support.

The Committee was a tripartite one composed of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (both Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity and Directorate of Planning), the GEF Focal Point and the UNDP Country Office. In order to increase the impact of key strategic outputs, it would be beneficial to have broader representation. This could include institutions such as the Ministry of Economy and Planning and the Ministry of Tourism. Effectively achieving environmental goals often requires decisions to be made outside of the Ministry of Environment. In the case of this project, the goal of ensuring financial sustainability of the protected areas system inevitably involves decisions to be made by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development related to budgetary allocations. In general, the strengthening of inter-institutional communication could promote greater integration of environmental issues into the developmental agenda.

Strengthen knowledge management and internal communication plan

While interinstitutional communication and knowledge management occurred with this project, this could be further strengthened to increase awareness of project outputs, to maximize their use and to help ensure that the information generated by the project translates into best practices in the long-term. In terms of internal communication, all project outputs should be socialized from the outset with other relevant directorates or units within the executing agency (in this case the Ministry of Environment). In some cases, this socialization is still pending (for example, the PA business plans still need to be presented formally in a meeting with the Vice Ministry of PAs). The project design phase needs to ensure sufficient resources for ample knowledge management to ensure that products are disseminated to all relevant stakeholder in order to maximize impact. For example, newsletters could be developed as part of this knowledge management strategy. Capacity building workshops could also be supplemented with the development of written material for more sustainable impact.

Dedicate more time to disseminating project outputs

Due to delays in project execution, the PMU and EA had to work hard to achieve the deliverables in a shorter period of time. This led to inadequate time to disseminate and make use of some of the key project outputs, such as the PA business plans. This recommendation is consistent with one of the conclusions drawn by the consultant who prepared the final project report, who noted the project carried out technical studies that require further dissemination. This includes dissemination of key studies to the level of individual PAs, which is not always carried out.

Recommendations to maximize project impact

Continue to carry out negotiations with the goal of obtaining a signed vertical agreement between the Fondo Marena and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. The Dominican Republic recently sent its official CBF eligibility request, and was the first participating country to do so. The next vital step is carrying out the negotiations and administrative procedures required to establish the vertical agreement so that the remaining funds from TNC and KfW can be transferred to the Dominican Republic.

Government to continue to make contributions to National Protected Areas Trust Fund to provide sustainable source of money for key investments in the NPAS. Given that the release of interest earnings on the CBF funds is contingent on matching funds being provided from the government, it will be important to continue to make government contributions to the fund. Not only will this provide a sustainable source of money in and of itself for addressing the needs of the NPAS, but if some of this money is used to improve the public use infrastructure of PAs, the proposed tariff increases can be justified and implemented, which could generate further revenues for the system.

Strengthen the functioning of the Fondo Marena Board of Directors so that it can effectively carry out its duties. The Final Evaluation found that there are important weakness in terms of the current functioning of the Board of Fondo Marena. Meetings are not taking place with the required periodicity, and information is not adequately disseminated to members before and after the meetings. This has led to a feeling that the Board is being sidestepped in processes and kept out of the loop. Given the increased funds that Fondo Marena will be receiving if and when the CBF funding is secured, it will be important to ensure that this governance structure is working more effectively. This will enable the Board to support the resolution of any issues that may arise. The specific role of the Board of Directors in relation to the National Protected Areas Trust Fund will need to be further clarified over the next few months of discussions/ negotiations for the signing of the vertical agreement with CBF.

Widely disseminate the protected areas business plans. The seven protected area business plans that were developed in 2014 and 2015 have not yet been implemented. An important first step is to disseminate the final plans to all relevant stakeholders. This includes the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity at the national level, as well as local level groups and organizations that were involved in their development as well as those that have the potential to implement some aspects of the business plans. Physical and electronic copies of the plans should be disseminated to local groups and to provincial directorates of the Ministry of Environment. In addition, it would be useful to make a presentation on the business plans and disseminate them to the Co-Management Board which includes all of the country's co-managing organizations. This could trigger interest in the development and implementation of additional business plans in PAs with co-management.

Promote partnerships for the implementation of business plans and increase promotion of the ecotourism potential of the National Protected Areas System. To kick start implementation of the business plans, one of the key issues is securing funds for the initial investments required to promote the ecotourism products that were identified. Given budgetary restrictions within government, strategic

partnerships should be explored with groups such as local associations, tourism guide groups, Boards of Concession Owners, Tourism Clusters and the Ministry of Tourism. In addition, it would be beneficial to exploit the tremendous marketing potential of the logos developed for four of the protected area business plans. Additional logos should be developed for those business plans that do not yet have them.

Carry out an advocacy campaign with the results of the economic valuation study of the NPAS with high-level decision makers and to general public. The economic valuation study was the first time that the contribution of NPAS to the national GDP was quantified. In order to increase the impact of the study, a high-level advocacy campaign needs to be carried with a view to influencing budget allocations and associated policy. This campaign will need to be led by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and target key institutions such as the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development and Ministry of Finance (Ministerio de Hacienda). It would be useful for the UNDP CO to provide support where possible to convene the required meetings. This recommendation had already been included in the Mid-Term Review but was not carried out in the second half of the project, in part due to internal discussions on the utility of the results. In addition, the study should be disseminated to the general public. In this respect, the Ministry's plan to publish a succinct information graphic highlighting the study results and present it at public events is a good one and should be followed through.

Ministry of Environment to carry out restructuring process to maximize effectiveness, building on steps taken during the project The Directorate of Planning is continuing to lead the process of institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Through a consultancy funded by the project, staff roles and functions were defined and gaps in terms of implementation of the country's environmental commitments are currently being identified. The next steps are developing a procedures manual as well as developing and implementing an improvement plan. These are vital actions to carry out so that the effectiveness and efficiency of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity and of the Ministry as a whole can continue to improve, and budgetary execution can continue to increase.

Ministry of Environment to legally approve all PA management plans. By the end of the project, four of the 18 management plans developed with project funding were formally approved by resolution, while the rest are still listed as drafts. While it may be the case that some actions to begin to implement some of the management plans are being carried out anyway, it is important that the technical revisions be finalized and that all PA management plans be formally approved. These are time delimited plans with information that could become out of date if the process of approval is not sped up. This is important for the plans to serve as a management guide for PA administrators and to give the green light to co-managing organizations to kick-start their implementation.

Promote establishment of the Management Plan Monitoring Committees proposed in the PA management plans. Some of the PA management plans developed with the project promote the establishment of a new body in each protected area to help monitor effective implementation of the management plans (Management Plan Monitoring Committees). These Committees would be inter-sectoral and would include all stakeholders with some involvement in the protected area at the local level. The creation of such Committees could support the role of Protected Areas administrations in monitoring the implementation of the actions proposed in the management plans. The interviews carried out during the Final Evaluation suggest that there is at least some local-level support for the creation of such committees. In addition, several of the management plans developed with the project

proposed the establishment of community support committees to protect the PAs, which could also be beneficial.

Update the Vice Ministry of Protected Area's guide for the development of protected area management plans based on the methodology employed with the project. The processes used to develop the management plans with project funds were more participatory than the standard practice for previous management plans. In order to ensure that the methodology used during the project continues to be adopted (and to avoid having to depend on the institutional memory of these new procedures), it would be useful to update the Vice Ministry's formal written guide in this respect.

Continue to promote protected areas co-management. Co-management is an important mechanism in the Dominican Republic to support the effective management of protected areas while simultaneously reducing the economic pressures on the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas. This is particularly true within the context of the limited budget available to manage such an extensive protected areas system (123 units covering approximately 25% of the country's territory). The co-management Unit within the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity is advised to continue to work with interested organizations and to forge partnerships, in order to promote additional co-management arrangements. At the same time, the government will continue to need to dedicate sufficient resources to monitor co-managed PAs for adherence to management principles.

Ensure continuity in meetings of the Co-Management Board. A Co-Management Board was reactivated through the project, with its inaugural meeting held in October 2013. The meeting proved to be an effective venue for the exchange of information, experiences and learning among the country's co-managing organizations. There have not been any meetings since then, although one of the interviewees mentioned that another meeting is planned for later in 2015. It will be important for the Ministry to budget for and organize regular meetings of the Co-Management Board now that the project has concluded. In addition, minutes of the meetings should be taken and filed for future reference. Define possible financial incentives for the establishment of private reserves in greater detail. With project support as well as co-financing from various other sources, the Dominican Republic now has its first private reserve, El Zorzal. An approved regulation for the establishment of private reserves provides the supportive legal framework. The regulation makes mention of the provision of economic incentives to land owners by the Ministry of Environment to promote the establishment of private reserves.

Payments for Environmental Services are identified as one possible mechanism. However, further definition of the exact nature of these financial incentives will be important to motivate landowners to take the step of declaring private reserves. If not, it will be difficult to expand the number of private reserves at the local level except where local organizations are able to secure external funding. The responsibility of landowners wanting to establish private reserves of developing and implementing management plans and submitting regular reports to the Ministry of Environment will need to be coupled with tangible financial incentives to make the establishment of private reserves a more attractive option. There is interest within the Ministry of updating this regulation to take these issues into account, which should be acted upon.

Share the pilot project experiences and lessons learned on innovative financial mechanisms to promote further replication. The project successfully promoted several examples of innovative financial mechanisms at the local level under Outcome 3. In order to promote learning and replication, widespread dissemination of these experiences should be carried out. The project has already produced

videos of the three pilots which will be shared with the main stakeholders and plans to use social media, internet sites and PA fairs to disseminate experiences. In addition, it might be useful to prepare succinct written material that can be shared throughout the National Protected Areas System. For example, the experience of producers planting trees through Plan Vivo merits sharing.

Put in place feasible compensation mechanisms for landowners and individuals with possession rights affected by PA designation, such as some of the alternatives identified with the los Quemados pilot project. The lack of compensation for people who were living in PAs before they were established and who now face restrictions in their land use is a divisive one that contributes to conflict within communities and reduces support for protected areas. Compensation or the offering of viable alternatives to communities is needed. For the Los Quemados pilot project under Outcome 3, project actions were limited to carrying out a census of users, providing some support for infrastructure investments and identifying possible mechanisms to compensate locals with land title or possession rights. Due to limited time and funds, none of the proposed mechanisms were implemented during the project. Funding and leadership to implement the most promising mechanisms identified should therefore be sought.

10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF IEO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	The report contains a detailed assessment of outcomes and impacts.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is internally consistent and evidence is complete and convincing.	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Project sustainability is discussed in detail, with all relevant dimensions explored.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons learned are comprehensive and reflect well the description provided in the TE.	S
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	Co-financing information is given, and total costs as well as costs per outcome are provided. Costs per activity are not provided.	MS
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The report's evaluation of the project M&E system is detailed and complete.	S
Overall TE Rating		S

11. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).